

Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
A Comprehensive Peer-Evaluation Report

**Lake Washington Institute of Technology
Kirkland, Washington**

October 17-19, 2011

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

**Evaluation Committee Report
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Introduction

Lake Washington Institute of Technology (LWIT) was originally known as Lake Washington Vocational-Technical Institute. It was granted initial Candidacy by the Commission on Colleges December 11, 1975. In December 1981 it was granted Initial Accreditation.

The last comprehensive evaluation visit occurred in Fall 2006, as a result of which the college received reaffirmation of accreditation by action of the Commission in January 2007. Recommendations from that visiting team included the development and implementation of an institutional effectiveness plan, a process for documentation of educational outcomes assessment, implementation of academic policies and procedures, including those related to the bookstore and part time faculty, an improved system of governance and several recommendations regarding governance policies regarding finance.

In the time since the last self-study, the college has made progress in a number of areas related to the recommendations. The college has also sought and received permission from the Washington state system to grant a Bachelor of Technology (Applied Design) degree. This resulted in a substantive change request of the Commission in 2008. The college changed its name from Lake Washington Technical College to Lake Washington Institute of Technology in 2011. Because this was the first site visit since the substantive change request to offer the baccalaureate degree, the site visit team reviewed the college against the standards, with the new degree granting level in mind.

The committee found the institutional self-study and related materials to be well organized and very helpful. The college similarly prepared a well-organized team room with an extensive collection of college resource materials available for team use.

Lake Washington Institute of Technology continues to meet the Commission's Eligibility Requirements.

Section One

Standard 1.A: Mission

The institution's mission statement, approved by the Board of Trustees in 2001 and reaffirmed in 2007, is simply "to prepare students for today's careers and tomorrow's opportunities." Consistent with the mission, Lake Washington Institute of Technology (LWIT) has adopted four core themes which stress 1) access via pathways and 2) student achievement, thereby supporting student preparation for today's careers, and 3) external engagement and 4) college community, thereby assuring the college will be able to prepare students for future opportunities. The core themes were selected and approved by the college community and the Board of Trustees in 2010. (1.A.1)

Standard 1.B: Core Themes

The mission and the core themes are appropriate to the institution and appear to be broadly understood by the community, and to direct the work of the college community, including the recent expansion of services, to include transfer degrees, a broader range of academic courses and services, an applied baccalaureate degree program, and an institutional name change reflective of this expansion of services. (1.A.2, 1.B.1)

Establishment of objectives and associated meaningful indicators support assessment of institutional activity toward mission fulfillment. The indicators provide the governing board with a "data dashboard" by which the board can determine college effectiveness. (1.B.2)

Section Two

Standard 2.A: Governance

“The institution demonstrates an effective and widely understood system of governance with clearly defined authority, roles, and responsibilities. Its decision-making structures and processes make provision for the consideration of the views of faculty, staff, administrators, and students on matters in which they have a direct and reasonable interest.” - NWCCU Standard 2.A.1

In forums and conversations with faculty and staff throughout the period of the visit, concerns were raised about the extent to which the administration seeks information about the views of faculty and staff about matters related to budget, planning and curriculum. Minimally, there appears to be a need for improved communication with both faculty and staff regarding defined authority, roles and responsibilities about budget decisions. It is also not clear that, at present, the decision-making structures, particularly with regard to curriculum planning, are actually being used to make provision for consideration of faculty views. (2.A.1)

The institution monitors its compliance with the Commission’s Standards for Accreditation, including the impact of collective bargaining agreements, legislative actions, and external mandates. (2.A.2)

LWIT has a board of trustees consisting of five voting members who are appointed by the governor to five-year terms, and generally not reappointed more than once. None of these trustees have contractual, employment, or financial interest in the institution. The Washington State Board of Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) provides oversight to the 34 community and technical colleges within the state. The roles, responsibilities, and authority of the board of trustees and the SBCTC—as they relate to the institution—are clearly defined, widely communicated, and broadly understood. (2.A.3)

A member of the visiting committee met with the board chair and one other member of the governance board. From that conversation, it was clear that the board fully understands that it acts only as a committee of the whole, and that it has selected a full time C.E.O. to whom it delegates the implementation and administration of its policies. It was also clear that the board establishes, provides oversight and regularly reviews and revises as necessary institutional policies, including those regarding its own organization and operation. The board conducts an annual retreat at which it conducts planning and development activity and also evaluates its own performance. The presidential evaluation also occurs in the context of this annual activity. (2.A.5, 2.A.6, 2.A.7, 2.A.8, 2.A.10)

