



The Higher Learning Commission

A Commission of the
North Central Association
of Colleges and Schools

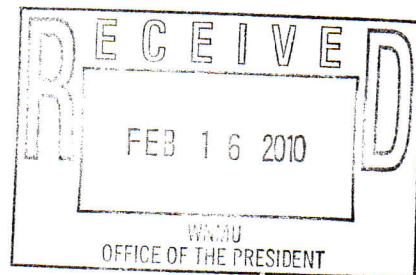


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Serving the common good by assuring and advancing the quality of higher learning

February 11, 2010

John E. Counts
President
Western New Mexico University
P. O. Box 680
Silver City, NM 88062



Dear President Counts:

Enclosed is a copy of Western New Mexico University's *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report*. It begins with a concise Executive Summary, intended for those general readers that do not require a high level of detail. Your Systems Appraisal Team of quality experts provided extensive detail in the full report by identifying nine distinct groups of what they view as your institution's *strengths* and *opportunities for improvement*, one group for each of the nine AQIP Categories. We are also emailing your institution's AQIP Liaison a copy of this full *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report* and enclosures.

To receive maximum benefit from your Systems Appraisal, you and your colleagues should plan to invest substantial time in discussing it, considering the team's observations and advice, and identifying which actions will best advance your institution. The enclosed *After Your Appraisal* details what lies ahead and how to use your Feedback Report most effectively, and explains when and how to register for your next Strategy Forum.

To comply with federal requirements, we need the CEO of the institution formally to acknowledge receipt of this report within the next two weeks, and to provide us with any comments you wish to make about it. Please read the enclosed *After Your Appraisal* suggestions *before* you decide how to respond. Limit your acknowledgement and comments to a maximum of two typewritten pages, and understand that your response will become part of your institution's permanent HLC file, to be shared with future peer reviewers who review your institution (including the next Systems Appraisal team, the next Quality Checkup visit team, and the next Reaffirmation of Accreditation panel). Email your response to AQIP@hlcommission.org; call me or Mary Green (at 800-621-7440 x130) if you have any questions about it.

We know you will gain real value from the Systems Appraisal Feedback and the activities it will stimulate within your institution, and we are proud to be working with you as you continue along the never-ending path to improvement.

Sincerely,

Stephen D. Spanghel
Vice President



The Higher Learning Commission

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STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS

WESTERN NEW MEXICO UNIVERSITY

P. O. Box 680
Silver City, NM 88062

Affiliation Status: Candidate: Not Applicable
Accreditation: (1926-33; 1942- .)

AQIP PARTICIPANT

Nature of Organization

Legal Status: Public
Degrees Awarded: A, B, M

Conditions of Affiliation:

Stipulations on Affiliation Status: None.
Approval of New Degree Sites: The Commission's Streamlined Review Process is only available for offering existing degree programs at new sites within the state.
Approval of Distance Education Degrees: No prior Commission approval required.
Reports Required: None.
Other Visits Scheduled: None.

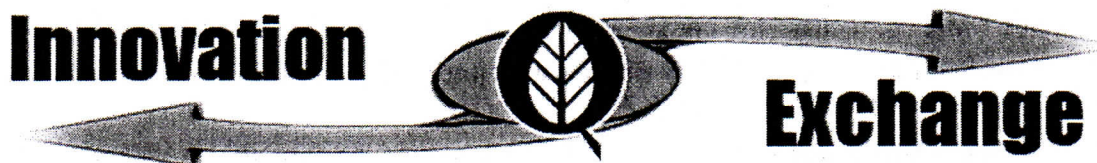
Summary of Commission Review

<i>Year of Admission to AQIP:</i>	11/20/2000
<i>Year of Last PEAQ Comprehensive Evaluation:</i>	1996 - 1997
<i>Year of Last Systems Appraisal:</i>	2009 - 2010
<i>Year of Next Systems Appraisal:</i>	2013 - 2014
<i>Year of Last Reaffirmation of Accreditation:</i>	2007 - 2008
<i>Year of Next Reaffirmation of Accreditation:</i>	2014 - 2015
<i>Date of Last Action:</i>	08/28/2009

Name Change:

New Mexico State Teachers College to New Mexico Western College (1950) to Western New Mexico University (1963)

Celebrate your Strengths



The *Innovation Exchange* allows an AQIP institution to discuss and celebrate the strengths identified in its Systems Appraisal, and it provides a means for AQIP institutions to share these accomplishments with the broader higher education community and learn of others' innovations. Expect to get calls, emails, or invitations to consult from those who want to learn more about the Innovative Practices you post. Use the *Innovation Exchange* to show your faculty and staff how proud you are of their ingenuity, creativity, and hard work.

Describe three SS or S items from your Systems Appraisal Feedback Report.

Select from your Systems Appraisal Feedback Report three items that your Appraisal team identified as strengths (SS or S) of your organization. Choose items that you agree are strengths, ones that might help other colleges and universities searching for help in solving problems and challenges they face. In creating the text that will describe your Innovative Practices on the *Innovation Exchange*, think about what you write from the point of view of other higher educators searching for practices that will help them solve problems — for example, make sure to include in your answers those key words or terms upon which others might be likely to search. Don't attempt to force your institution's name into the title or into your responses to questions 1-9, since question 10 asks you to identify your institution and your "contact person."

For inspiration, study <http://www.HigherEducationInnovation.org/InnovationExchange/> to view others' postings or the "sample" Innovative Practice AQIP has posted, and the **help** file.

Title & Category

Make sure that the title you assign your Innovative Practice will be easily understood by someone searching the *Innovation Exchange*. Poetic or visionary titles ("La Vita Nuova for Advising") do not communicate what a practice covers clearly. Use a simple, literal, direct, and concrete sentence of 10 or fewer words, built around a action verb in active (not passive) voice. Good examples are "Advisor training increases student persistence" or "Streamlined process cuts faculty search process time to four weeks" or "Succession policy prevents organization from losing valuable experiential knowledge."

Assign a category to your Innovative Practice that best fits it. Use the AQIP Category item number under which this practice was identified as a strength in your Systems Appraisal feedback. If a Quality Checkup team or other process identified the Innovative Practice, choose the category that will make it easy for others to search for it.

1. What does this Innovative Practice do and how does it work?

Concisely describe your Innovative Practice in a way that other higher education faculty, staff, and administrators will be able to understand and appreciate it — and what makes it valuable. Don't try to give *all* the details, but explain enough of the practice or process to show how it differs from less innovative approaches.

2. What motivated you to develop or adopt this Innovative Practice?

How did you identify the problem area(s) or process flaws that required your attention? Did you invent a new process or policy, incrementally improve one over time, or adopting one originally developed elsewhere?

3. How long did it take you to develop and implement this Innovative Practice?

When did you begin using the Innovative Practice? How long before that did you begin the work

that resulted in the Innovative Practice's development and implementation or adoption?

4. What did it cost you to develop and implement this Innovative Practice?

Realistically report or estimate what it cost you (in dollars, resources, people, etc.) to develop this Innovative Practice. Include the cost of initial implementation, but not ongoing operation.

5. What resistance did you face in developing and implementing this Innovative Practice, and how did you reduce or overcome it?

Change initiatives always face resistance. When you developed, adopted, or adapted this practice, what obstacles did you face? Explain briefly how you surmounted them.

6. What does it cost you to maintain and operate this Innovative Practice, and what does it save you?

Realistically report or estimate what it costs you annually (in dollars, resources, people, etc.) to employ this Innovative Practice. Do not include the cost of initial development or implementation. What are the savings (in money, time, people) that resulted?

7. How do you measure or check whether this Innovative Practice performs the way you intend it to?

Explain the metrics you use to evaluate how well this Innovative Practice achieves the goals and objectives you had when you developed it?

8. What print or web documents are available to provide more detail and explanation about this Innovative Practice?

If possible, explain how someone interested can get additional documentation about your Innovative Practice — or see it in use. You can provide a web link here that will take people to additional information on your website. Tell how and by whom it was externally judged to be an *innovative, best, or useful practice* of your institution.

9. How does your organization currently use this Innovative Practice?

Briefly identify your organization and the traits relevant to use of this practice (e.g., size, location, scope, programs, stakeholders). If the Innovative Practice is not used organization-wide, identify the subunit, office, or area where it is used.

10. Whom at your organization should people should contact for more information or help about this Innovative Practice?

Provide the name, title, phone number, and email of the one person at your organization that others interested in your Innovative Practice should call or write.

After you register and are approved as a contributor to the Innovation Exchange, log in at <http://www.HigherEducationInnovation.org/InnovationExchange/admin/>. Before you submit your Innovative Practice, make sure you preview it and proofread it carefully — to make certain it looks the way you want it to when it appears on the Innovation Exchange. If it is poorly written, you may be asked to revise it before it publishing it.

You can save your Innovative Practice as a draft and return to it later. Often, coming back to a piece of writing before you submit it for publication alerts you to opportunities for improving it that you might miss if you write and submit it in one session. But don't procrastinate;

After it is published, you can return to it and revise it, although it will be reviewed again before it is re-published.

<http://www.HigherEducationInnovation.org/InnovationExchange/>



Academic
Quality Improvement
Program

The Higher Learning Commission NCA

After Your Systems Appraisal

Acknowledging and Digesting your Feedback Report
Preparing for your next Strategy Forum

To reap maximum value from your AQIP participation, it is essential that everyone on campus carefully read, debrief, and digest the Systems Appraisal Feedback Report. And it is equally critical that the institution use their reactions to and discussion of the report to prepare for the Strategy Forum it will attend within the next few months. The seriousness of this debriefing will determine the quality of the benefits an institution receives from its Systems Appraisal and the Strategy Forum, so it is important to keep the following in mind as you discuss the information in the Feedback Report:

- You need to hold multiple meetings and discussions at regular intervals between the time of receiving the Feedback Report and attending the second Strategy Forum. Prior to these meetings, everyone involved should have read the report (and the Systems Portfolio that the Appraisal Team reviewed and reacted to when it made its Appraisal). Encourage everyone to make comments and suggestions. The output from these meetings should help your institution identify which AQIP Categories you want to focus on at the next Strategy Forum. In these campus meetings prior to the Strategy Forum, make every attempt to identify solutions and create actionable plans for areas of opportunity noted in the Feedback Report. Note places where you encounter stumbling blocks that arise in these discussions so you can work through them before — or at — the Strategy Forum.
- At your next Strategy Forum your institution will be sharing the fruits of these internal discussions with other veteran AQIP institutions, eager to learn how others are using their feedback effectively to shape strategies and drive additional improvement. If you have not already registered for your next Strategy Forum and you do not have information on how to do so, please contact Babatunde Alokolaro (balokolaro@hlcommission.org) so he can get you the information you need to register and to prepare. Our website, www.AQIP.org/StrategyForum/ describes the goals and objectives of ***Creating the Climate for Continuous Improvement*** and the dates this Strategy Forum, intended exclusively for advanced AQIP institutions, is scheduled.
- Plan to involve those responsible for driving improvement at your institution in planning for the Strategy Forum. (This is a good opportunity to broaden those who see themselves as the “AQIP group” by adding others who should be stimulating improvement.) The absence of any of these people will significantly weaken the synergy of your AQIP team and halt certain progress from being made. Among those who attend the Strategy Forum should be your institution’s president, chief academic officer, AQIP liaison, faculty and staff leaders, and at least one board member.
- AQIP needs a formal response (letter or email) from your institution’s CEO acknowledging receipt of the Feedback Report within two weeks. But AQIP also recognizes the dangers in asking an institution to respond so quickly. Two weeks will not *begin* to provide you with the time you need to hold meetings with your faculty and staff to discuss why the Appraisal team might have formed the impressions it did. Therefore, it may be prudent to postpone writing a defensive response; a simple “We received the report and are studying it” fulfills everyone’s obligations under federal policies. You can add a more thoughtful response later to your institution’s permanent file, so providing a perfunctory one now is fine.

- If you do decide to use your response to refute observations or comments in the feedback report, or to promise immediate or future action in a particular area, make certain you can back up any assertions or deliver on any promises.
- Do not be overly alarmed if the team identified something as an *Accreditation Concern*. An *Accreditation Concern* might result from your not devoting enough attention to a topic in your Systems Portfolio, thereby failing to provide the team with the evidence it would have liked to see concerning your fulfillment of one of the *Criteria for Accreditation*. You can easily correct omissions like these in future versions of your Systems Portfolio and in additions to your Index to the Criteria for Accreditation. And your next Quality Checkup visit can confirm that this is not longer a concern. AQIP has designed this process so that you get an early warning that prevents you from being out of compliance with the Higher Learning Commission's *Criteria for Accreditation*.
- Remember that the goal of the Appraisal was to give you feedback based on *the Systems Portfolio that the team read*, feedback that may help alert you to opportunities you might not have otherwise seen, and it is common for institutions to discover that their Systems Portfolio did not capture or communicate their institution as effectively as they would have wished. It goes without saying that your next Portfolio will be an improvement.
- If an *Accreditation Concern* resulted from something deeper (i.e., it is not simply the result of your failure to provide easily available existing evidence), then you need to get to work on the issue so that you will actually create the evidence you need to demonstrate that you meet the *Criteria for Accreditation*. Depending on the specific issue, you probably have plenty of time to do this, but if you have questions or want to discuss your possible strategies, call Steve Spangehl at AQIP. Remember: the team isn't saying you fail to meet accreditation standards, but merely alerting you to a potential concern so that you can remedy it now.
- Your Systems Portfolio will undoubtedly serve as a model for other colleges and universities. We applaud the efforts you put into its development up to this point, and ask that you continue to refine, expand and publish updates via your website or other means. Doing so will help communicate to both internal and external stakeholders what your institution is trying to accomplish, the key processes it is using to get there, how it is currently performing, and how it is striving systematically to improve. Please make the link to your electronic Portfolio prominent on your home page, and send it to Mary Green (mgreen@hlcommission.org) so we can add it to our website.
- The Systems Appraisal team worked hard to identify both institutional strengths (marked SS or S) and opportunities for improvement (marked OO or O). Please examine *both* so that your institution can celebrate and build on its strengths and understand and explore its growth opportunities. To ensure you do so, we want you to write up three of your strengths and post them on our *Innovation Exchange* within the next eight weeks. *Celebrate Your Strengths*, enclosed, explains how to do this.
- Your Feedback Report *should* stimulate discussion — and disagreement — among your colleagues. It is perfectly reasonable for you to decide that an "O" or "OO" identified by the team was a misinterpretation (because of what you failed to put in your Portfolio, because the team didn't understand your institution's goals, because you described your process and results unclearly, etc.). It's also reasonable for campus insiders to disagree with places where the team perceived strengths. What is important is that you move toward consensus on how to proceed — what issues deserve your institution's attention next — that everyone understand why the strategies you select make sense.

