This has been an exceptional year of accomplishment for WITC. Our success reflects the dedicated efforts of many people across the College. Two examples of our success include our Quality Checkup and Multi-Campus Site visits conducted by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), as well as our progress related to strategic planning. The HLC reviewers determined that our Systems Portfolio and documented Criteria for Accreditation were found to be "strong, clear, and well-presented". In addition, WITC was found to be "in compliance" regarding all the Federal regulations to which we are accountable. These findings provide testimony to the amazing work of many, many staff members throughout the College. I am enormously grateful to those staff who contributed in so many ways to assure success with our HLC visits. I was particularly proud of our staff when I read the following excerpt in the Quality Checkup Visit Report:

"It should be noted that the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) team was impressed with the campus culture WITC has developed. Students told the team that they were proud to be a student at WITC. Students were comfortable going to any faculty or staff..."
member with concerns or to ask for help. The student support system is holistic - everyone gets involved in helping students learn. The sense of community was palpable. External stakeholders expressed their pride and appreciation of WITC’s connection to the local workforce. According to students, the College has earned its national ranking."

This quote confirms our staff's commitment to our students and our emphasis on "Learning First". Accolades are also in order regarding the effort our staff has invested in strategic planning. We've made great progress implementing our 2012-2015 Strategic Plan while concurrently developing our 2015-2018 plan. This fall over 400 stakeholders attended 20 forums that generated valuable feedback for the College. This input, along with feedback collected online, provided WITC with over 1,200 suggestions regarding how to improve the College. The Quality Improvement Steering Committee (QISC) considered each of these suggestions towards identifying some powerful continuous improvement themes that the Divisions can incorporate into their planning. Ultimately, these themes will produce meaningful action steps that will move the College forward and I would like to thank the QISC members for their facilitation of the forums and efforts to leverage the forum feedback. More detailed information regarding these themes and our strategic goals can be found at the link below.

As I consider the dedicated efforts of staff that nurture student success and contribute to the College's continuous improvement efforts, it comes as no surprise to me that we received recognition from Washington Monthly magazine as the fourth best two-year college in the nation and our inclusion in the Aspen Institute's list of top community and technical colleges. These recognitions were well-deserved and affirmed the hard work each of you is investing on a daily basis. Thank you for all you do to make WITC an extraordinary College! I'm proud of your contributions and your success!!

2015-2018 Strategic Goals & Themes...

Quality Improvement Steering Committee
Looking for New Members

The Quality Improvement Steering Committee (QISC) is looking for new members. If you are interested in being involved in this collegewide committee, please contact Becka Cusick at becka.cusick@witr.edu. For more details about the committee, please see my email dated May 7th. Thank you to all those members that have served and continue to serve on QISC! Your dedication is appreciated.

Bdb

Check out the QISC site on The Connection...

Accreditation Updates
WITC's Reaffirmation of Accreditation

On April 2, 2014, President Meyer received a memorandum from the Higher Learning Commission recommending WITC's full reaffirmation of accreditation! This recommendation is the result of the great work done by all WITC staff which culminated in October's Quality Checkup Visit. In the recommendation, it stated that WITC provided "sufficient evidence that it fully met each of the five Criteria for Accreditation and their Core Components." This recommendation will be sent to the next meeting of HLC's Institutional Action Council for official action.

Read the full Quality Check-up Visit Report...

Specialized Program Accreditations

Several programs have had accreditation reaffirmation visits this year. Congratulations to these programs continued success!

- Dental Assistant
- Emergency Medical Technician - Paramedic
- Medical Assistant
- Occupational Therapy Assistant

Extended AQIP Cycle

Presented at this year's HLC conference was the final draft of a new eight-year cycle for institutions being accredited through the AQIP Pathway. Previously a seven-year cycle, HLC utilized a committee of peer reviewers along with feedback from all AQIP institutions to build an improved AQIP model. The core of AQIP's continuous improvement model has been retained with action projects, strategy forums, and systems appraisals; however, many items have been revised and streamlined to align with college requests.