The institution has an effective system of leadership, staffed by qualified administrators, with appropriate levels of responsibility and accountability, who are charged with planning, organizing, and managing the institution and assessing its achievements and effectiveness. There recently has been an unusual degree of change in the individuals in

the administration, as well as the scope of their responsibilities and alignment. However, this might be expected in the staff of a college with a recent change in C.E.O., who himself was until recently an interim appointment at his previous college. There was also some concern expressed within the college community that so many of the recent administrative appointments were done without a national search. However, the individuals hired all appear to be viewed by the college community as highly qualified and effective, and the new president has indicated his intention to conduct national searches for all future administrative vacancies. (2.A.9, 2.A.11)

Academic policies are clearly communicated to students, faculty, staff and administrators through college documents, collective bargaining activities and via the college council. (2.A.12)

A member of the visiting team was able to visit the library, review all website materials and interview the Associate Dean, Business Programs & Learning Resources. The Library Policy Manual was found to be readily accessible on the library's website. It includes all of the elements of procedures and policies that directly apply to the library/learning commons resources and services. The collection development policy outlines areas of responsibility, selection guidelines for all formats, copyright and intellectual freedom policies. Circulation policies define authorized users, expectations regarding patron conduct (use of facilities), patron privacy, loan periods, renewal and holds, and interlibrary loan services. Procedures for scheduling conference and study rooms are clearly outlined. The Learning Commons also handles college email accounts. Forms are available in the library. (2.A.13, 2.A.14)

Student policies and procedures related to student rights and responsibilities, student activities and admission and placement are all clearly stated and readily accessible. (2.A.15, 2.A.16, 2.A.17)

Standard 2.B: Human Resources

Although the college has experienced exponential growth in student enrollments and significant reductions in state funding resulting in job duty expansion and new efficiencies as positions are eliminated, the college continues to employ a sufficient number of exceptionally passionate, qualified staff and faculty to support the college's mission and its daily operations as validated by the team. (2.B.1, 2.B.4, 2.B.5).

Position descriptions are reviewed and updated prior to advertising vacant and/or new positions. Moreover, all position descriptions are accessible online and reviewed periodically to ensure each description accurately reflects the duties and responsibilities associated with the position (2.B.1).

Despite limited budgets/economic restraints, the college widely promotes professional development opportunities throughout both campuses. In collaboration with the Staff Development Committee, Diversity Committee, the Teaching and Learning Center, the Professional Technical Certification classes for faculty, the Master Advising Class, and

RAPID days many local, affordable opportunities exist for faculty and staff in support of professional development plans associated with annual faculty, staff, and administrator evaluations (2.B.2, 2.B.3, 2.B.6). Evaluators noted a strong intrinsic commitment by staff and faculty throughout campus to strive for excellence within their position, grow professionally, and remain current in the field.

Standard 2.C: Educational Resources

The information provided to the team by LWIT suggests the institution meets the requirements laid out in the Accreditation Standards outlined from the NWCCU. The self-evaluation provides a detailed explanation of the basic requirements for certifications, associate degrees or a Bachelors of Technology Degree as well as for Direct Transfer Agreement degrees. Appendix F in the related documents provides indicators of intended outcomes for educational pathways and progression through the educational process. Content of the coursework is in line with the training, rigor, and course hours required for similar degree programs elsewhere.

The LWIT 2011-2012 Course Catalog explains programs of study, provides mission statements, credit hours required as well as career options and emphases in coursework. Course descriptions are concise and available with clear indicators of pre-requisite and co-requisite classes for each program of study at LWIT. The class schedule booklet for the fall session of 2011 provides the class schedule, class fees, and pre-requisite and co-requisite information. The booklet also advertises continuing education classes, and online education courses offered in the community.

Learning outcomes are identified in the college catalog under each program of study in the course outcomes and requirements section. Each class offered and its outcomes can also be viewed in the course descriptions section of the college catalog. Appendix F documents student achievements for specified programs at LWIT, as well as an achievement scorecard for indicators based on outcomes, career preparation, and licensure exams. Intended outcome 2 appears in appendix F and uses achievement indicators such as student enrollment (increase and decrease), basic skills vs. transition skills, 1st year retention rates (at 15 and 30 credits) and degree completion. Indicator 3 in appendix F is job placement with salary indicators upon completion. (2.C.1, 2.C.2, 2.C.3)

Faculty members appear to exercise a major role in the design, approval, implementation and revision of the curriculum. They take the lead in writing course and program learning outcomes, determining course sequences, library resources and program structure.