SYSTEMS APPRAISAL FEEDBACK REPORT

in response to the *Systems Portfolio* of

WESTERN NEW MEXICO UNIVERSITY

February 10, 2010



**Academic
Quality Improvement
Program**

The Higher Learning Commission NCA

**30 North LaSalle Street, Suite 2400
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In response to the *Systems Portfolio* of
WESTERN NEW MEXICO UNIVERSITY



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR WESTERN NEW MEXICO UNIVERSITY

The following are summary comments on each of the AQIP Categories crafted by the Appraisal Team to highlight **Western New Mexico University's** achievements and to identify challenges yet to be met.

Category 1 Helping Students Learn

- WNMU has begun the path to establishing systematic improvement of student learning. The next step is to put into place valid assessment instruments and techniques that align with its learning objectives and outcomes. As it strengthens its assessment processes, the institution will gain data that can guide it in improving student learning.

Category 2 Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives

- WNMU currently uses feedback from the various stakeholders and its primary planning processes, such as SPP, to manage its non-instructional processes. There seems to be a large focus on athletics as the primary example of the other distinctive objectives; other distinctive objectives may warrant more focus. Currently, the data used to manage support processes are gathered and analyzed very informally. In addition, there appears to be no systematic processes used to analyze the data as well as to make decisions about objectives and processes. Use of systematic processes to gather, analyze, and make decisions would help WNMU to make more effective improvement decisions.

Category 3 Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs

- WNMU uses multiple methods for collecting the data for student and stakeholder needs and satisfaction. Relationships are fostered with students; mechanisms are in place to deal with student complaints. There is less discussion about building, maintaining and improving relationships with other constituents. The supporting evidence presented is vague with respect to systematic process for choosing a course of action when needs for a particular stakeholder group are identified. WNMU would be well-served by defining a process for identifying needs from the data collected and identifying stronger methods for measuring the strength of relationships with students and stakeholders. The processes presented do not appear to have a clearly defined model for data collection, analysis, and review for possible improvements performed in a continuous fashion.

Category 4 Valuing People

- WNMU has used the AQIP program to identify several improvement projects and implement them. Two of these have been started within the last 12 months and data are still being collected. Because of its small size, WNMU encourages all stakeholders to participate in the program to help value people. Staff and faculty participate in a variety of programs to help gather feedback that is used by management. Various comments and statements indicate a strong sense of satisfaction with the institution.
- WNMU's approaches to valuing people indicate that informal processes currently are being used for gathering information and data. Although it describes itself as a small organization, the institution is sufficiently large to benefit from clearly defined and standardized processes that define how data are collected, aggregated, and analyzed, and to include metrics and targets against which performance can be measured. The development of these processes is very important for the institution in order to manage and track performance over time and determine areas where additional professional development and skills training are needed.

Category 5 Leading and Communicating

- WNMU has made a good start in documenting some of its processes for Leading and Communicating. WNMU uses the SPP and Decision Cycle as the primary mechanisms for leadership to set direction and communicate with its constituents.. It appears that communicating the changes others are making may or may not be shared broadly among stakeholders resulting in compartmentalizing of experience and expertise. If processes can be modified to support others, there can be a cost savings in terms of time and money. Whereas two new techniques have been initiated to gather data, there isn't sufficient data available to illustrate the results. WNMU indicates that it does not have a formal succession management System [GP1].
- WNMU is not very clear about its leadership and communication processes nor does it have effective direct measures of the outcomes of such processes. WNMU could improve the quality of its leadership by identifying and evaluating its leadership processes, developing direct measures for its leadership processes, developing leadership skills among its employees more systematically, formally sharing best practices, and creating a more formal succession plan.

- Defining and implementing formal processes, in combination with setting performance targets, can assist WNMU in attaining greater levels of performance and success. Comparing attained results against established targets can identify gaps that can be prioritized so as to make best use of the constrained resources available.
- There is evidence that WNMU has examined this category and has planned to address areas of need. There, however, remains a need to provide greater specificity in response to the questions raised under this AQIP category. From the general statements presented, it is unclear what has occurred, who was affected, and how this was accomplished. The institution could benefit from systems and processes with outcomes of clearly specified details that relate actions to both the planning process and those actions already completed.

Category 6 Supporting Institutional Operations

- WNMU reports some successes in supporting its institutional operations. There is a need for the institution to revisit how the informal processes and procedures could become much more formal in nature and fact-based. The systems portfolio presents the impression that the institution lacks a systematic approach to establishing performance targets and measuring outcomes against those targets. Many actions described lacked context because data that led to them are lacking. In its current environment of constrained resources, a systematic approach can lead to optimization of the use of those resources.
- Information relating to how WNMU addresses the organizational support processes that help to provide an environment conducive to learning lacks specificity ; the institution has used many informal processes and procedures to gather and respond to data. WNMU would benefit from developing more direct measures to evaluate their support services and improve the data collection of a number of metrics that have already been identified.
- The next step for WNMU would be to create a system-wide, systematic focus on performance improvement. Such a focus would result in the use of systematic processes to analyze the data and design and manage the processes for day-to-day operations as well as to plan improvements. Measuring attained results against

established targets can identify gaps that can be prioritized so as to make best use of the constrained resources available.

Category 7 Measuring Effectiveness

- WNMU has identified continuous improvement as a core value and quality practices as one of its six strategic objectives. Both of these require a strong fact-based decision-making culture. WNMU has developed a few new processes and ways to build the system for collecting, analyzing, distributing, and using data, information, and knowledge to manage itself and to begin its performance improvement process.
- From the information provided in this category, effectiveness does not appear to be well defined or measured. There appear to be inconsistencies between institutional intention as to process and the actions taken by particular actors. A need for greater pan-institutional coordination appears evident. The lack of specific details, specific information, processes, and clear procedures weakens the perception that assessment methods and procedures are used on a regular basis to provide valuable feedback to the institution's stakeholders.
- A more structured process and a well-articulated system for communication and dissemination of information within the university could help inform its improvement decisions. However, before effectiveness can be measured, the institution needs to establish performance targets for its processes to provide context for utilizing its actual outcomes to assess effectiveness. This appears to be a particular issue for non-instructional and administrative processes but, as noted in Category 1, exists also for instructional processes.

Category 8 Planning Continuous Improvement

- Some positive first steps have been made toward the development and implementation of a continuous improvement process. WNMU uses the Strategic Planning Process (SPP) to monitor continuous improvement. The functional Vice Presidents receive information from their staffs and use this information to develop programs and then monitor their progress. Data for a few projects were illustrated to show their progress. Although this is a good start, additional work is needed.
- The planning process relies on informal processes and *ad hoc* approaches. It is not clear that metrics reported for some areas are valid indicators of performance. The planning

process at WNMU lacks clear definition of the processes by which input is sought, decisions are made, and decisions made at different units and levels of the organization are aligned. WNMU also lacks clear processes for the establishment of specific and measurable targets against which it can assess its performance and effectiveness.

- WNMU needs to systematically link decisions about resources and capabilities to its planning process. There appears to be an inherent conflict between WNMU's goal of increasing enrollment and its funding environment. It is not evident in this section how WNMU is addressing this conflict through its strategic planning and how it will reconcile the demand for education with its constrained funding. In an environment of constrained resources, WNMU may wish to consider how, financially, it will be able to attain its goal of increased enrollment.

Category 9 Building Collaborative Relationships

- WNMU uses many identified methods for building relationships in the community as listed in several figures in the portfolio. Formal and informal methods are used to build relationships with suppliers, service providers, material suppliers and agencies. A major effort to attract students is through contact with school counselors. However, much of what WNMU does appears to be on an *ad hoc* basis without established or defined processes for which performance targets have been set and for which outcomes are assessed.
- WNMU needs to explore better the value of its external relationships and the impact of those relationships on the university in order to prioritize them in a manner that makes most efficient use of its resources and support its mission, value, and objectives. The understanding and improvement of the relationships could be greatly enhanced by having defined, formal processes with established performance targets which will allow WNMU to assess its actual results and identify opportunities to improve its processes and outcomes.

Accreditation issues and Strategic challenges for **Western New Mexico University** are listed in detail within the Strategic and Accreditation Issues Analysis section of the Appraisal Feedback Report.

ELEMENTS OF Western New Mexico University's FEEDBACK REPORT

The *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report* provides AQIP's official response to your *Systems Portfolio* by a team of readers trained in evaluation. After appraisers independently reviewed your document, the team reached consensus on essential elements of your institutional profile, strengths and opportunities for improvement by Category, and significant issues for your institution. These are presented in three sections of the Feedback Report: Accreditation Issues Analysis, Critical Characteristics Analysis, and Category Feedback. These components are interrelated in defining context, evaluating performance, surfacing critical issues, and assessing institutional performance.

It is important to remember that the Systems Appraisal Team had only your *Systems Portfolio* to guide their analysis of your institution's strengths and opportunities for improvement. Consequently, their report may omit important strengths — if you were too modest to stress them in your *Systems Portfolio*, or if your discussion and documentation of them was unconvincing. Similarly, the team may have pointed out areas of potential improvement that are already receiving the institution's attention. Again, the team used its best judgment in identifying improvement opportunities. If some of these areas of potential improvement are now strengths rather than opportunities because of your own focused efforts, that is all to your credit. If the team was unsure about an area, we urged it to err on the side of giving your institution the best possible advice about where investing your efforts might pay off. If some of their advice comes after the fact, after you've already tackled an area, no harm is done.

Executive Summary: Summative statements agreed upon by the Systems Appraisal Team reflecting the reviewers' assessment of the institution's current status in relation to critical quality characteristics: robustness of process design; utilization or deployment of processes; the existence of results, trends, and comparative data; the use of results data as feedback, and systematic processes for improvement of the activities that the Category covers. Since institutions are complex, maturity levels may vary from one Category to another.

Strategic challenges for the institution are listed in detail within the Strategic and Accreditation Issues Analysis section of the Appraisal Feedback Report.

Strategic and Accreditation Issues Analysis: Strategic issues are those most closely related to your institution's ability to succeed in reaching its mission, planning, and quality improvement

goals. Accreditation issues are areas where you have not yet provided evidence that you meet the Commission's *Criteria for Accreditation*, or where the evidence you have presented suggests you may have difficulties, now or in the future, in meeting these expectations. If accreditation is essential for your institution then any accreditation issues identified are, by definition, also strategic. The Systems Appraisal Team identified both of these kinds of issues through analysis of your Organizational Overview and the feedback it provided for each Category, as well as by reviewing the Index to the *Criteria for Accreditation* that you provided along with your *Systems Portfolio*. This list of strategic issues offers a framework for addressing ongoing improvement of processes and systems, serving as an executive summary of the Report's key findings and recommendations.

Critical Characteristics: Your Systems Portfolio's Organizational Overview provides context for the team's knowledge of your institution's identity, mission objectives, strategic goals, and key factors related to improvement. Critical Characteristics are those features most important for understanding the institution's mission, environment, stakeholders, competitive position, goals, and processes. Characteristics having the greatest relevance to each Category are identified in the Report.

Category Feedback: The Report's feedback on each of AQIP's nine Categories specifically identifies strengths and opportunities for improvement. An **S** or **SS** identifies strengths, with the double letter signifying important achievements or capabilities upon which to build. Opportunities are designated by **O**, with **OO** indicating areas where attention may result in more significant improvement. Comments, which are keyed to your *Systems Portfolio*, offer brief analysis of each strength and opportunity. Organized by Category, and presenting the team's findings in detail, this section is the heart of the Report.

STRATEGIC AND ACCREDITATION ISSUES

In conducting the Systems Appraisal, the team attempted to identify the broader issues that present the greatest challenges and opportunities for your institution in the coming years. These are all strategic issues, ones you need to grapple with as you identify your institution's strategies for confronting the future and becoming the institution you want to be. The team also examined whether any of these strategic issues put your institution into jeopardy of not meeting the Higher Learning Commission's accreditation expectations.

Issues Affecting Compliance with the *Criteria for Accreditation*. An important goal for the Systems Appraisal was to review your institution's compliance with the Higher Learning Commission's *Criteria for Accreditation*. The peer quality experts who served on the team were all trained in evaluating colleges and universities using the Commission's *Criteria*, and the Systems Appraisal process they followed included careful steps to ensure the team used the *Criteria* as a major factor in their review. As the team reviewed your presentation of your institution's systems and processes under each AQIP Category, it searched for accreditation-related issues and concerns. In addition, the team used the *Index to the Criteria for Accreditation* that you provided with your Portfolio to perform a comprehensive review of the *Criteria* and each Core Component to ascertain whether you presented compelling evidence that your institution complies with each of these Commission expectations.

The Systems Appraisal team concluded that Western New Mexico University has presented evidence that it complies with each of the Five *Criteria for Accreditation* and each of their Core Components. Although the Systems Appraisal does not in itself constitute a review for continued accreditation, the team's conclusion upon reviewing your Portfolio against the *Criteria* will serve as a telling piece of evidence during the Commission's next scheduled AQIP review of your institution for Reaffirmation of Accreditation.