Learn more about the 8-year cycle...
Meet WITC’s New HLC Liaison

In February 2013, the Higher Learning Commission assigned WITC a new liaison, Linnea Stenson. Dr. Stenson brings 30 years of higher education experience as an educator, scholar and administrator at a wide range of institutions, including a research university, correctional facility, liberal arts college and a comprehensive community and technical college, affording an understanding of higher education in multiple venues. Dr. Stenson was the Program Director of Steven J. Schochet Center for GLBT Studies at the University of Minnesota. From there and for ten years, Dr. Stenson served as academic dean for liberal arts departments and career programs at Minneapolis Community and Technical College, providing leadership, budget preparation and management, curricular administration, and annual program reviews; for five years during this same tenure, Dr. Stenson served as the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs.

A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Augustana College in Rock Island, Dr. Stenson received an M.A. and Ph.D. at the University of Minnesota with research concentrated on the formation and place of lesbian identity in 20th century American novels. She has published a number of articles and presented papers at national conferences, most recently on creative partnerships between community colleges and small liberal arts colleges to support world language learning, and on programs designed for college readiness and retention.

Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Annual Conference, April 9-14

HLC’s annual conference highlights best practices in higher education from around the country with over 200 general program sessions on topics such as assessment, organizational change, quality improvement, faculty development, learning environments, technology tools, pedagogy, collaboration, and retention to name just a few. Over 4,000 higher education professionals attended from approximately 850 institutions.

Saturday's keynote was titled "Capturing Student and Faculty Voices: Authentic Assessment of Learning and Teaching" and was presented by Gail O. Mellow, President of LaGuardia Community College, New York. Attending from WITC were Bonny Copenhaver, Vice President of Academic Affairs; Becka Cusick, Quality Improvement Coordinator; and Ellen Hauser, Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness.

AQIP Action Projects
Fostering a Culture Where All Employees are Valued

The **College Culture Task Force** action project has continued to highlight the College’s operational tenets in a monthly newsletter which is sent to all staff. The first newsletter was published in November, 2013, with an initial focus on the four tenets which had the greatest measurable gap as revealed by the Noel-Levitz staff survey conducted in March, 2013. Following that were tenets that encourage open dialogue, risk taking, and collaborative decision-making.

Since that time, the newsletters have continued to highlight a tenet and will continue until all nine have been discussed, with the final newsletter to be published October, 2014. The newsletters encourage staff to be introspective of how each of us demonstrates and practices the tenets. Self-reflection forms are included in each newsletter, as well as links to articles and web sites to encourage greater reflection. All staff are also invited to share their best practices on a blog on The Connection.

In addition to the newsletter, the Committee has discussed other ways to demonstrate how the College values all staff. It quickly became apparent that inclusion of adjunct and Continuing Education faculty and staff was an area in which WITC needed to improve. There are hundreds of people who help to make WITC a successful college, and many are invisible to us, and frequently go unrecognized. As a first step, Craig Fowler mailed out more than 500 WITC lapel pins, wallet-sized tenet cards and thank you notes to all Continuing Ed faculty. The Committee hopes that a next logical step to that is a follow-up that will recognize all adjunct faculty in a similar manner. The task to remain one of the best two-year colleges in the nation would be much more difficult without their dedication.

As the 2013-2014 academic year comes to a close, the Committee will meet in May to evaluate successes and issues that remain to be addressed. In the meantime, all are encouraged to continue to visit the College Culture Task Force blog at [https://theconnection.mywilm.com/ConnectTo/aqipvaluepeople/collegecultureblog/default.aspx](https://theconnection.mywilm.com/ConnectTo/aqipvaluepeople/collegecultureblog/default.aspx) and to contact co-chairs Craig Fowler or Dan Cooper with any questions and concerns.

The taskforce also wants to express appreciation to all who have contributed to the blog, and all of the support received from the Board, President’s Cabinet, and all staff. Thank you.

**Submitted by:**

*Co-chairs:* Craig Fowler (Vice President, Continuing Education) and Dan Cooper (General Studies - Economics Instructor)

*Team Members:* Gini Baker, Jennifer Bednarik, Aleesha Drost, Sharon Duthie, Ingrid Evavold, Shane Evenson, Leslie Larsen, Barb Lundberg, Barb Malom, Jim Melin, Jodi Saliny, Jerry Secord, and Dave Shipley
At its January meeting, the WITC Board of Trustees unanimously voted to use the Tenet of the Month reflection form to look at how they do their work together as a Board. President’s Cabinet also has monthly discussions on that month’s tenet. Check out what they have to say.