An elected body of primarily faculty members forms the Instructional Council (IC), which has a number of major responsibilities. The IC considers and makes recommendations on instructional issues. The IC provides a forum for instructional administrators and faculty to discuss budgets, program planning evaluation and instructional policies and procedures. The IC is also involved in reviewing pertinent Board policy changes and making recommendations to the institution's administration.

Four working committees made up of mostly faculty members, make recommendations to the Instructional Council:

The Curriculum Review Committee (CRC) reviews course and program learning outcomes and curriculum changes. The committee is made up of faculty and a Library faculty member who provide input on information literacy and research applicable to course content. This committee's recommendations are forwarded to Instructional Council for action. The State Board gives final approval for programs and associate degrees offered.

The Educational Assessment Committee (EAC), a faculty group chaired by the Director of Educational Assessment Faculty, oversees the system of educational assessment. All faculty are responsible for carrying out ongoing program and institutional assessment; the EAC provides training to faculty regarding assessment policies, procedures, classroom methods, the development of program outcomes and program review. In addition to course and program outcomes, faculty assess five institution-wide global outcomes. The evaluation rubrics for these outcomes are posted on the institution's website for students and community members to view. The institution earned a commendation for this effort during the 2009 NWCCU focused interim evaluation.

The eLearning Committee (ELC) consists of faculty, administrators, and staff whose primary responsibility is to evaluate possible uses of new technologies and potential course development. The committee also provides training to faculty on the effective uses of technology in the classroom and program delivery.

The Library Advisory Committee (LAC) includes Library staff, faculty, and a student government representative. The LAC meets quarterly to provide the library information on instructional program needs, to assist the library with collection development and planning, and to provide feedback from the library constituency about the services it provides.

Although the Instructional Council receives recommendations and information from the above groups and makes recommendations in turn to the administration, interviews with faculty suggested that there is a disconnect between faculty recommendations and administrative decisions. Whether this disconnect is a communication or a process gap, it appears that faculty believe they are being left out of significant academic and operational decisions. Proposals for new programs are being generated outside of the standing committees, especially outside of the Instructional Council, whose charge is to make recommendations for program planning and development.

Another responsibility that faculty members hold is active involvement in new faculty hiring. They participate on interview teams, serve as adjunct faculty recruiters from the field, and provide recommendations to administration regarding top candidates for selection.

Faculty members with teaching responsibilities are in partnership with library and information resources personnel through a variety of collaborative links. As mentioned above, faculty members participate on the Library Advisory Committee and Library faculty participate on the Curriculum Review Committee. The Associate Dean of the Library reports directly to the VP for Instruction so there is an administrative link between instructional faculty and library faculty. Faculty and librarians are working together to incorporate information literacy into the instructional programs of the college. After the last Full Scale Evaluation in November 2006, the Library Advisory Committee prepared a Library Action Plan that resulted in improved staffing and resources for the acquisition of materials. One full-time librarian was hired in 2008 to support the BTAD degree program. The other librarian is responsible for the STARS program. With two full-time librarians on staff the number of information literacy classes increased from 57 in 2008-2009 to 183 in 2010. The numbers of students served through these classes increased from 751 in 2008-2009 to 3389 in 2010-2011.

Information and Technical Literacy is one of the Global Outcomes for Student Learning at LWIT. Based on a review of program notebooks provided from the visit, many programs require students to write a research paper with appropriate documentation of sources cited.

As noted above, librarians are teaching information literacy skills in course-related instruction. They have developed a source evaluation rubric for student papers. Faculty and librarians can track improvement in the quality of sources cited. This rubric has been used in a variety of classes over the past year including English, Chemistry, Cell Biology, Culinary, Dental Assisting, Fitness, and Funeral Services.

The Library Advisory Committee, which includes library staff, faculty, and a student government representative, will review and update the Library Action Plan in 2011-2012. Five additional faculty members joined the LAC to participate in the planning and development process for the new action plan.

In a statewide effort, faculty members are contributing common course materials to Open Source, so the materials can be used throughout the state.