Issues Affecting Future Institutional Strategies. The Systems Appraisal Team identified the following strategic issues to assist Western New Mexico University in prioritizing and taking action on the important broad challenges and opportunities it faces. From these you may discover your vital immediate priorities, shaping strategies that can lead to a quantum leap in the performance of your institution. Implementing these strategies may call for specific actions, so AQIP's expectation that your institution be engaged in three or four vital Action Projects at all times will help encourage your administrators, faculty, and staff to turn these strategic goals into real accomplishments. Knowing that Western New Mexico University will discuss these strategic issues, give priority to those it concludes are most critical, and take action promptly, the Systems Appraisal Team identified:

- Use of mostly anecdotal examples in response to questions - The systems portfolio reflects, consistently, a general presentation of data, explanation, and information collected informally with reference to formal data-collection strategies. The absence of specifics that clearly address the AQIP questions related to processes, metrics, and use

of the metrics to plan for improvement contributes to a lack of understanding by members of the review team as to what Western New Mexico University is doing and has done with regards to the AQIP process.

- Need for a process approach - There is a need for WNMU to have in place formal structures, clear procedures, and logical policies which guide the university through both the assessment and planning exercises; these structures and procedures should be communicated to all members of the educational community - all stakeholders should have knowledge of a formal structure that the university employs. There are comments throughout the portfolio indicating that "owing to the small size" informal procedures were more effective than structured data-collection procedures. It might be opportune to take advantage of the small size to speed and simplify the decision making process. The primary objective of the AQIP process, however, is to encourage organizations to continuously improve toward becoming a high performance organization. Achieving this requires clarity in the processes by which goals, metrics, and targets are set, services are delivered, process effectiveness is assessed, and improvement plans are made. In the absence of such clarity, the guiding principles of a learning organization that values information, people, foresight, and agility cannot be achieved. Providing such clarity and formalization of processes would enable more effective leadership.
- Consistent reviewer comments - The AQIP Feedback Report (2004) indicate that similar issues were raised. The presentation of general information related to the various questions posed provides little useful communication to stakeholders across the institution as well as to those in the surrounding community. The stakeholders' lack of understanding of the specifics of processes and decision making could hinder WNMU from attaining one of its strategic objectives – "public trust." There is a critical need for the institution and surrounding community, all stakeholders, to have a serious discussion relating to the AQIP process currently in place at WNMU.
- Comparison data with other institutions - There is a lack of comparison data present in the systems portfolio. While it could be challenging to locate appropriate institutions, the use of comparison data can be an important component providing opportunities for the institution to evaluate its performance in the context of other, like institutions.
- Use of institutional culture - WNMU does not address how its institutional culture and infrastructure affect the selection of processes and performance targets. People exist

within both their personal cultures and that of the organization. Consideration of these factors can enhance the decisions made by WNMU as it seeks to improve itself.

- Metrics and data - Many metrics presented in the Systems Portfolio do not appear relevant to the item being discussed. Selection of metrics that are valid measurements of the items being assessed, followed by collection of data for those metrics, can lead WNMU in being a data-driven decision making organization. WNMU operates in an environment of constrained resources, which it identified throughout the Systems Portfolio. There is little discussion and no evidence presented as to how the institution prioritizes its strategies and actions so as to maximize the impact of the limited resources available to it. The use of valid metrics and relevant data in institutional decisions and prioritization of actions based on these data can ensure maximum benefit and improvement within the resources available.

USING THE FEEDBACK REPORT

The AQIP *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report* is intended to initiate action for improvement. It is therefore important that the Report produced by the Systems Appraisal Team stimulate review of organizational processes and systems. Though decisions about specific actions are each institution's, AQIP expects every institution to use its feedback to stimulate cycles of continual improvement. At the next Strategy Forum an AQIP institution attends, its peers will examine in detail how it is using the feedback from its Systems Appraisal.

An organization needs to examine its Report strategically to identify those areas that will yield greatest benefit if addressed. Some key questions that may arise in careful examination of the Report may be: How do the team's findings challenge our assumptions about ourselves? Given our mission and goals, which issues should we focus on? How will we employ results to innovate, grow, and encourage a positive culture of improvement? How will we incorporate lessons learned from this review in our planning and operational processes? How will we revise the *Systems Portfolio* to reflect what we have learned?

How an organization interprets, communicates, and uses its feedback for improvement ought to support AQIP's core values, encouraging involvement, learning, collaboration and integrity. Based solely upon an organization's *Systems Portfolio*, the Report reflects a disciplined,

external review of what an organization says about itself. The report should help an organization identify ways to improve its *Systems Portfolio* so it functions better to communicate accurately to internal and external audiences. But the Report's chief purpose is to help you to identify areas for improvement, and to act so that these areas actually improve. These improvements can then be incorporated into an updated *Systems Portfolio*, guaranteeing that future Systems Appraisals will reflect the progress an institution has made.

Within a year following the Systems Appraisal, an institution participates in another AQIP Strategy Forum, where the focus will be on what the institution has learned from its Appraisal (and from its other methods of identifying and prioritizing improvement opportunities, and what it has concluded are its major strategic priorities for the next few years. AQIP's goal is to help an institution to clarify the strategic issues most vital to its success, and then to support the institution as it addresses these priorities through Action Projects that will make a difference in institutional performance.

CRITICAL CHARACTERISTICS ANALYSIS

The purpose of this section is to identify what team members understood to be the critical and distinguishing characteristics of your institution. They are the shared understanding of the most important aspects of Western New Mexico University, its current dynamics and the forces surrounding it, and its internal momentum and aspirations, at least as team members understood them. This section also demonstrates that the Systems Appraisal Team recognized and knew what makes Western New Mexico University distinctive. Should you find some characteristics that you think are critical and missing from this list, you may want to clarify and highlight these items when you revise your *Systems Portfolio* and other literature explaining your institution to the public.

Item Critical Characteristic

- O1a Western New Mexico University (WNMU) established in 1893 as New Mexico Normal School offering teacher training programs; WNMU is a regional, comprehensive, not-for-profit, public university located in the mountain community of Silver City, New Mexico. WNMU serves as the business and financial center for a vast four-county area extending west to Arizona and south to Mexico.

- O1b WNMU's mission stresses responsibility for its multi-cultural, multi-lingual population, as well as affordability, accessibility, pre-eminence of teaching, and professional growth of employees. WNMU's core values include pre-eminence of teaching and learning, "personal touch" with students, respect for people, integrity, and continuous improvement.
- O2a Key organizational services aligned with the WNMU mission are provided to students and other stakeholders. These services are designed to support student learning and address the needs of the communities served by WNMU. WNMU provides various opportunities to external stakeholders including specific programming, Miller Library access, multicultural programs and events, and website access. WNMU offers graduate programs in education fields, counseling, social work, business and occupational therapy. Interdisciplinary Studies is offered as an online degree.
- O2b Six distinctive objectives identified are: Scholarship, Quality of Environment, Diversity, Building Public Trust, Quality Practices, Economic and Community Development.
- O2c WNMU is accredited by several local and national boards and offers a Bachelor and Masters in Business and bachelors in Nursing. WNMU offers masters degrees in a variety of teaching specialties. WNMU has several programs that are recognized by national accreditation organizations including: National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP), International Economic Development Council (IEDC), National League of Nursing (NLNAC), Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) and National Academy of Early Childhood Programs (NAECP).
- O2d WNMU provides a variety of learning-centered delivery options including in-class learning, project-based learning, field experiences, and classroom assessment. In addition, the university has developed options for ITV and online learning using Blackboard-Vista and Mustang Express (ME).
- O3 Primary competitors include nearby institutions, on-line universities, and local organizations and employers.
- O4a An AQIP Action Project was formed in 2007 to address the creation of a human resources plan. Accreditation factors, improvement efforts, program considerations,

financial resources, and traditions of higher education determine the organization of the work areas. The Human Resources (HR) Action Team has identified gaps in critical areas and is drafting policies and procedures.

- O4b WNMU employs 106 faculty (excluding adjuncts), 282 staff, 519 student workers, and 60-80 adjunct faculty members. WNMU uses unpaid volunteers in WILL, WNMU call center, and “other areas of the campus.”
- O5a Board of Regents (BOR) is responsible for governance. BOR includes four members plus a student regent. WNMU leadership and New Mexico political leadership serve in an *ex-officio* capacity. There is a statewide coordination of higher education through New Mexico HED. The BOR ensures that WNMU has an effective President, an appropriate vision and mission and sets general policies.
- O5b The strategic plan was developed for 2009-2012 that addresses a broad variety of needs. The strategic planning process provides deliberate opportunities for informing stakeholders and receiving feedback from these groups on a regular basis.
- O6 The strategic plan includes specific items that address support services: meet or exceed support needs of students, implementation of a student complaint process, evaluate and improve supplier relationship that impact student learning experience, expand the curricular and extracurricular activities to all campuses, promote cultural awareness, improve the First Year Experience activities.
- O7a Data collection and distribution occurs on many levels and is administered by the Office of Data Analysis and Research and is charged to ensure reliability and validity of all data obtained from the SCT Banner system.
- O8a The most significant challenge facing WNMU is cost containment to accommodate financial crisis and budget reductions without compromising quality; a top priority for WNMU is allocation of “scarce resources” to support student learning and support services. The economic climate and budget shortfalls are major constraints to WNMU’s continued enrollment growth and meeting the needs of the expanding population of students.
- O8b WNMU has established a comprehensive vision for 2012, which when attained, positions the institution in the national market as a teaching-focused university. WNMU has

historic collaborative relationships with the south west and international higher education institutions, P-12 schools, health care and business organizations.

- O9a Management of partnership priorities is centralized through the SPP, the President's cabinet, and the SEAT.
- O9b There exist a broad variety of collaborative relationships with local and statewide groups that are used to reinforce the institution's mission. WNMU has detailed its partnerships and collaborations both external and internal.

CATEGORY FEEDBACK

In the following sections, each of which deals with strengths and opportunities for improvement for one of the nine AQIP Categories, selected *Critical Characteristics* are again highlighted, those the Systems Appraisal Team believed were critical keys to reviewing that particular AQIP Category. The symbols used in these "strengths and opportunities" sections for each Category stand for *outstanding strength* (SS), *strength* (S), *opportunity for improvement* (O) and *pressing or outstanding opportunity for improvement* (OO). The choice of symbol for each item represents the consensus evaluation of the Systems Appraisal Team members, and deserves your thoughtful consideration. Comments marked SS or OO may need immediate attention, either to ensure the institution preserves and maximizes the value of its greatest strengths, or to devote immediate attention to its greatest opportunities for improvement.

AQIP CATEGORY 1: HELPING STUDENTS LEARN

Helping Students Learn identifies the shared purpose of all higher education organizations, and is accordingly the pivot of any institutional analysis. This Category focuses on the teaching-learning process within a formal instructional context, yet also addresses how your entire institution contributes to helping students learn and overall student development. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to learning objectives, mission-driven student learning and development, intellectual climate, academic programs and courses, student preparation, key issues such as technology and diversity, program and course delivery, faculty and staff roles, teaching and learning effectiveness, course sequencing and scheduling,

learning and co-curricular support, student assessment, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Western New Mexico University that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its *Systems Portfolio* section covering Category 1, Helping Students Learn:

Item Critical Characteristic

- O1a Western New Mexico University (WNMU) established in 1893 as New Mexico Normal School offering teacher training programs; WNMU is a regional, comprehensive, not-for-profit, public university located in the mountain community of Silver City, New Mexico. WNMU serves as the business and financial center for a vast four-county area extending west to Arizona and south to Mexico.
- O1b WNMU's mission stresses responsibility for its multi-cultural, multi-lingual population, as well as affordability, accessibility, pre-eminence of teaching, and professional growth of employees. WNMU's core values include pre-eminence of teaching and learning, "personal touch" with students, respect for people, integrity, and continuous improvement.
- O2a Key organizational services aligned with the WNMU mission are provided to students and other stakeholders. These services are designed to support student learning and address the needs of the communities served by WNMU. WNMU provides various opportunities to external stakeholders including specific programming, Miller Library access, multicultural programs and events, and website access. WNMU offers graduate programs in education fields, counseling, social work, business and occupational therapy. Interdisciplinary Studies is offered as an online degree.
- O2b Six distinctive objectives identified: Scholarship, Quality of Environment, Diversity, Building Public Trust, Quality Practices, Economic and Community Development.
- O2c WNMU is accredited by several local and national boards and offers a Bachelor and Masters in Business and bachelors in Nursing. WNMU offers masters degrees in a variety of teaching specialties. WNMU has several programs that are recognized by national accreditation organizations including: National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs

(ACBSP), International Economic Development Council (IEDC), National League of Nursing (NLNAC), Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) and National Academy of Early Childhood Programs (NAECP).

- O2d WNMU provides a variety of learning-centered delivery options including in-class learning, project-based learning, field experiences, and classroom assessment. In addition, the university has developed options for ITV and online learning using Blackboard-Vista and Mustang Express (ME).
- O4b WNMU employs 106 faculty (excluding adjuncts), 282 staff, 519 student workers, and 60-80 adjunct faculty members. WNMU uses unpaid volunteers in WILL, WNMU call center, and "other areas of the campus."
- O8b WNMU has established a comprehensive vision for 2012, which when attained, positions the institution in the national market as a teaching-focused university. WNMU has historic collaborative relationships with the south west and international higher education institutions, P-12 schools, health care and business organizations.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as [Institution]'s most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 1, Helping Students Learn.

Item	S/O	Comment
1P1	OO	WNMU describes its philosophy and breadth of offerings as regards general education curriculum. It could strengthen the process by documenting how it determines which common and shared objectives should be required of all students and the persons involved in making those decisions. Process documentation will help ensure a unified, cohesive, and consistent approach.
1P2a	S	WNMU utilizes the requirements of program accreditors and certificate sponsors as guidance for program objectives for those programs it offers for which such bodies exist.
1P2b	O	It is not evident from the materials provided the process by which the institution determines program objectives for programs for which

accreditation standards are not available. Documentation of the process by which objectives for these programs are determined would ensure that such objectives receive input and oversight from affected constituencies.