- It’s an opportunity to communicate to more stakeholders. (Decision Making is Collaborative and Researched Based)
- We are an institution that has put a process in place and it's our time to reevaluate and reflect on our assessment processes and continuous improvement. When you do quality improvement or continuous improvement you are always questioning what we can do better or improve, which keeps us growing and moving. It’s not to make it feel like we are starting over, or that it was all bad. (Quality and Continuous Improvement are Expected in all Aspects of the College)
- The nurturing is that we all have a responsibility to make sure that our facility is up-to-date. Listening, talking, and challenging each other in the conversations we have. (Learning Environments are Created and Nurtured to Maximize Personal Success)

You too can get involved in the reflection & discussion.
It begins with me!

Aligning our Student Learning Assessment Initiatives

The goal of this AQIP project is to create a relevant and meaningful academic assessment process that is fluid, streamlined, logical, and works to benefit faculty, students, and staff. The committee kicked off its work in February by discussing the following three questions: what is positive about our assessment process; what benefits come from our assessment process; and where do we struggle with the assessment process.

The major components in academic assessment are the Collegewide Outcome process, the Technical Skills Attainment (TSA) process, and Academic Program Review process. Additionally, the program viability process, program specific accreditations, and the College’s HLC accreditation all touch academic assessment by requiring it be conducted and/or by using assessment results already gathered from the activities.

The committee is learning about each major process individually and will be evaluating the processes by charting all activities to look for overlapping activities and places to streamline the work. Because this evaluation will take some time, it is important that all work on any of the assessment processes continue according to our current practices.
Developing Divisional and Collegewide Measurements

For this action project, most of 2013-2014 has been focused on Collegewide Effectiveness Measures that, in one snapshot, shows factors related to WITC's success as well as goals for those factors. Starting with the reports provided to WITC's Board of Trustees, measures were identified and "data definitions" and "signal values" for each began to be selected.

Data Definition - a clear and consistent definition of the data used for the measure and how it will be calculated. Below is a summary of these definitions and their sources:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Data Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUCCESS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student FTE</td>
<td>Credit and non-credit for year (Peoplesoft/Cognos)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversion Rate</td>
<td>Application to enroll, program/UGRD student (Peoplesoft/Cognos)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persistence/Retention</td>
<td>UGRD Fall-Spring, Fall-Fall, &amp; Course Completion (Peoplesoft/Cognos)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>Benchmarks of Effective Practice (CCSSE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation Rate</td>
<td>Program/UGRD Completion(WTCS Student Success Measure)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placement</td>
<td>Employed and Employed-Related (WTCS Graduate Follow-Up)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SATISFACTION</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Satisfaction</td>
<td>Overall Satisfaction (Noel-Levitz SSI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Satisfaction</td>
<td>Satisfied/Very Satisfied (WTCS Graduate Follow-up)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer Satisfaction</td>
<td>Preparedness meets/exceeds expectations (WTCS Employer Follow-up)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Satisfaction</td>
<td>Overall Satisfaction (Noel-Levitz CESS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EFFECTIVENESS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost/FTE</td>
<td>Cost/FTE (WTCS Schedule B-7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Viability</td>
<td>Bond Rating (Moody’s) and Composite Financial Index (HLC)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Signal Value - is used for measurement and communication purposes to show the status of a measure. Based on benchmarks from a variety of sources including the WTCS, the National Community College Benchmark project, and internally-selected benchmarks, we are in the process of selecting and testing various signal values. A visual representation of these values will be shown using colors typically seen at a traffic light.

- **Green** = meeting or exceeding goal
- **Yellow** = potential concern
- **Red** = action needed

The WTCS is currently finalizing statewide Student Success Measures as well as Performance-Based Funding measures. As work progresses, adjustments will be made to align with those measures. A graphical representation or "scorecard" will be shared with all WITC Staff for additional feedback in the Fall of 2014.

Submitted by:
Chair: Ellen Riely Hauser (Vice President, Institutional Effectiveness)

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**Coming Next Fall**

As we all know, quality improvement is happening all over the College on a daily basis, but we don't always get a chance to hear about it. A new item in future quality Improvement newsletters will be an opportunity for each of WITC's divisions to feature highlights, projects, and new activities that they'd like to showcase and share with all staff. Stay tuned...