Credit for prior experiential learning is assessed and validated by qualified faculty through a process designed by the faculty. At the completion of assessment, the College translates the competencies met into course equivalencies which are documented on an Assessment of Credit for Prior learning form. As published in the College Catalog, Credit for Prior Learning is limited to a maximum of 25% and the institution does not guarantee that other colleges will accept those credits. Students may also challenge some individual courses using CLEP.

Transfer credit is accepted according to procedures which provide safeguards to ensure that credits accepted maintain the academic integrity of the credits of course requirements. Deans and faculty validate transferability of academic courses which are not commonly accepted for credit. The institution utilizes the Common Course Numbering (CCN) system developed at the state level and takes part in the statewide Reciprocity Agreement in which the transferring credit will be applied and transcribed to

the distribution area in which it was earned at the original institution. (2.C.4, 2.C.5, 2.C.6, 2.C.7, 2.C.8)

Undergraduate Programs

The general education requirements for all certificates, associate degrees (including the three direct transfer degrees) and the Bachelor of Technology in Applied Design require courses that are in the academic core area. Four programs include academic general education: the Bachelor of Technology in Applied Design and all three Direct Transfer Agreement programs. Each requires coursework in writing, quantitative reasoning, humanities, social sciences and natural sciences. The mission of the Academic Core program is to help students develop foundational skills that prepare them for success in technical programs and careers, cultivate critical thinking, and foster life-long learning. Courses also support skill and knowledge development in LWIT's global outcomes and satisfy the related instruction requirement for professional-technical AAS degree and certificate programs.

While the number and breadth of general education courses is not as large as may be seen at a comprehensive community college, the Academic Core Division at LWIT has expanded over the last five years with more course offerings and more higher level courses offered. Academic course enrollment has tripled over the last ten years with academic FTE representing nearly a third of all college enrollment. The college distribution system is now more similar to those used at other community colleges and universities, and faculty have developed many more courses to fill each distribution area, giving students a range of courses previously unavailable to them.

Certificates of Proficiency require a lower number of academic credits and may include some developmental-level coursework. The college's catalog specifically lists general education and related instruction requirements for degrees and certificates in a clear and understandable manner, which enables students to plan accordingly.

General Education components of both baccalaureate degree programs and transfer associate degree programs have identifiable and assessable learning outcomes that support the mission of the college and the learning outcomes for those programs. Related instruction components of applied degree and certificate programs additionally support program goals and outcomes and are identifiable and assessable. Related instruction is not embedded in LWIT program curricula; it is provided through the Academic Core Program. The 2009 Focused Interim Report commended LWIT on compliance with the Commission's standards regarding outcomes assessment, and also on the organization of assessment efforts. While assessment efforts are not completely pervasive, faculty members who were interviewed reported that assessment is becoming more and more a part of the culture at LWIT. Faculty also expressed a need for continued institutional focus and training to keep outcomes assessment moving ahead in the future. (2.C.9, 2.C.10, 2.C.11)

Bachelor of Technology in Applied Design (BTAD)

LWIT's proposal to offer a new applied baccalaureate degree program was approved by the state of Washington in 2008. Later that year, LWIT submitted a major substantive change for the Bachelor of Technology in Applied Design to the NWCCU. In fall, 2009, NWCCU granted candidacy status and LWIT opened the program for student admission. The bachelor's degree program provides the opportunity for associate degree graduates in design-related fields to develop the skills needed to become lead designers, supervisors and project managers, leading teams of technical professionals. Program students primarily come from LWIT lower division programs such as Multimedia Design and Production, Video and Web Production, Digital Gaming and Media, Architectural Graphics and Engineering Graphics. Students also transfer in from surrounding community colleges. Core curriculum in the program emphasizes design process, design technology, project management, managing creativity, entrepreneurship, and professional issues. The program supports the college's mission and strategic plan by providing students new and additional educational opportunities in professional and technical programs.

The BTAD Program, which is a selective admissions program, is well defined in the catalog and on the college's website. Information is clear about program requirements and admission procedures. A complete admissions packet includes requirements for an earned Associate of Applied Science Degree or equivalent from a regionally-accredited institution with a minimum of 70 quarter credits in an appropriate technical area of concentration, a minimum cumulative grade point average, letters of recommendation and an essay describing the candidate's interest in the degree.

Student advising services for BTAD students are the same as for other LWIT students, with most students using program faculty as advisors once they are in the BTAD program. Counseling is available to support all students with short-term issues that may affect their academic success and the completion of their degrees. Students have access to disability support services, the Employment Resource Center (for career assessment and information, labor market information, and connection to employment), and other student services areas.