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| 1P3a | S | WNMU has a robust process of market scanning to identify the need for new programs. |
| 1P3b | S | The new program approval process originates with faculty and there is a governance structure for review and approval. |
| 1P3c | O | It is not evident from the materials provided how the institution validates the competitiveness of proposed programs with comparable programs at its competitors. |
| 1P4a | S | WNMU uses market research in combination with stakeholder feedback to assess how closely its programs meet student career needs and employer expectations. |
| 1P4b | O | WNMU may find it valuable to incorporate the experience of those who have completed its programs to gather information on the extent to which the program did or did not meet the completer's career need. |
| 1P5 | S | WNMU utilizes multiple approaches to assess student learning preparedness including COMPASS for placement of reading, writing, and mathematics skill development in combination with ACT/SAT scores. |
| 1P6a | S | WNMU utilizes multiple channels of communication to convey to students the required preparation, learning, and development objectives. |
| 1P6b | O | Although WNMU indicates that its admissions and other student support functions communicate expectations to students; the nature of this process is not discussed. Specification of how this is accomplished could lead to opportunities for improvement. |
| 1P6c | SS | WNMU provides feedback to its feeder schools as to placement scores of transferred students. This provides those schools an opportunity to improve the learning outcomes of their students. |

1P7a	S	WNMU utilizes multiple approaches to assist students to select appropriate courses of study.
1P7b	S	Student advising is a high profile function with the P/VPAA providing monthly training sessions during the fall and spring semesters.
1P8a	SS	Implementation of the outcomes of an AQIP Action Project resulted in the hiring of a Coordinator of Writing and a Coordinator of Mathematics.
1P8b	S	WNMU has implemented multiple programs to assist students to bridge the gap between their current preparation and that needed for academic success.
1P9a	S	WNMU utilizes multiple approaches to assess student learning styles.
1P9b	O	Faculty adaptation to differing student learning styles is presently ad hoc. WNMU has an opportunity to strengthen faculty adaptation to student learning styles through a defined process that guides faculty so as to help faculty understand alternative teaching strategies and to choose strategies likely to be effective.
1P10	SS	WNMU addresses the needs of handicapped, senior, and commuter students through its approach to ADA compliance through its Office of Special Needs that provides a broad range of services, special tuition rates to improve affordability for students, and course scheduling that recognizes student work commitments.
1P11a	S	WNMU communicates its expectations for effective teaching and learning through rubrics and through standardization of syllabi. Teaching expectations established by accrediting and program approval bodies are utilized in setting local expectations.
1P11b	O	As identified by WNMU, it has an opportunity to take the lessons learned and processes used in what it terms "more mature" programs (e.g., SOE) and to use those to improve less mature programs.
1P12a	S	WNMU utilizes face-to-face, web based, and ITV modalities, singly and in combination, to deliver classes. It provides both technical and academic support of each modality.

- 1P12b O WNMU utilizes Blackboard-Vista, Mustang Express, and its web portal for the delivery of web based courses. The Quality Matters Standards (www.qualitymatters.org) provide researched best practices in the delivery of online courses. Incorporation of these standards into its web based course delivery could improve the effectiveness of these courses.
- 1P13 S WNMU utilizes multiple approaches to ensuring currency of curricula including advisory committees, input from alumni and other stakeholders, and other input sources.
- 1P14 O Although WNMU utilizes faculty input for program changes and discontinuance, the institution does not describe the criteria and process by which such decisions are evaluated. It discusses the approval of such proposals through its governance structure and the Board of Regents. Establishing and documenting the criteria and process for evaluation for such decisions may help to ensure objective and consistent decisions.
- 1P15a S WNMU reports that it utilizes multiple approaches to assess student learning and development needs.
- 1P15b O Although WNMU provides instruction through multiple modalities, it is not evident from the information provided how it addresses learning support needs including tutoring, libraries, laboratories, and other support. A strong learning support system helps students to improve learning outcomes.
- 1P16 S WNMU offers a variety of co-curricular activities that offer opportunities to students to strengthen life skills and to expand on reinforce academic knowledge through involvement with professional organizations,
- 1P17 O Although WNMU requires all degree candidates to fulfill program requirements, it does not describe a process for assessing that students have met program objectives and outcomes before the degree is awarded. Summative assessment of attainment of program requirements will ensure that degrees awarded reflect the rigor expected by WNMU.

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| 1P18 | O | Although WNMU describes the process by which it sets learning outcomes and objectives, it does not describe the process by which it assesses student attainment of those outcomes and objectives. Ensuring an effective and valid assessment process can inform WNMU as to student learning success and provide a mechanism to identify opportunities to strengthen student learning. |
| 1R1 | O | WNMU reports that each year departments report assessment activities and it identifies multiple assessment instruments. It does not report representative results of these assessments. Representative results would provide context for the success of student learning and development at WNMU. |
| 1R2a | O | WNMU identifies student retention as a metric. It reports that its retention rate decreased by 5% from 2003 to 2007. It has established an Office of Data Analysis and Research to identify causal factors that can lead to improvement actions. Completion of this initiative may improve student outcomes and retention. |
| 1R2b | S | Utilization of the Writing Center increased from 2007 to 2008. |
| 1R2c | O | WNMU states that a majority of its students take its Developmental Mathematics course. It does not report the improvement in student mathematics skills. To assess the success of the Developmental Mathematics course, it should assess the extent of improvement. Results of that assessment can be used to validate the effectiveness of the course. |
| 1R3a | SS | The data provided for WNMU's Chemical Dependency and Business/Economics programs documents the success of students in these programs. |
| 1R3b | O | Although WNMU reports incoming data for teacher candidates, it does not report comparable data at completion. Measuring the learning attainment of these students while at WNMU can inform it as to the success of its program and identify opportunities to further strengthen it. |

- 1R3c ○ WNMU reports a 70% first time pass rate for RN licensure. Absent comparison to the pass rate on the exam of all takers, whether 70% represents strong performance cannot be ascertained. Comparative pass rates could inform WNMU as to the strengths and weaknesses of its program.
- 1R4 ○ Although WNMU reports how it gathers evidence that students have gained the knowledge expected by employers and other stake holders, it does not report the results. The referenced table, 1R3.1, does not address post graduation competencies. Tables 1R3.2-3, also referenced, do not reflect employer feedback about graduates' job preparedness. Utilization of data from employers and other stakeholders can help validate that students have gained the knowledge sought by them.
- 1R5a ○ Figure 6P4.1, referenced, is not found. Figure 9R2.3 "Career Services Employment Survey Results" addresses survey response rates but does not provide survey results. Figure 6R2.3, library service, provides data on utilization but does not inform as to how student learning is affected. Item 7I2 does not discuss how these IT improvements affected student learning outcomes. Assessing how initiatives affect student learning outcomes can inform WNMU about how to continue to improve these activities.
- 1R5b ○ Figure 1R5.1 presents evidence that the Mental Health Services were utilized. No data is presented to indicate how 2008 utilization compares to prior years, nor are data presented that indicate the effectiveness of the services provided. Assessment of program effectiveness may inform WNMU as to how to further improve these services.
- 1R6 ○ WNMU reports it has developed an in-state list of peer institutions and has begun to develop a "scorecard" to compare itself to peers. Completion of this initiative can inform WNMU as to its strengths and opportunities to improve.
- 1I1a ○ WNMU reports a number of initiatives for improvement. No results of these initiatives are reported as to the extent they improved student

- learning. Identification of the outcomes can inform WNMU as to how to attain further improvements in these or other areas.
- 111b S WNMU reports that its processes for helping students learn are aligned with the expectations of program accrediting bodies.
- 111c O WNMU reports that the SPP and WNMU By The Numbers initiatives will “further systematize” its processes of capturing and disseminating performance. Completion of these initiatives can provide WNMU data that can be used to strengthen its student learning outcomes.
- 112 O Although WNMU discusses how it identifies opportunities to improve teaching and student learning, it does not address how its institutional culture informs on and its infrastructure influences these decisions. Explicit consideration of these factors can help to ensure objectivity in selection and prioritization of initiatives so as to maximize their affect on student learning.

AQIP CATEGORY 2: ACCOMPLISHING OTHER DISTINCTIVE OBJECTIVES

Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives addresses the processes that contribute to the achievement of your institution’s major objectives that complement student learning and fulfill other portions of your mission. Depending on your institution’s character, it examines your institution's processes and systems related to identification of other distinctive objectives, alignment of other distinctive objectives, faculty and staff roles, assessment and review of objectives, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Western New Mexico University that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its *Systems Portfolio* section covering Category 2, Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives:

Item Critical Characteristic

- O1b WNMU's mission stresses responsibility for its multi-cultural, multi-lingual population, as well as affordability, accessibility, pre-eminence of teaching, and professional growth of

employees. WNMU's core values include pre-eminence of teaching and learning, "personal touch" with students, respect for people, integrity, and continuous improvement.

- O2a Key organizational services aligned with the WNMU mission are provided to students and other stakeholders. These services are designed to support student learning and address the needs of the communities served by WNMU. WNMU provides various opportunities to external stakeholders including specific programming, Miller Library access, multicultural programs and events, and website access. WNMU offers graduate programs in education fields, counseling, social work, business and occupational therapy. Interdisciplinary Studies is offered as an online degree.
- O2b Six distinctive objectives identified: Scholarship, Quality of Environment, Diversity, Building Public Trust, Quality Practices, Economic and Community Development.
- O5b The strategic plan was developed for 2009-2012 that addresses a broad variety of needs. The strategic planning process provides deliberate opportunities for informing stakeholders and receiving feedback from these groups on a regular basis.
- O6 The strategic plan includes specific items that address support services: meet or exceed support needs of students, implementation of a student complaint process, evaluate and improve supplier relationship that impact student learning experience, expand the curricular and extracurricular activities to all campuses, promote cultural awareness, improve the First Year Experience activities.
- O9b There exist a broad variety of collaborative relationships with local and statewide groups that are used to reinforce the institution's mission. WNMU has detailed its partnerships and collaborations both external and internal.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Western New Mexico University's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 2, Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives.

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
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| 2P1a | S | WNMU has included students in the fiscal decision making process for classroom furniture renewal and IT upgrades. By including students in these decisions, |
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- which directly impact both their learning experience and their expenses, WNMU is giving students a first-hand opportunity to learn about business decisions.
- 2P1b OO The systems portfolio does not provide details about processes used to design and manage the non-instructional processes. A thorough development and documentation of such processes will enable WNMU to progress in its stated goal of focusing on continuous improvement of processes and practices.
- 2P2 S The Institutional Advancement Committee (IAC) determines objectives from feedback obtained from stakeholders; information is gained using a variety of methods (surveys, website comments, event evaluation forms, and informal manners).
- 2P3 O Expectations relating to objectives are communicated primarily in an informal manner; there is a need to have a more formal method for communicating objectives and related expectations across the institution.
- 2P4 OO WNMU provides various methods for assessing and reviewing non-instructional objectives; however, there is not a consistent and concentrated method for assessment and review by one group, or one individual. Having a group, and/or an individual possessing this responsibility could provide a consistent method for monitoring the various forms of information collected.
- 2P5 OO The figure (Figure 2P5.1) provides valuable information; however, it is unclear how this information is used to determine faculty and staff needs relative to non-instructional objectives and operations. There is a need to provide more specifics relating to how the institution addresses this question.
- 2P6 O The Strategic Planning Process (SPP) and operational plans are the processes WNMU documents for incorporating faculty and staff needs; however, WNMU does not provide any specifics. Detailing a systematic process by which information is evaluated and decisions are made will ensure that the changes in objectives and processes are consistent with WNMU's mission and strategy and consistent over time.
- 2R1 O The list of objectives and examples by which WNMU measures other distinctive objectives is insightful. The use of C, D, and E provides WNMU with a clear

picture of where they can easily improve. It is not evident why no plan is suggested to collect and use the data designated with an "E," indicating that they are measured easily.

- 2R1 O WNMU lists a number of measures but it is not clear that they reflect the objectives described in Figure 1P1-6.
- 2R2a O Although WNMU has some goals relative to gender equity in athletics, it continues to work on providing equitable opportunities for participation overall. The establishment of a Gender Equity Committee may provide additional direction and support for the Athletics Department.
- 2R2b OO The portfolio does not provide data for many of the measures listed in Figure 2R1.1. More rigorous gathering and analysis of data, especially in the areas of scholarship, environment, diversity, community development, and service are essential to planning for improvement of non-instructional objectives and processes.
- 2R3 O WNMU provides some internal longitudinal comparisons and limited external benchmarking amongst other state institutions but has opportunity to increase both internal and external comparisons.
- 2R4 O WNMU does not provide specific measures of curricular and co-curricular learning experiences that result from the Distinctive Objectives described earlier in the portfolio.
- 2I1 OO WNMU identifies a number of improvements made in this category; however, there does not appear to be any systematic processes used to effectively analyze the data and drive the decisions with respect to the changes as well as to set targets. Developing and documenting such processes would help WNMU ensure that it makes changes that are evidence-based.
- 2I2a S The SPP, President's Cabinet, and SEAT provide the infrastructure in which decisions about non-instructional objectives are made. The method of collecting informal, and sometimes formal, feedback from internal stakeholders and the local constituents drives the data that are used to make decisions.

- 212b O Although WNMU describes how it determines its needs, it does not discuss how its institutional culture affects these decisions. Clarification as to how its institutional culture and infrastructure affect its decisions and resources allocations can provide insight into the most effective use of its constrained resources.

AQIP CATEGORY 3: UNDERSTANDING STUDENTS' AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS' NEEDS

Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs examines how your institution works actively to understand student and other stakeholder needs. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to student and stakeholder identification, student and stakeholder requirements, analysis of student and stakeholder needs, relationship building with students and stakeholders, complaint collection, analysis, and resolution, determining satisfaction of students and stakeholders, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Western New Mexico University that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 3, Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs:

Item Critical Characteristic

- O1b WNMU's mission stresses responsibility for its multi-cultural, multi-lingual population, as well as affordability, accessibility, pre-eminence of teaching, and professional growth of employees. WNMU's core values include pre-eminence of teaching and learning, "personal touch" with students, respect for people, integrity, and continuous improvement.
- O2a Key organizational services aligned with the WNMU mission are provided to students and other stakeholders. These services are designed to support student learning and address the needs of the communities served by WNMU. WNMU provides various opportunities to external stakeholders including specific programming, Miller Library access, multicultural programs and events, and website access. WNMU offers graduate

programs in education fields, counseling, social work, business and occupational therapy. Interdisciplinary Studies is offered as an online degree.