Most of the BTAD degree program classes are offered in the Technology Center, a building completed in 2003 that offers media-equipped classrooms, the college library, academic offices and a student commons area. Classrooms are equipped with high-end projectors, printers and computers. At the request of students, an additional computer lab in the technology center is being renovated to provide additional space and equipment for the program.

In 2005, as part of the initial work to prepare for offering a Bachelor of Technology degree, LWIT commissioned a librarian from the University of Washington to complete an assessment of library resources. Recommendations from that review included the need to hire additional library staff and to increase funding for library resources to support the

baccalaureate program. Specifically to support this degree, a new full-time faculty librarian with appropriate degrees and experience at the four-year college level was hired to liaison with the program by providing informational instruction sessions and collection development. Over a period of three years the college invested \$175,000 into library print materials and online resources.

The program is staffed with qualified faculty and staff members, many who have experienced the business side of fields included in this degree. Several of the academic core faculty hold earned doctorates and also have university teaching experience. Some program management is accomplished by a full-time faculty lead who receives a release from one class per quarter. The dean of Applied Design Programs, who reports directly to the VP for Instruction and Student Services, provides other program oversight and leadership. Students and staff alike appear to be very proud of this new degree. One impact the program is having is on LWIT feeder programs: the BTAD has shown where those programs have weaknesses or where they may need curricular revision. Additionally, the program has contributed to the growth of the academic core of general education classes at LWIT. Thirdly, the BTAD has provided access for students to a baccalaureate program in the geographic area, especially one that currently has excellent employment opportunities.

The BTAD program maintains an advisory committee and adheres to the same administrative, program review and assessment processes as are used for other programs. Enrollment response to the program has been good, especially from current or past LWIT students. Data for the first two years of operation demonstrate that BTAD has higher retention and completion rates than the institutional average for two-year programs. The 2010-11 enrollment began fall term with thirty-seven students; thirty-four remained by spring term and nineteen graduated. On-going program sustainability is supported financially by a state FTE funding formula, program revenues (tuition and fees), and continued funding from the state of Washington in the amount of \$252,000 per year. Tuition for this program is two times higher than for lower division courses. Program faculty are aware of some student placement data, but a formal student survey will be conducted in the next few months to determine broader placement outcomes.

Concern: Despite the existence of the Instructional Council and other committees, there appears to be a lack of connection between faculty recommendations and administrative decisions. Whether a communication gap or procedure flaw, faculty members appear to believe that they are being left out of significant academic and operational decision-making. (2.C.5)

Continuing Education and Non-Credit Programs

The Extended Learning Department's charge is aligned with the institution's mission. The Department provides noncredit courses to assist individuals to advance their career options, to refine their professional skills and knowledge for the workforce, and to achieve personal enrichment. Experienced faculty and community experts teach the

courses in classrooms and through online vendors such as Ed2go and Gatlin. In addition, the institution provides industry training for incumbent workers.

The Executive Director of Extended and Global Learning administers continuing education. An Associate Dean is responsible for programming offered.

Faculty representing the disciplines and fields of work are appropriately involved in the planning and evaluation of the institution's continuing education and special learning activities. They assist in establishing the quality of and overseeing instructional programs. They have majority membership on key committees: Instructional Council, Curriculum Review Committee, and the Educational Assessment Committee which have roles in reviewing continuing education and special learning activities.

Credit or CEUS are granted according to generally accepted norms by means of state regulations and the institutional curriculum review process which includes Educational Assessment. Non-credit courses that meet institution-specified criteria can be awarded one CEU per ten hours of instruction.

Records of CEU's earned by students are maintained by Enrollment Services. Non-credit course records are maintained by the Office of Extended Learning and are kept in the Student Management System. (2.C.16, 2.C.17, 2.C.18, 2.C.19)

Standard 2.D: Student Support Resources

By design LWIT's Student Support Resources supports and enhances student success consistent with its mission at both campuses for most students. Specifically, the team noted that international students are not being served justly through the current placement of international students within the organizational structure and with Core Theme Three. By not being included with student services, international students, for example, are not fully informed of program requirements or job placement limitations in a coordinated, timely manner. Consistent with the nature of college programs and methods of delivery, the institution should create an effective, fully integrated learning environment with appropriate programs and services that support learning needs of all students—domestic and international (2.D.1, 2.D.3).