- O2b Six distinctive objectives identified: Scholarship, Quality of Environment, Diversity, Building Public Trust, Quality Practices, Economic and Community Development.
- O5b The strategic plan was developed for 2009-2012 that addresses a broad variety of needs. The strategic planning process provides deliberate opportunities for informing stakeholders and receiving feedback from these groups on a regular basis.
- O6 The strategic plan includes specific items that address support services: meet or exceed support needs of students, implementation of a student complaint process, evaluate and improve supplier relationship that impact student learning experience, expand the curricular and extracurricular activities to all campuses, promote cultural awareness, improve the First Year Experience activities.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Western New Mexico University's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 3, Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs.

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
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| 3P1a | S | WNMU appears to have a comprehensive set of processes in place to identify the changing needs of students. The use of integrated data by the VPAA/P and the Director of Data Analysis and Research should help to provide WNMU with a clear picture of student needs. |
| 3P1b | O | Although WNMU has a variety of methods for identifying and analyzing the changing needs of students groups, it is unclear how these methods may vary by the various student groups (multiple campuses, non-traditional students, and online) |
| 3P2 | S | WNMU has a number of processes it uses to build and maintain relationships with students. Some of these include recruitment activities, orientation activities, dual enrollment courses, parents' programs, and campus visits. In addition, the University also uses the newly created Student Success Seminar, faculty-student |

- career services, relationship building, multicultural awareness activities, counseling and tutoring.
- 3P3 S WNMU describes a variety of ways it analyzes and responds to changing stakeholder needs. WNMU includes its students, alumni, the community, and business leaders in its informal and formal data gathering.
- 3P4 S The University outlines the various stakeholder relationship-building activities and listening posts in Figure 3P4.1. The information is gathered and integrated into the Strategic Planning Process.
- 3P5 OO Although WNMU surveys current students, recent graduates, and alumni and communicates with the local community and state representatives, it is not clear how these contacts and surveys help WNMU identify potentially new student or stakeholder groups. Clarification of the process by which it makes these determinations can improve the effectiveness in identifying groups to target and better focus resources on groups that may provide the best return to WNMU and/or its community.
- 3P6 OO WNMU has both formal and informal processes in place for collecting complaint information from students but has no formal process for external stakeholders and lists few mechanisms for analyzing data to provide feedback.
- 3R1 O WNMU lists some national and internal survey instruments for student satisfaction but it is not clear how well they measure other stakeholder needs from the table of mechanisms provided.
- 3R2a S The N-L survey indicates that the students are generally more satisfied with academic offerings and mentoring.
- 3R2b O The student satisfaction is low on fees, sufficiency of courses, and administration availability; since no trend data is provided for the N-L survey (and the NSSE data is relatively stable between 2004 and 2006), it is difficult to determine how these results reflect changes made in the processes.
- 3R3 O WNMU provides the Graduating Senior Survey data as evidence of building relationships with students but provides no other performance results.

- 3R4a S Satisfaction with new staff orientation has improved between 2007 and 2008; Enrollment (online, dual, graduate, geographic) has increased in the past year indirectly indicating satisfaction with the stakeholder groups - public schools and potential students.
- 3R4b O Although WNMU identified measures for other stakeholders – employers, community, parents, and alumni, it provides no data for these measures. Gathering and analyzing such information would enable WNMU to identify improvements in contacts with these groups.
- 3R5 S WNMU demonstrated its ability to serve displaced workers in a timely way by offering specific areas of concentration and offering campus services to ensure their enrollment. In this way, the workers could be ready and available to take courses in areas of interest and be job ready.
- 3R6 O WNMU provides only comparative student satisfaction results and only with other New Mexico institution and recognizes the opportunity to develop more comparative results.
- 3I1 S WNMU provides a list of improvement items that are focused on improving the understanding of stakeholders' needs.
- 3I2 O WNMU does not appear to have a specific process to systematically select targets for improved performance. Citing "agility" as its greatest strength for one of two needs in a decade does not clearly speak to the processes needed on an on-going basis to support a university.

AQIP CATEGORY 4: VALUING PEOPLE

Valuing People explores your institution's commitment to the development of your employees since the efforts of all of your faculty, staff, and administrators are required for institutional success. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to work and job environment; workforce needs; training initiatives; job competencies and characteristics; recruitment, hiring, and retention practices; work processes and activities; training and development; personnel evaluation; recognition, reward, compensation, and benefits; motivation

factors; satisfaction, health and safety, and well-being; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Western New Mexico University that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 4, Valuing People:

Item Critical Characteristic

- O1b WNMU's mission stresses responsibility for its multi-cultural, multi-lingual population, as well as affordability, accessibility, pre-eminence of teaching, and professional growth of employees. WNMU's core values include pre-eminence of teaching and learning, "personal touch" with students, respect for people, integrity, and continuous improvement.
- O4a An AQIP Action Project was formed in 2007 to address the creation of a human resources plan. Accreditation factors, improvement efforts, program considerations, financial resources, and traditions of higher education determine the organization of the work areas. The Human Resources (HR) Action Team has identified gaps in critical areas and is drafting policies and procedures.
- O4b WNMU employs 106 faculty (excluding adjuncts), 282 staff, 519 student workers, and 60-80 adjunct faculty members. WNMU uses unpaid volunteers in WILL, WNMU call center, and "other areas of the campus."

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Western New Mexico University's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 4, Valuing People.

Item S/O Comment

- 4P1a S WNMU identifies the Vice Presidents as the persons in charge of working with units to determine specific credentials, skills, and values required for faculty, staff, and administrators. WNMU also uses the SPP, Chairs Council, Academic Council, Faculty and Staff Budget Committee, program reviews, and involvement of discipline administrators, faculty, and staff to identify the credentials and skills needed for positions they wish to fill.

- 4P1b O The need for hiring new personnel seems to be directed by units rather than through a centralized process. This may result in an inconsistency in job descriptions and pay scales. Although information is passed through multiple levels of planning to identify needs, it is not clear how the information is analyzed to elicit clear needs of skills and credentials and lessen duplication of effort. Human Resources does not appear to have a central role in the University for the review of positions or credentials for staff to be recruited or hired. The Affirmative Action process is not described as it relates to a consistent process across units of the University. A more formal process and documentation of the analyses and decision making are needed. The implementation of a Human Resources manual can provide the consistency appropriate to ensure non-discriminatory hiring of appropriately qualified persons and more thorough recruitment and hiring processes.
- 4P2a S The interview process is used to measure the credentials of the individuals against predetermined criteria. The institution uses standard employment procedures for determining the credentials of new employees. Open forums are one tool used to interview for management level positions. Faculty rank is determined at the time of hire using a variety of background information. Several screening committee inputs are provided to the hiring supervisor.
- 4P2b O It is not clear how the hiring processes are designed and evaluated to ensure that the persons employed actually possess the requisite qualifications. Evaluation of achievements of the goals in past hiring processes and the use of such information to improve the hiring process could help enhance the quality of hires.
- 4P3a S WNMU uses appropriate methods for recruiting and hiring faculty, staff, and/or administrators. The institution also has a system in place for advertising and hiring new employees.
- 4P3b O Other than the priority given to internal candidates, equity in the distribution of skills, and a competitive benefit package, there is little focus

on retention of employees. WNMU could benefit from identifying the organization culture and infrastructure factors that give satisfaction to the employees and promote these factors to improve retention of its employees.

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| 4P4a | S | WNMU employs standard and comprehensive methods for orienting new hires to the history, mission, and values of the institution. These methods also include mentoring for new employees. Orientation also includes information about AQIP accreditation process and the AQIP Action Projects. |
| 4P4b | O | Although there is a focus on orienting new employees to the organization's mission and values, there is little done to reiterate these values for all employees. A systematic process that clearly links work processes and decision making to WNMU's values and mission would not only provide a reminder, but also ensure that these values are incorporated in the work performed. |
| 4P5a | S | The annual budget process and the SPP are used to consider needs for additional personnel and prioritize these needs. Administrators, faculty, and staff are included in this process at multiple levels of the organization. |
| 4P5b | O | It is clear that WNMU explicitly considers need for additional faculty and staff in its planning process. It is not clear, however, how WNMU considers changes needed in skill levels of current personnel to meet its strategic objectives. Explicitly identifying the changes in skills needed will help ensure that the organization has the appropriate skill sets at different units and levels to support its strategic objectives. |
| 4P5c | O | There does not appear to be a succession plan in place for critical positions. Given the location of the institution and the limitations of its local workforce, having a succession plan for critical positions would provide a formal mechanism to ensure that unexpected vacancies in key positions can be quickly covered, either on an interim basis, or as a planned permanent replacement, by a trained and knowledgeable person. |

- 4P6 OO Work processes appear to be designed locally and on an *ad hoc* basis. A systematic approach to process design that incorporates benchmarked best practices could improve WNMU's work process effectiveness and efficiency and contribute to employee satisfaction.
- 4P7a S WNMU has in place a variety of policies and practices intended to communicate ethical expectations to employees. The "zero-tolerance" policy emphasizes the seriousness with which leadership views this issue. Senior leaders are responsible for assuring that the environment conforms to legal requirements. State mandated training is provided and required annually.
- 4P7b O WNMU does not describe a process by which it proactively seeks to verify the ethical practices of employees. Its approach appears reactive rather than proactive. Implementation of a proactive approach to identifying ethical breaches can help leadership ensure that the expected standards of ethical behavior are, in fact, being followed and any deviations are promptly identified and addressed before major consequences occur.
- 4P8a S Because of its small size, training and resources for all is provided and available for everyone. Survey data is used to identify needs. The AQIP participation is credited with identifying needs and implementing programs to address these needs.
- 4P8b OO Various methods are used to determine training needs; however, there exists a need to develop a clear process and/or set of procedures to aid in the development of training needs. WMNU provides anecdotal examples of how identification of training needs strengthens its services. It, however, appears that this link is not considered explicitly and systematically when identifying specific training needs. Such consideration could enable WNMU to use scarce resources more efficiently as it tries to meet its objectives for instructional and non-instructional services. Establishment of a more formal process could assist with multi-year planning for training of employees and assurance that training is consistent with institutional strategies.

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| 4P9a | S | WNMU describes a variety of professional development activities for staff and administrators and is utilizing an AQIP Action Project to develop additional opportunities. |
| 4P9b | O | There appears to be no systematic process used to evaluate training needs, training options, and the effectiveness of the training resources used. Further, WNMU does not describe a structured process for faculty development. Although some training is offered to faculty in Blackboard and online course development, and in instructional technology, the institution does not appear to offer pedagogical training to faculty nor does it describe faculty opportunities for other professional development. A structured approach to faculty development is important to improving student learning outcomes and faculty satisfaction. |
| 4P10a | O | WNMU does not share the process it uses for designing and modifying the evaluation system. Clarifying such a process could lead to planned improvements of the system and further improve staff, faculty, and administration contribution to achieving WNMU's objectives. Such a process view could also enable WNMU to consider formative development as opposed to a summative focus and thus link evaluation to professional development. |
| 4P10b | O | WNMU has identified the need to ensure that all staff members are, in fact, evaluated at least annually. Implementation of an annual performance evaluation for each staff member can ensure that staff is provided performance feedback and an opportunity to rectify any identified performance issues. |
| 4P11a | S | WNMU provides multiple opportunities for employee recognition and awards. Faculty and staff are recognized and rewarded for high achievement and innovation through various awards such as teacher of the year, employee of the month, and online pioneers. The "Online Academy Awards" initiative exemplifies alignment of awards to initiatives. |
| 4P11b | O | WNMU does not discuss the process it uses for designing and modifying its recognition, reward, compensation, and benefit systems or how these |

systems are aligned with its instructional and non-instructional objectives. Clarifying such a process could lead to planned improvements of the system and further improve staff, faculty, and administration contribution to achieving WNMU's objectives.

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| 4P12a | S | WNMU has in place processes that address employee motivation. These can involve direct or indirect communication, as well as the use of rewards and benefits. For faculty these can include faculty retreats, classroom visitations and student evaluations. |
| 4P12b | OO | WNMU uses informal processes, its formal planning process, and retreats to discuss issues of concern for its staff and faculty. However, the key issues described around motivation do not appear to be about motivation at all. WNMU should spend some time examining the elements it currently sees as motivators against known theories of motivation before determining that assessment and quality are motivators. Addressing issues central to motivation of staff and faculty will contribute to the institution's advancement and quality improvement for Valuing People. |
| 4P13a | S | Information gained from the strategic planning process and feedback from faculty and staff governance activities are used to make determinations related to employee satisfaction, health and safety, and well-being. The SWOT analysis provides feedback for leadership concerning weaknesses. WNMU has implemented a number of initiatives involving employee health and well being based on emergent situations. |
| 4P13c | OO | WNMU uses informal processes, its formal planning process, and retreats to discuss issues related to personnel satisfaction, well-being, and safety. WNMU, however, does not describe the systematic process used to determine level of satisfaction of its personnel, nor does it discuss the process used to analyze the information currently collected to identify key issues and select a course of action. The gathering and analysis of information would enable WNMU to more effectively improve the satisfaction of its employees. |

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| 4R1 | O | The SPP provides procedures to gain consistent feedback on strengths and weakness related to valuing people. WNMU describes the mechanisms by which it collects employee feedback but not the measures collected. For example, data are not provided on the satisfaction surveys. A systematic approach to data collection that focuses on the critical metrics can inform WNMU and enhance data-driven decisions. |
| 4R2 | OO | A single measure – number of grievances for a consolidated 5-year period – is provided. WNMU does not present performance results in valuing people. Metrics and targets are necessary to measure performance. Establishment of metrics and targets will allow WNMU to measure its performance, which in turn will inform it as to opportunities for improvement. |
| 4R3b | OO | WNMU provides a number of indicators for effectiveness; however, all of the indicators are indirect measures and there is no evidence presented to link these measures to specific processes associated with faculty, staff, or administrators. The use of evidence, derived from data, to identify opportunities for improvement could strengthen the institution. |
| 4R4b | OO | WNMU recognizes the need to develop benchmarks and comparison data. WNMU is challenged to compare its results in Valuing People to its peer institutions. Although diversity metrics have a purpose, they are not direct evidence of valuing people. WNMU should consider coordinating with peer institutions to develop common instruments by which cross-institutional comparisons can be made. WNMU can benefit by benchmarking best practices at other institutions. |
| 4I1 | S | WNMU uses an AQIP People First Team to demonstrate the institution's commitment to valuing people before they are hired. WNMU reports success in improving its new staff orientation, evidenced by participant evaluation scores. |
| 4I2a | O | WNMU provides a list of processes to improve and sustain the welfare, morale, and effectiveness of its employees. However, WNMU does not |

address how its institutional culture and infrastructure affect its selection of processes and performance targets as regards Valuing People. People exist within both their personal cultures and that of the organization. Consideration of these factors can enhance the decisions made by WNMU as it seeks to improve itself in this area.