As noted in the self-study and verified by the team through direct observation, student forum comments and the student satisfaction survey, LWIT adequately provides for the safety and security of its students and property. Moreover, campus safety policies, procedures, and statistics are readily available and assessable (2.D.2).

As verified in the faculty forum, the college works with students to make appropriate arrangements as programs and/or courses are eliminated (2.D.4).

The evaluators noted that the college continues to embrace student placement with a proactive assessment center and a highly educated, passionate core of cross-trained

advisors (and faculty counselor) throughout student development, enrollment services, financial aid, TRiO, and workforce development through professional development opportunities including the Master Advising course and weekly Friday meetings. Although the LWIT catalog does not specify course sequencing by term, a self-advising safety net does exist through the use of mandatory prerequisites. Conversely, the college catalog and supplemental materials (i.e. program handbooks) clearly states its mission, core themes, rights and responsibilities for students, and all policies, resources, program expectations and opportunities pertinent to students and student success (2.D.5, 2.D.6, 2.D.10).

As validated by the team, LWIT safely secures the retention of student records and student identity, adhering to the *General Retention Schedule for Washington's Community and Technical College System* and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) through consistent procedures, quarterly FERPA reminders emailed to all faculty and staff, and student identity safeguards (2.D.7, 2.D.14).

The Financial Aid Office provides an effective and accountable program of financial aid consistent with its mission, student needs, and institutional resources. Information regarding categories of financial assistance is published and readily made available and explained to students through outreach efforts and a highly skilled, cross-trained staff (2.D.8, 2.D.9). The FAO should be recognized for its ability to continually meet or exceed deadlines, process awards, and streamline efforts.

Student clubs, highly steeped with academic-ties and noteworthy achievements including merit status and placing at national competitions, supports and contributes to the college's mission. Student programs and auxiliary services including food services and the bookstore also enhances the quality of student life as demonstrated by the student satisfaction survey results, student supported menus and an active Bookstore Advisory Committee (2.D.11, 2.D.12).

Standard 2.E: Library And Information Resources

The Library/Learning Commons provides physical collections and digital assets accessible online which are sufficient to support the instructional needs of the college consistent with the college mission and core themes. Following the last Full Scale Evaluation in 2006, the acquisitions budget was increased and considerable effort made to insure that the information resources are current, selected to reflect course and program offerings, and available to support instruction wherever offered and however delivered. The Library/Learning commons is open 65.5 hours per week. One of the factors driving a shift from physical to online electronic resources is the expectation that resources will be readily available even when the library/learning commons is not open. Library databases include periodical databases, full-text electronic books, and online reference books. All online materials are accessible both on and off-campus. For materials not owned or licensed for use, users can request interlibrary loan. (2.E.1)

Planning for library and information resources is primarily the responsibility of the Associate Dean for Business and Learning Resources, library staff, and the Library Advisory Committee. After the last Full Scale Evaluation in November 2006, the Library Advisory Committee prepared a Library Action Plan in 2007. Many of the objectives identified in that plan have been achieved; others are ongoing. During 2011-2012, the Library Advisory Committee and staff will update the Library Action Plan to reflect current and anticipated requirements. This committee includes library staff, a representative from student government and faculty. Five new faculty members have volunteered to serve on the LAC this year. The committee meets quarterly to review usage reports and survey data, feedback about service quality, and assist with collection development.

Information about user satisfaction with library and information services has been collected with an online survey instrument for the years 2009, 2010, and 2011. These data indicate a high level of satisfaction with the staff in terms of readiness to respond to users' questions, willingness to help users, giving users individual attention, employees who are consistently courteous and have the knowledge to answer user questions. In the 2011 survey, 96% of respondents indicated that the library has the "electronic information resources that I need" (rated average or above on a scale of 1-5). Usage reports are available for the subscription databases and other licensed electronic resources. Librarians analyze these reports and make collection management decisions based on usage and cost. (2.E.2)

Library/Learning Commons faculty and staff, supported by the Associate Dean of Business and Learning Resources, have developed a multifaceted instructional program based on collaboration with individual faculty and the Library Advisory Committee. Over the past few years, they have worked to change the perception of the library as simply a depository for materials. The Library/Learning Commons is a friendly, service-oriented accessible, learning space which does not preclude conversation and/or food. In addition to the changes in the library as place, collection development is moving from print to digital and librarians play an increasingly visible, important role in instruction. There are two full-time tenured library faculty members. One librarian is responsible for supporting the BTAD degree program. One librarian is primarily responsible for the STAR program. Through direct instruction in various classes, participation in college-wide committees (e.g., Curriculum Review Committee, Instructional Council, and Library Advisory Committee), and collection development liaison responsibilities, they interact with teaching faculty on a regular basis. Librarians attend department meetings and provide workshops to acquaint faculty and staff with new resources.

Librarians are available to students and faculty during open hours for face-to-face (point of use) instruction by appointment or during regularly scheduled desk hours.

Librarians offer classroom instruction in information literacy. The number of sessions offered and the number of students served has increased year to year. Guides and rubrics are available, designed by the librarians, which are intended to help people score their

assignments. These are teaching-learning tools which help both faculty and students assess progress towards meeting learning objectives. (2.E.3)

Evaluating quality of resources begins with selection of materials. The Library has a collection development policy that outlines criteria for selection in order to acquire resources in all formats that serve all areas of the college. The librarians use professional review journals to make selection decisions. They review reference guides and accreditation requirements for programs that have additional specialized requirements (e.g. Nursing, Dental Assisting, Physical Therapy). Faculty members are encouraged to recommend resources for their technical and academic areas to understand how the resources are being used and to evaluate the adequacy of resources. These reports are shared with the Library Advisory Committee, College Council and Instructional Council. During the visit, the usage reports available to the evaluator showed a fairly consistent pattern of increased use over the past 24 months. Cost is a consideration in renewal of electronic resources but would not be the only consideration because of the importance of augmenting the onsite collections with resources available anytime, anywhere. Access to periodicals through subscription databases is very cost effective and greatly expands resources available to students and faculty. Faculty and student surveys reflect satisfaction with the resources available. The Library/Learning Commons uses a “3M” security system and gate to protect the physical collection. The electronic resources are password protected by the library’s EZ Proxy system to assure compliance with licensing agreements. (2.E.4)

Standard 2.F: Financial Resources

Lake Washington Institute of Technology (LWIT) is one of 34 public community and technical colleges in the State of Washington and part of the Washington State Community and Technical College System. As part of a state system, it receives significant oversight from the state through a series of policies and procedures and utilizes a centralized administrative system for financial and information reporting. The College is audited by the Washington State Auditor’s office on a biennial basis.

The institution has demonstrated financial stability through difficult economic times by bringing expenditures in line with revenues, funding reserves, and then utilizing those reserves to strategically support its programs and services. Financial planning reflects available funds and a multi-year horizon for financial changes.

LWIT has made progress on their strategic plan goal of shared governance through use of representative committees such as the finance and budget committee. This committee has increased the transparency of budget priority setting and provided constituencies with additional opportunities for input prior to decision-making. In addition the finance and budget committee is used to inform representatives about financial conditions, budget development processes and policies, and acts as a reporting mechanism for developments in the budget process.

Faculty and staff indicate there is still lack of communication and clarity about budgetary investments made outside the defined finance and budget committee process. There is concern that the college community does not have a clear common understanding of the shared governance model, individual roles, and that decision making is not followed by communications congruent with input received from constituencies.

The College regularly reports financial results to the college and governing board. Because LWIT is a small part of the State of Washington's overall financial report, the college doesn't prepare stand-alone GAAP financial statements as its results are incorporated into the statewide audited financial statements.

Capital budgets are reflective of the college mission and core themes, but are largely subject to state approval and state priority setting. Strategic use of local reserves have been utilized outside the state approval process to address some of the colleges identified needs, but in order to be sustainable, equipment replacement will need to part of the regular, ongoing budget allocation process.

Debt for capital outlay is subject to state approval and control as it impacts the state bonding authority limits.

Fundraising activities are governed by institutional policies and are conducted in a professional and ethical manner. A foundation finance committee and college administrators respectively administer Foundation and College endowments and their investments. The organization maintains complete records concerning these funds. The institution has a written agreement that clearly defines its relationship with the Foundation.

Standard 2.G: Physical and Technological Infrastructure

Instructional facilities are sufficient to achieve the institution's mission and goals. Facilities are constructed and maintained with due regard for health and safety and for access by the physically disabled.

The management and operation of instructional facilities are adequate at this time, but there is concern that to ensure the continuing quality and safety necessary to support the educational programs and support services of the institution, a greater ongoing investment will be required. Both maintenance expenditures per square foot and maintenance staff per square foot are well below that of comparable Washington Community Colleges. Independent assessment by the State Board of Community Colleges indicates that over the long term this will reduce the life cycle of the college infrastructure.