AQIP CATEGORY 5: LEADING AND COMMUNICATING

Leading And Communicating addresses how your institution's leadership and communication structures, networks, and processes guide your institution in setting directions, making decisions, seeking future opportunities, and building and sustaining a learning environment. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to leading activities, communicating activities, alignment of leadership system practices, institutional values and expectations, direction setting, future opportunity seeking, decision making, use of data, leadership development and sharing, succession planning, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Western New Mexico University that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 5, Leading and Communicating:

Item Critical Characteristic

- O1b WNMU's mission stresses responsibility for its multi-cultural, multi-lingual population, as well as affordability, accessibility, pre-eminence of teaching, and professional growth of employees. WNMU's core values include pre-eminence of teaching and learning, "personal touch" with students, respect for people, integrity, and continuous improvement.
- O2b Six distinctive objectives identified: Scholarship, Quality of Environment, Diversity, Building Public Trust, Quality Practices, Economic and Community Development.
- O5a Board of Regents (BOR) is responsible for governance. BOR includes four members plus a student regent. WNMU leadership and New Mexico political leadership serve in an *ex-officio* capacity. There is a statewide coordination of higher education through

New Mexico HED. The BOR ensures that WNMU has an effective President, an appropriate vision and mission and sets general policies.

- O5b The strategic plan was developed for 2009-2012 that addresses a broad variety of needs. The strategic planning process provides deliberate opportunities for informing stakeholders and receiving feedback from these groups on a regular basis.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Western New Mexico University's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 5, Leading and Communicating.

Item S/O Comment

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| 5P1a | S | The Strategic Planning Process (SPP) is used to analyze the WNMU mission and vision. The process review is an ongoing cycle that responds to environmental changes; it starts in the fall and is completed during the annual budget review. The process involves multiple constituencies. |
| 5P1b | O | WNMU indicates that the mission and vision are defined, reviewed, and revised as needed; WNMU has not articulated a systematic process for the periodic review of the mission and vision. It, also, is unclear what the role of the BOR is in this process. The institution could benefit from a systematic plan for reviewing the mission and vision and a description of the process used to analyze the information and make decisions. In addition, it can describe who will be engaged in the process with a timetable for the review. Documenting these details would not only make the deliberations more systematic and fact-based, but would also enable further refinement of the planning process. |
| 5P2a | S | WNMU uses the Decision Cycle to provide leadership with a continuous improvement process allowing leadership to make responsive changes to improve performance. The president is responsible for ensuring that the mission is accomplished using feedback from the VPs who gather information from their department heads. The VPs provide input based on information developed at committee meetings and from general communication tools. |
| 5P2b | O | The institution's leadership employs the "Decision Cycle" model and presents examples relating to various activities; however, it is unclear "how" the leadership |

team determines a direction in order to align the mission, vision and commitment. More information about the processes and procedures used is needed; from the processes and procedures employed there is an expectation for goals to be determined that address mission and vision as well as the commitment the institution would make. Having a formal process for leadership would help support the consistency of the Decision Cycle and assist during any future transitions in leadership.

- 5P3 OO It is not evident from the materials provided, in developing the directions set by leadership, how WNMU takes into account the needs and expectations of potential students and other stakeholders. Although reference is made to Category Three, there is no evidence of a formal process by which leadership assesses and prioritizes those needs and expectations in the context of the mission, vision, values, and constrained resources to arrive at its decisions about institutional direction. A formal process can ensure that the directions of leadership make best use of available resources while remaining focused on WNMU's mission, vision, and values and addressing expectations of key stakeholders across the institution.
- 5P4 O WNMU describes a series of activities that provide "Learning Opportunities for WNMU and for Its Employees and Students." However, it is not evident from the information provided "how" the administrative leadership team guides the institution in seeking future opportunities. A defined process to identify and prioritize opportunities that strengthen the focus on students and learning could ensure effective use of resources available and provide metrics by which the effectiveness of opportunities pursued can be assessed.
- 5P5a S WNMU employs the Decision Cycle or the SPP to provide the framework for decision making across the institution. The appropriate VP and SEAT review and direct the decisions that have impact outside of a unit. Key players in the decision-making processes represent various segments of the university. Communication includes face-to-face meetings of various committees, teams, and cross-functional groups.

- 5P5b O WNMU describes the structure within which decisions are made. The process by which decision making is accomplished is not evident from the information provided in the portfolio. A defined process of decision making that includes problem definition, identification of feasible alternatives, and a gap analysis ensures both rigor and consistency in the making of decisions.
- 5P6 OO Figure 5P6.1 provides a list of measures that are used for different units. However, it is not clear how the measures listed are analyzed and drive decision making. A defined process and documentation of the data – analysis – decision-making cycle could help ensure that WNMU draws the most accurate conclusions from the information, and hence makes the most effective decisions for continuous improvement.
- 5P7a S WNMU summarizes in Fig 5P7.1 key face-to-face communication mechanisms. These include formal and informal methods.
- 5P7b OO The illustration in Figure 5P7.1 provides a comprehensive look at the communication methods used by various departments but there is seems to be some confusion in the “type” column. The use of up, down, and two way seems to imply that some conversations would not be two way. This differentiation between communications indicates that WNMU has many conversations that are not open. It is important for all communication within the university to remain open to support the best decision making.
- 5P8a S WNMU provides information on how leaders communicate a shared mission, vision, and values among and between various groups.
- 5P8b OO WNMU provides examples of communicating shared mission, vision, and values. It is not evident what process its leadership uses to communicate shared mission, vision, and values. Rather, the impression is of an *ad hoc* approach, lacking defined process, structure, and assessment of the effectiveness of the communication processes. A defined process that ensures consistency of message over time with metrics of communication effectiveness can enhance attainment of the goal of becoming a high performance organization.
- 5P9a S Several different types of on-campus techniques are used to develop the faculty and staff. These include seminars, committee activities, and statewide meetings.

The recognition and planning of a resource room will provide WNMU with historical data and allow leaders to keep track of their accomplishments. Historical data can also be used to support new decisions. Participation in professional conferences, on campus development activities, participation in QNM, Baldrige, all would enable WNMU to develop leadership skills among all of its personnel.

- 5P9b OO WNMU describes examples of opportunities for leadership development and sharing, and for communication. Processes for either of these are not evident from the materials provided and WNMU acknowledges that a "formal knowledge management system is not in place." The function and goals for SPP is unclear; there is a need to clearly outline the role and function as it applies to leadership. The WNMU electronic document storehouse if organized to facilitate research of specific issues regarding leadership knowledge, skills and best practices can facilitate improved communication of these matters. Creation of defined processes that address leadership development and leadership sharing can inform WNMU as to how to progress in these areas.
- 5P10a S WNMU has a comprehensive leadership succession plan for positions on an interim basis and appears to be able to follow it effectively. The Board of Regents, following state guidelines, ultimately determines the succession process.
- 5P10b O There is no evidence of a clear succession plan for the top leadership at WNMU. The institution could benefit from an articulated succession plan and identify training opportunities for administrators to support the plan.
- 5R1 OO A number of key measures are identified through the SPP. Many of these measures are potentially for the future. All the measures are, at most, indirectly related to Leading and Communicating. It is important for WNMU to develop measures that more directly relate to effective leadership and communication processes (for example direct measurement of satisfaction with leadership and management practices). Development (including targets) and analysis of such metrics would enable WNMU to clarify its leadership processes, identify gaps, and plan for improvement in the processes and skills.

- 5R2 OO The examples provided for the results of leading and communicating processes and systems are not concrete results of leading and communicating and are not linked to the measures described. WNMU does not provide any results for direct measures for Leading and Communicating. Keeping track of results in this specific category would help WNMU assure that its processes and systems provide evidence of its performance.
- 5R3 O WNMU does not provide comparisons of results for leading and communicating. Development of comparative data with peer institutions can identify opportunities for further improvement at WNMU. The institution might consider developing a more comprehensive set of comparison results.
- 5I1a S Recognizing the need to develop the organization scorecard is a start towards keeping track of recent improvements in leading and communicating.
- 5I1b O WNMU is developing an organization scorecard, "WNMU By The Numbers." As noted by the institution, "continued development ... will further formalize a systematic and comprehensive process ..." Further development of this scorecard should include quantitative measures for specific leadership and communication processes that need to be tracked over time. Such a comprehensive scorecard can assist WNMU to identify gaps in its leading and communicating endeavors quantitatively. Incorporation of both quantitative and qualitative data provides the broadest picture of performance when placed in the context of its performance targets.
- 5I2 O Although WNMU reports its use of the SPP and several approaches to select processes for improvement, it does not address how its institutional culture and infrastructure affect its selection of processes and performance targets for leading and communicating. People exist within both their personal cultures and those of the organization. Consideration of these factors can enhance the decisions made by WNMU as it seeks to improve itself in this area.

AQIP CATEGORY 6: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONAL OPERATIONS

Supporting Institutional Operations addresses the variety of your institutional support processes that help to provide an environment in which learning can thrive. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to student support, administrative support, identification of needs, contribution to student learning and accomplishing other distinctive objectives, day-to-day operations, use of data, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Western New Mexico University that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 6, Supporting Institutional Operations:

Item Critical Characteristic

- O1a Western New Mexico University (WNMU) established in 1893 as New Mexico Normal School offering teacher training programs; WNMU is a regional, comprehensive, not-for-profit, public university located in the mountain community of Silver City, New Mexico. WNMU serves as the business and financial center for a vast four-county area extending west to Arizona and south to Mexico
- O1b WNMU's mission stresses responsibility for its multi-cultural, multi-lingual population, as well as affordability, accessibility, pre-eminence of teaching, and professional growth of employees. WNMU's core values include pre-eminence of teaching and learning, "personal touch" with students, respect for people, integrity, and continuous improvement.
- O2a Key organizational services aligned with the WNMU mission are provided to students and other stakeholders. These services are designed to support student learning and address the needs of the communities served by WNMU. WNMU provides various opportunities to external stakeholders including specific programming, Miller Library access, multicultural programs and events, and website access. WNMU offers graduate programs in education fields, counseling, social work, business and occupational therapy. Interdisciplinary Studies is offered as an online degree

- O4b WNMU employs 106 faculty (excluding adjuncts), 282 staff, 519 student workers, and 60-80 adjunct faculty members. WNMU uses unpaid volunteers in WILL, WNMU call center, and "other areas of the campus
- O5b The strategic plan was developed for 2009-2012 that addresses a broad variety of needs. The strategic planning process provides deliberate opportunities for informing stakeholders and receiving feedback from these groups on a regular basis
- O6 The strategic plan includes specific items that address support services: meet or exceed support needs of students, implementation of a student complaint process, evaluate and improve supplier relationship that impact student learning experience, expand the curricular and extracurricular activities to all campuses, promote cultural awareness, improve the First Year Experience activities.
- O7a Data collection and distribution occurs on many levels and is administered by the Office of Data Analysis and Research and is charged to ensure reliability and validity of all data obtained from the SCT Banner system
- O8a The most significant challenge facing WNMU is cost containment to accommodate financial crisis and budget reductions without compromising quality; a top priority for WNMU is allocation of "scarce resources" to support student learning and support services. The economic climate and budget shortfalls are major constraints to WNMU's continued enrollment growth and meeting the needs of the expanding population of students.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Western New Mexico University's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 6, Supporting Institutional Operations.

Item S/O Comment

- 6P1a S WNMU uses an informal process of fact gathering on a daily basis. Feedback from surveys from faculty and students provide information. Employee needs are identified through SPP, meetings and forms that generate data. Stakeholder feedback comes from surveys, meetings, job fairs and community events.
- 6P1b O It is unclear how WNMU analyzes the support service needs of students and other stakeholders; the systems portfolio does not discuss the process for

analyzing and evaluating student support service data. There is a need for a formal process to gather information, a formal process to for analyze that data, and a formal process to address the identified need. Using a systematic approach to analyze the data and draw conclusions could enable the University to make more effective decisions pertaining to changing student support service needs.

- 6P2 O Information about service needs for employees is collected through regular department meetings, official university forms, faculty and staff orientations, staff and faculty governance committees, university committees and Action Project Teams, and faculty evaluations of administration. It is not clear how the information collected is analyzed to identify the specific support service needs of employees. A defined process that includes formal analysis of existing processes, benchmarking of the best practices of others, and a structured process re-engineering approach can ensure that administrative support processes are both efficient and effective.
- 6P3 OO WNMU describes who is involved in designing and maintaining the services, but provides no details about the process used to design the services. WNMU should consider identifying the guiding principles to be used in designing and maintaining the services. WMNU relies on process owners to ensure that factors related to physical security and safety are considered. The example of the WMNU Crisis Response Plan is reactive to external events and not representative of a response to an analysis of internal risk factors. Although training on safety is important, it is not evident from the information provided that the training is conducted by persons who are experts in that field. Physical security and safety are specialized areas of expertise and provision of centralized resources, expert in these areas, can ensure that these factors are addressed proactively with effective and current approaches that represent best practices.
- 6P4a O WNMU has decentralized collection of feedback and data regarding the effectiveness of support functions. Although this creates ownership of those issues that arise, it does not facilitate systemic analysis that can identify institution-wide issues in a timely manner. The examples provided are indicative of *ad hoc* reactive improvements, not driven by systematic analysis of process

effectiveness. It is not evident from that information provided that WNMU sets target performance levels for its processes against which actual performance can be measured in order to identify opportunities for process improvement in a systematic manner.

- 6P4b OO As a result of the size of the university, personnel interact informally frequently with one another; however, there is a need to have in place a formal method and/or process for monitoring, managing, and addressing key support services.
- 6P5a O WNMU has initiated the process of creating documentation, including process mapping, for some of its support processes. The practices are shared via minutes of meetings as well as formal training. Continuing on this path would lead to documentation of more processes. More formal ways to share best practices and knowledge would help WNMU learn from within its organization.
- 6P5b O WNMU indicates that the sharing of ideas is an ongoing practice and innovation naturally comes from these interactions; however, there is a great need to have formal processes and / or procedures in place to document changes made in the support operations across the university. The institution should consider developing a plan for documentation of support processes to encourage knowledge sharing, innovation and empowerment. Having this plan with identified benchmarks for sharing and implementation timelines will create a consistent and responsive system for the institution to address this area.
- 6R1 O WNMU reports that it has results for a variety of metrics (Figure 6R1.1). For a number of identified processes it is not evident how the metrics reported assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the process. For example in Human Resources/Payroll the identified metrics are grievances and worker compensation claims. Neither of these is within the direct control of this process and may represent outcomes from other processes. Metrics directly controllable within a process provide more accurate assessment of process effectiveness and an appropriate measure of process performance. Metrics that do not appear to be directly controllable by any identified process may not be valid or may require initiation of appropriate processes to control them. Additional information that defines frequencies of data collection and some examples of results achieved

that include trend analyses would be beneficial. Provision of actual outcomes in these areas would strengthen WNMU's evidence as to its performance.

- 6R2c OO The results provided do not match the performance measures identified in R1. Results are not provided for a number of metrics identified in R1. Although a summary of actions taken is provided for career services and admissions, no direct metrics are provided. Tracking metrics for student support services such as tutoring, registration, advisement, and career services would enable WNMU to assess the effectiveness of these services in meeting student needs.
- 6R3 O Although WNMU references training and support for students and faculty, it does not provide information on the performance results for administrative support service processes that are integral to meeting organizational operations. There is a need to clearly identify how these actions are related to the mission and vision of the university. Provision of actual outcomes in these areas would strengthen WNMU's evidence as to its performance.
- 6R4a O WNMU reports that it has increased its ability to capture, analyze, and use data for improvement and the Banner System is provided as one example. It is evident that WNMU has much data available that is accessible. However, it is not evident from the information provided how its key support areas use information and results to improve their services. The University needs to create a systematized approach for tracking and using its performance data on administrative support service processes for continuous improvement. Provision of actual outcomes in these areas would strengthen WNMU's evidence as to its performance.
- 6R4b OO WNMU discusses the use of information and technology in the day-to-day operations of some of its support services. However, there is no discussion of how information (metrics that measure the effectiveness of the services) is used to plan improvements in the services. Lack of direct links between information gathered, analyses, and improvement plans could lead to *ad hoc* decisions that might not be efficient or effective in the long term and for the whole organization.
- 6R5 O WNMU indicates that it has, but did not provide, comparative data with other organizations. It concludes that its alumni satisfaction rate "is consistent with

other state institutions.” Absent performance results, these statements lack context. Provision of actual outcomes in these areas would strengthen WNMU’s evidence as to its performance.

- 6I1a S WNMU has implemented or has in construction a number of improvements to its support of organizational operations. Following implementation of the Banner system, projects to leverage that system for additional improvements have been completed or are in process. A new student center building was recently opened. Student support improvement projects have been identified by a project team. The web has been enhanced to provide more data on line.
- 6I1b S WNMU highlights two major improvements made to Supporting Organizational Operations. These are the Customer Services Improvement Action Project and the Office of Institutional Advancement plan for the Capital Campaign.
- 6I1c S A number of improvements are in progress in student services. These improvements are based on a team decision making processes that in most cases are tied to the SPP. The QNM Piñon recognition reflects WNMU’s commitment to performance excellence.
- 6I1d O Although a number of improvements are in the works, it is not clear how systematic processes are used to effectively analyze the data and drive the decisions with respect to the changes as well as to set targets. Although there is a strategic plan in place, it is unclear how the plan and processes for Organizational Operations are integrated.
- 6I2 O Although WNMU reports its use of several approaches to selection of processes, it does not address how its institutional culture and infrastructure affect its selection of processes and performance targets in supporting institutional objectives. People exist within both their personal cultures and that of the organization. Consideration of these factors can enhance the decisions made by WNMU as it seeks to improvements in this area.

AQIP CATEGORY 7: MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS

Measuring Effectiveness examines how your institution collects, analyzes, and uses information to manage itself and to drive performance improvement. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to collection, storage, management, and use of information and data – at the institutional and departmental/unit levels; institutional measures of effectiveness; information and data alignment with institutional needs and directions; comparative information and data; analysis of information and data; effectiveness of information system and processes; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Western New Mexico University that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 7, Measuring Effectiveness:

Item Critical Characteristic

- O1b WNMU's mission stresses responsibility for its multi-cultural, multi-lingual population, as well as affordability, accessibility, pre-eminence of teaching, and professional growth of employees. WNMU's core values include pre-eminence of teaching and learning, "personal touch" with students, respect for people, integrity, and continuous improvement.
- O2b Six distinctive objectives identified are: Scholarship, Quality of Environment, Diversity, Building Public Trust, Quality Practices, Economic and Community Development.
- O5b The strategic plan was developed for 2009-2012 that addresses a broad variety of needs. The strategic planning process provides deliberate opportunities for informing stakeholders and receiving feedback from these groups on a regular basis.
- O7 Data collection and distribution occurs on many levels and is administered by the Office of Data Analysis and Research and is charged to ensure reliability and validity of all data obtained from the SCT Banner system.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Western New Mexico University's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 7, Measuring Effectiveness.

Item S/O Comment

- 7P1 OO It is unclear how WNMU selects, manages, and distributes data and performance information to the various stakeholders across the university. WNMU states that data collection is driven for the most part by regulatory and reporting requirements. There is a need to have a formal process in place, similar to the Strategic Planning Process (SPP) mentioned throughout the systems portfolio. It is unclear how information is gathered across the institution, what formal formats are employed across the institution, and what procedures are used consistently in a formal manner to analyze any data collected. Uniformity of data storage can enhance accessibility and encourage data use in decisions
- 7P2 OO WNMU discusses how the data needs are identified based on the gaps identified in the SPP. That is, the “gap” question is asked first and then the data needed to answer it is identified and reported. It, however, is not clear how WNMU identifies the data that are needed for analysis in order to ask the “gap” question. WNMU needs to clearly identify the different data that are needed for planning and improvement analysis in order to be able to identify its challenges more clearly and take improvement action. Data selected on the basis of priorities is a positive beginning. There, however, is a need to have a formal method in place which is used by all members of the institutional community; having a formal method and/or procedure ensures that a consistent process for analysis will be used by all members of the community. The informal approach to planning and analysis presents too many unknowns.
- 7P3a O WNMU has decentralized decisions as to what data is to be collected. Although this allows users to collect data needed, there is no process described that coordinates collection across the institution. There is a need for the institution to have a formal method, a formal plan, formal procedures, and a specific method in place for analysis, planning, and initiation of a plan to address a need identified. A coordinated process can ensure that neither a duplication of data collection nor gaps in data collection occurs.
- 7P3b O Although WNMU describes its intent to place needs determination at the user level, it is evident that not all at the institution follow that. The report of the IT Director ignoring user input and accelerating the campus wireless network exemplifies the lack of cohesive planning. Given the constrained resources of

WNMU, such decisions should be made so as to make best use of the available resources rather than seeking to have new technology just because others are using it. There appears to be a need for a defined policy that addresses how resource allocations are decided upon for the betterment of the institution as a whole rather than attainment of the objectives of individual areas.

- 7P4b O The Director of Data Analysis and Research along with the President's Cabinet oversees the collection and analysis of institutional data. Although WNMU indicates who manages the data collection and analysis, it does not discuss how the analyses are performed. Clear identification of the processes used to select the methods of analyses and presentation of the analyses would ensure that the information is presented in a way that most effectively enables the decision-making process. WNMU acknowledges that data collection is driven for the most part by regulatory and reporting requirements.
- 7P5b O WNMU has not identified peer institutions for comparative data that can be used to make decisions based on external benchmarking measures. WNMU observes that finding comparative organizations "can be problematic due to the University's unique combination of environmental circumstances and roles within the community it serves." The criteria used to select peers are comprehensive, which minimizes the opportunity to find comparison organizations. A practice of benchmarking the best practices of others in specific processes is more likely to yield useful information that can be used for improvement even when the organization benchmarked is dissimilar to WNMU as a whole.
- 7P5a S Through WNMU's Decision Cycle, the teams that are engaged in different projects and departments and units identify the appropriate comparative data to be used for decision making.
- 7P6 O Although WNMU reports assessment results of academic programs to its Assessment Committee, it does not indicate that assessment of non-instructional programs and administrative processes are similarly reported. WNMU lists departmental assessment reports as the only example of unit level data analysis. Assessment of all processes to determine success in attaining established process goals can inform the institution as to opportunities for further

improvement in these areas. Using a model similar to the one used for instructional services for support services would help WNMU manage and improve its support services.

- 7P7a S WNMU ensures the timeliness of the data by making it available via the Banner, Voyager, and other web portals. The reliability is ensured by proper maintenance of the hard drive as well as use of clear policies and procedures for different kinds of data. Accuracy of the data is ensured through training, data validation guidelines, and supervision. The security of the data is ensured through the use of login access codes for different levels of data.
- 7P7b O The IT Department has the primary responsibility to ensure timeliness, accuracy, reliability and security of the information system and related processes. It is unclear what process and/or procedure are used to determine the delivery, the monitoring, and accessibility of the information to the students, administration and faculty; further, how this is accomplished is unclear. There is a need to formalize the processes employed by both the IT Department and other stakeholders in determining needs, evaluating the current delivery of services, and monitoring that delivery. A process to vet data and to test its accuracy on a periodic basis can help ensure that unintentional inaccuracies through errors and omissions are corrected before such data are used.
- 7R1a OO WNMU reports that it has results for a variety of metrics. However, it does not report these results or the targets for performance in these areas. Absent actual outcomes, the meaning of statements such as "speaks directly to leadership results" and "reflect leadership's efforts" lack context and clarity. Provision of actual outcomes in these areas would strengthen WNMU's evidence as to its performance.
- 7R1b O It is unclear how the performance and effectiveness of the information and knowledge system is determined. There is a need to provide what specific measures are used regularly; there is a need to provide a description of how that information gained from the various assessment measurements are analyzed.
- 7R1c O WNMU uses measures such as traffic and usage for the network and application as needed, response times for queries are also monitored. WNMU would benefit

from developing measures to evaluate the data selection, analyses, and sharing processes. Such measures would help WNMU identify improvements that could be made in the metrics used, analyses methods and accessibility and use of such analyses for decision making.

- 7R2a O WNMU has made a number of improvements in the IT area in the past few years. Most of the improvements are focused on hardware and software and little discussion is presented about improvements in the processes used for knowledge management. It is not evident that that the improvements made are based on systematic analysis of needs and performance.
- 7R2b OO It is unclear what evidence is present to ensure that the system is measuring effectiveness in meeting the institution's mission and goals. No targets that define what constitutes an effective process are presented, nor are outcomes presented or linked to organization goals. Provision of actual outcomes in these areas in the context of established targets would strengthen WNMU's evidence as to its performance and clearly link the actions at different levels to the Institution's mission and goals.
- 7R3 OO WMNU does not provide comparison data for results of its performance and processes against other institutions. Establishing a comparison group could enrich the institution's knowledge of data tools and processes needed as well as inform the establishment of additional performance benchmarks. Assumption of a broader and more holistic view can provide more meaningful comparisons for institutional improvement.
- 7I1a O WNMU lists a few recent improvements but does not explain how systematic or comprehensive is the system. A systematic plan for collecting, analyzing, distributing and using data, information, and knowledge to manage itself and drive performance improvement would provide a holistic view of the systems to measure effectiveness and incorporate all information systems, whether computerized, manual, or informal.
- 7I2 O Although WMNU describes some processes for determining priorities and implementing improvement efforts, it does not address how the institutional

culture influences the selection of processes to improve and set targets for improved performance results.

AQIP CATEGORY 8: PLANNING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Planning Continuous Improvement examines your institution's planning processes and how your strategies and action plans are helping you achieve your mission and vision. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to institutional vision; planning; strategies and action plans; coordination and alignment of strategies and action plans; measures and performance projections; resource needs; faculty, staff, and administrator capabilities; measures; analysis of performance projections and results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Western New Mexico University that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its *Systems Portfolio* section covering Category 8, Planning Continuous Improvement:

Item Critical Characteristic

- O1b WNMU's mission stresses responsibility for its multi-cultural, multi-lingual population, as well as affordability, accessibility, pre-eminence of teaching, and professional growth of employees. WNMU's core values include pre-eminence of teaching and learning, "personal touch" with students, respect for people, integrity, and continuous improvement.
- O2a Key organizational services aligned with the WNMU mission are provided to students and other stakeholders. These services are designed to support student learning and address the needs of the communities served by WNMU. WNMU provides various opportunities to external stakeholders including specific programming, Miller Library access, multicultural programs and events, and website access. WNMU offers graduate programs in education fields, counseling, social work, business and occupational therapy. Interdisciplinary Studies is offered as an online degree.
- O2b Six distinctive objectives identified: Scholarship, Quality of Environment, Diversity, Building Public Trust, Quality Practices, Economic and Community Development.

- O5a Board of Regents (BOR) is responsible for governance. BOR includes four members plus a student regent. WNMU leadership and New Mexico political leadership serve in an *ex-officio* capacity. There is a statewide coordination of higher education through New Mexico HED. The BOR ensures that WNMU has an effective President, an appropriate vision and mission and sets general policies.
- O5b The strategic plan was developed for 2009-2012 that addresses a broad variety of needs. The strategic planning process provides deliberate opportunities for informing stakeholders and receiving feedback from these groups on a regular basis.
- O6 The strategic plan includes specific items that address support services: meet or exceed support needs of students, implementation of a student complaint process, evaluate and improve supplier relationship that impact student learning experience, expand the curricular and extracurricular activities to all campuses, promote cultural awareness, improve the First Year Experience activities.
- O7a Data collection and distribution occurs on many levels and is administered by the Office of Data Analysis and Research and is charged to ensure reliability and validity of all data obtained from the SCT Banner system.
- O8a The most significant challenge facing WNMU is cost containment to accommodate financial crisis and budget reductions without compromising quality; a top priority for WNMU is allocation of "scarce resources" to support student learning and support services. The economic climate and budget shortfalls are major constraints to WNMU's continued enrollment growth and meeting the needs of the expanding population of students.
- O8b WNMU has established a comprehensive vision for 2012, which when attained, positions the institution in the national market as a teaching-focused university. WNMU has historic collaborative relationships with the south west and international higher education institutions, P-12 schools, health care and business organizations.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Western New Mexico University's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 8, Planning Continuous Improvement.

Item	S/O	Comment
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- 8P1a S WNMU employs planning processes that incorporate SWOT analysis and involves its Strategic Planning Team. A flow chart is available to illustrate the SPP, the main tool used for planning. Several meetings are held throughout the year to gather information. Once assembled, the information is shared via the web to all stakeholders. The SPP is used in other WNMU units as well.
- 8P1b OO Figure 8P1.1 represents the planning process used by WNMU. Comments such as, time lags usually exist between current assessments and the implementation of ideas and action stemming from those ideas, and various offices on campus use the model presented although meeting frequency may vary are made. It is unclear how the planning process functions given the various alternatives presented; there is a need to have formal processes in places that are recognized, followed, and responded to in a timely manner. Although WNMU states that HED, the New Mexico Legislature, accrediting bodies, and the governor influence WNMU's decision cycle, it is not evident from the information provided the process by which input, feedback, and participation are sought from these entities. There is a critical need for WNMU to establish formal planning, assessment, review processes; it appears there are a substantial number of informal functions acting in place of the formal ones.
- 8P2 O Long and short term strategies are developed and reviewed by SEAT and the cabinet; there is a critical need to express clearly how these strategies are developed. From the general comments presented, it is unclear how long and short term strategies are developed or how stakeholders are involved in their development and the process described seems to be a continuously changing process. Clarity in the strategic planning process can ensure that prioritization of strategies is consistent with the institutional mission, vision, and values.
- 8P3 O Key action plans deriving from the vice presidents' operational plans are developed within units responsible for each of the plans, or through campus hearings. The process by which the action plans are developed

or the criteria by which plans are chosen is unclear. There is a critical need for the institution to develop clear, formal methods for developing action plans that support the organization's strategies.

- 8P4 OO Although the institution identifies the VPs and cross-functional teams as groups involved with the coordinating and planning processes, WNMU does not describe how it coordinates and aligns planning processes, organizational strategies, and actions plans across the various levels of the institution. The process for coordinating and planning initiatives does not clearly indicate who is responsible for oversight, who collects data about the effectiveness of the process or who determines if the initiative is a success. A clearly defined description of how WNMU works through the coordinating and planning processes would assist the institution to assure its ability to plan continuous improvement.
- 8P5 OO Objectives, MOE's and performance targets are defined during the strategic planning process (SPP) and are finalized by the President and SEAT. It is unclear from the information presented how WNMU defines objectives, selects measures and set performance targets for organizational strategies and action plans; it does not describe the process by which these are set. There is a critical need for a formal and specific plan and/or process used for this decision-making procedure and an opportunity exists to clarify the criteria used by SPP and the units to establish performance measures and targets. Clarity in the process used to establish MOE and set targets will help ensure that the most effective measures are used for assessment and continuous improvement.
- 8P6 OO Although WNMU describes who is responsible for the alignment of strategies and action plans, it does not describe the process by which this is accomplished nor does it describe how that process takes into account the constrained resources of WNMU. In an environment of constrained resources, prioritization of strategies and actions before expenditure of funds can ensure that only the most important items are actually pursued thereby conserving scarce resources.

- 8P7 OO WNMU acknowledges that it has no process to assess risk in the planning process. Recognizing that there is no process in place for assessing and addressing risk in the planning process is a first step. Before engaging in any plan, it is important to examine the risks to determine if they may be detrimental to the success of the project. A project or plan that does not have a risk evaluation may be very detrimental in practice, financially, or to the mission and values.
- 8P8 OO Various methods are used to determine training needs; however, there exists a critical need to develop a clear process and/or set of procedures to aid in the development of training needs. WNMU provides anecdotal examples of how identification of training needs strengthens its services. However, it appears that this link is not considered explicitly and systematically when identifying specific training needs. Such consideration could enable WNMU to use scarce resources more efficiently as it tries to meet changing requirements demanded by organizational strategies and action plans. There is a need for WNMU to develop a formal professional development plan for staff, faculty and administration with a specific link to the institution's assessment team. Establishment of a more formal process could assist with multi-year planning for training of employees and assure that training is consistent with institutional strategies.
- 8R1 OO WNMU states that it does not measure the effectiveness of its planning processes. Establishment of performance targets and assessment of process effectiveness is fundamental to AQIP. Establishment of performance targets and assessment of process outcomes will enable WNMU to ascertain whether its planning processes are effective and will allow the institution to make improvements to those processes that will ensure effective planning at WNMU.
- 8R2a S WNMU has clearly collected data and documented their success in meeting enrollment growth as evidenced in Figures 8P2.1, 8P2.2 and 8P2.3.

- 8R2b O WNMU has completed some of its plans and is in progress with others. Enrolment increases provide evidence of achievement of its objective. However, given that there are no targets provided (in terms of numbers and due dates for the identified plans) it is difficult to assess the performance. There appear to be areas under Strategic Challenges # 2, # 3 and # 6 that require more direction in identifying performance measures and results.
- 8R2c O Although WNMU reports fewer audit findings in 2007 and 2008, it is not evident from the information presented how audit findings as a metric address the improvement of fiscal and material resources that address needs identified in its strategic plan. Reduced audit findings are indicative of improved adherence to policies and practices but are not indicative of improvement in the allocation of scarce resources to attain its strategic plan.
- 8R3a O WNMU does not have an operational plan with projections or targets for performance on strategies and actions plans over the next 1-3 years. Developing a process to build a plan, collect data, and report out the success of these projects would help WNMU build a strong history of continuous quality improvement.
- 8R4 OO The list of results WNMU uses to collect comparative data is clearly labeled; however there is no explanation of how those results drive strategic planning, change, or action projects. A process for using the reporting would help WNMU clearly define how data drives continuous improvement. Data from peer institutions can inform WNMU as to the effectiveness of its processes and can provide opportunities to improve its processes by observing how other entities perform analogous functions.
- 8R5 OO Although WNMU reports that its planning processes are effective, as noted in 8R1 it does not track process and output measures related to its planning process. Absent metrics, there is no basis to assess the effectiveness of these processes. Establishment of performance targets and measuring actual outcomes against those targets is fundamental to

- AQIP and would allow WNMU to determine the effectiveness of these processes.
- 8I1 O WNMU reports implementation of structural changes in its planning process. It is not evident from the information provided what improvements in Planning Continuous Improvement have resulted from these changes. Understanding why changes are being made and the impact those changes have on an organization is a vital part of continuous quality improvement.
- 8I2 O It is not clear how WNMU selects which processes and targets to act upon. It is unclear how the culture and infrastructure aids in the selection of specific processes to improve and to set targets to improve performance. There seems to be a disconnect between the example in the paragraph and the impact on the strategic plan, which is contrary to the intent of this category. All targets should be aligned with the strategic plan.

AQIP CATEGORY 9: BUILDING COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Building Collaborative Relationships examines your institution's relationships – current and potential – to analyze how they contribute to the institution's accomplishing its mission. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to identification of key internal and external collaborative relationships; alignment of key collaborative relationships; relationship creation, prioritization, building; needs identification; internal relationships; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Western New Mexico University that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its *Systems Portfolio* section covering Category 9, Building Collaborative Relationships:

Item Critical Characteristic

- O1a Western New Mexico University (WNMU) established in 1893 as New Mexico Normal School offering teacher training programs; WNMU is a regional, comprehensive, not-for-profit, public university located in the mountain community of Silver City, New Mexico.

WNMU serves as the business and financial center for a vast four-county area extending west to Arizona and south to Mexico.

- O1b WNMU's mission stresses responsibility for its multi-cultural, multi-lingual population, as well as affordability, accessibility, pre-eminence of teaching, and professional growth of employees. WNMU's core values include pre-eminence of teaching and learning, "personal touch" with students, respect for people, integrity, and continuous improvement.
- O5b The strategic plan was developed for 2009-2012 that addresses a broad variety of needs. The strategic planning process provides deliberate opportunities for informing stakeholders and receiving feedback from these groups on a regular basis.
- O6 The strategic plan includes specific items that address support services: meet or exceed support needs of students, implementation of a student complaint process, evaluate and improve supplier relationship that impact student learning experience, expand the curricular and extracurricular activities to all campuses, promote cultural awareness, improve the First Year Experience activities.
- O9a Management of partnership priorities is centralized through the SPP, the President's cabinet, and the SEAT.
- O9b There exist a broad variety of collaborative relationships with local and statewide groups that are used to reinforce the institution's mission. WNMU has detailed its partnerships and collaborations both external and internal.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Western New Mexico University's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 9, Building Collaborative Relationships.

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
9P1	O	Although WNMU provides a list of its relationships with educational organizations and other organizations; it does not articulate how it creates and prioritizes these relationships. Developing a systematic process for creating and prioritizing relationships would demonstrate how WNMU supports its key planning process with meaningful and strategic relationships that lead to continuous improvement.

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| 9P2 | OO | WNMU recognizes the importance of building relationships that support their students and describes an informal process for building relationships with educational organizations and employers. However, there is no evidence provided of activities WNMU engages in to create, build, and foster relationships with organizations that receive its students – social service organizations, local and regional businesses, the school districts, and other universities. Developing a systematic process for creating, building, and prioritizing relationships would demonstrate how WNMU works with students to ensure that the organizations' requirements are met. Because that is a critical need for the institution, it is of critical importance that a formal process be in place to address the needs of those stakeholders. |
| 9P3 | O | WNMU works with campus suppliers (bookstore, dining services, etc.) to develop strategies for assessing the effectiveness of their services to students. However, a systematic process describing how the relationships are created, prioritized and built is still needed to link to performance and improvement. |
| 9P4a | S | WNMU understands the importance of managing relationships through the Director of Materials Resource Management and a formal RFP process. There is a process in place to address the relationship-building with organizations that supply materials and services to the institution. |
| 9P4b | O | WNMU does not provide evidence that it systematically considers how it creates, prioritizes, and fosters relationship with the service providers. Its approach seems reactive rather than a proactive approach that builds relationship focused on future, long-term needs of the organization. |
| 9P5 | O | WNMU uses common goals as a foundation to maintain its relationship with its consortia partners and the accreditation process to maintain relationships with the accreditation agencies. Although WNMU discusses the source of the need to establish relationships with educational associations, external agencies and other bodies, it is not evident from the information provided the process by which these relationships are |

created, prioritized, and built. It is not entirely clear from the information provided that WNMU understands how all encompassing the impact of relationships with education associations, external agencies, consortia partners, and the general community can be. There is a need for the institution to develop a formal process to address this.

- 9P6 O WNMU discusses its advisory boards and its use of meetings with school superintendents and others. It is not evident from the information provided that a defined process exists to manage these relationships, to set performance targets for these relationships, or to assess the effectiveness of these relationships in order to ensure that these relationships meet the needs of WNMU. WNMU could benefit from a defined process for identifying target performance for goals connected with its partnership relationships.
- 9P7 OO WNMU reports that it uses a variety of processes to create and build relationships within the institution. It is not evident from the information provided how it sets performance targets concerning the effect of these processes to build these relationships or that it assesses the effectiveness in accomplishing that. The portfolio does not provide details about any systematic planning and evaluation of activities that focus on building relationship between groups within the organization. There is a critical need for the institution to develop, install and utilize a more formal approach.
- 9R1 OO WNMU collects data from a variety of organizations but does not indicate how these data are implemented in building collaborative relationships. The decision to collect the various measures is inspired by an interest in institutional performance rather than having a specific plan to collect consistently information relating to the collaborative relationships. There is a critical need for the institution to develop a formal plan to collect this information, review the data, and to evaluate the information collected.
- 9R2 O It does not appear from the information provided that WNMU uses data to drive decisions about collaborative relationships. Capture rates are

provided as evidence of improved performance in the management of relationships; however, it is not clear how these results relate to specific processes used to prioritize, build, and manage relationships. There is a critical need for WNMU to identify the processes and direct measures out of these processes in order to assess and improve the actions it takes to improve its relationships with its partners.

- 9R3 OO WNMU needs to consider the importance of collecting data from its collaborative relationship partners. Data collected will help WNMU define itself in terms of the community and provide details on what steps are needed to improve its standing. A high community standing will then drive enrollment up and provide more opportunities for student community involvement.
- 9I1a O WNMU discusses improvements in the indirect measures it uses to access collaborative relationships. It is not clear which improvements WNMU has implemented in the collaborative relationships or how those improvements are directly related to increased enrollment numbers. WNMU needs to clearly identify the specific improvements made in the processes it uses to create, prioritize, or build collaborative relationships and how these improvements in the processes resulted in specific metrics. Lack of such clear process and fact based assessment of improvement could lead to *ad hoc* changes that would be hard to monitor.
- 9I1b O All of the processes listed in this item are related to internal processes. Collaborative relationships certainly include internal constituents; however, many more relationships exist outside the university and are vital for the success of the university. Including external partners in the definition of collaborative relationships would help WNMU align its mission and values with the community at large. This is especially important to WNMU, since its mission includes a strong community impact.