The institution adopts, publishes, reviews regularly, and adheres to policies and procedures regarding the safe use, storage, and disposal of hazardous or toxic materials.

While the institution has developed and implemented its 2000 master plan for its physical development and it is consistent with its mission and long-range educational plans, the college has delayed the regular review and update in order to deal with budget reductions. The last update was in 2005. The college will need to update its master facilities plan to both incorporate the core themes, and to provide the framework for future facilities development.

Consistent with its mission, core themes, and characteristics, the institution has appropriate and adequate technology systems and infrastructure to support its management and operational functions, academic programs, and support services. The college has embarked on a modernization of its technology infrastructure, already completing improvements to networking infrastructure, cabling, Wi-Fi, and phone systems and has a plan in place for additional comprehensive improvements.

Coordination between administrative and Instructional departments for technological infrastructure planning is sporadic and fragmented. Administrative infrastructure planning is separate from instructional planning, and not normally coordinated. While input from constituencies is sought separately for administrative and instructional departments, it is not integrated into an overall plan. Instead the institution develops and implements multiple technology update and replacement plans to ensure its technological infrastructure is adequate to support its operations, programs, and services. The plan for replacement of administrative computing technology utilizes a regular replacement cycle, while the instructional plan features a cascading replacement strategy which attempts to match computing requirements from highest to lowest with the capabilities of the computer inventory.

Section Three

Standard 3.A: Institutional Planning

In 2006, guided by external expertise, a college steering committee developed an approach for achieving strategic plan objectives. The committee then held a three-day, off-site conference of approximately 80 college members who developed the first draft of a strategic plan. After broad dissemination and feedback, a second draft was developed and circulated. In September 2007, the board of trustees approved the final 2007-2012 Strategic Plan. The strategic planning steering committee was then disbanded. What replaced it were teams charged with implementing the plan, and an Institutional Effectiveness Committee, charged with review of the progress of the plan, ensuring the capability of data systems and analysis, as well as the definition of necessary revisions. As a result of this process, the college calls the plan a “living document.”

It is clear that the college engages in planning processes that are ongoing and participatory, and the college appears therefore to be well positioned to use its plan for accomplishment of its core themes and the fulfillment of its mission. (3.A.1, 3.A.3) However, there was a concern expressed in some meetings with faculty and staff that they had insufficient input into decision-making structures and processes about matters in which they might be expected to have a direct and reasonable interest. (3.A.2)

The college has integrated its planning and budget allocation processes, via its collaborative and open activity of the finance and budget committee. This committee is charged with tying budget priorities to the strategic plan and core themes. (3.A.4) An interesting issue that surfaced in meetings with staff and faculty concerned the extent to which the finance and budget committee’s most recent priorities were or were not embraced by the executive cabinet, and whether resulting changes were appropriately communicated back to the finance and budget committee. There may be a need to more rigorously close the loop with various shared governance committees, or to at least establish clarity about who is responsible for what.

As part of its planning process, the college maintains an emergency management plan. The plan is reviewed and implemented by the college safety committee. The college maintains as well an official emergency notification system, called the e2 Campus. (3.A.5)

Standard 3.B (Core Theme Planning) is addressed holistically, in the context of each of the four individual core theme discussions, in Section Four below.

Section Four

Standard 3.B: Core Theme Planning and Standard Four: Effectiveness and Improvement

These two standards are treated holistically below, across the institution's four core themes.

Core Theme One: Pathways

The concept of pathways has been of fundamental value to the College since 2007 when it was a documented topic of discussion at a strategic planning retreat and into the 2010 process by which the College community selected it as one of the College's four core themes (Standards 3.B1 and 3.B.2). The Pathways theme's principle is to provide students with the ability to access and start at any level of education, leave the institution with workforce ready skills, return to enhance their skills, or to prepare for transfer to another college. The Pathway theme aligns with the institution's Strategic Plan Strategic Direction 1, supports three programmatic mission areas set forth by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, and spans student transitions from high school to college, and from college to the workforce and back. The Pathways theme encompasses every instructional program at the college, and "affects the full range of student support services."

The Institutional Effectiveness Committee selected two outcomes by which to evaluate and improve on the Pathways endeavor: 1) Educational pathways support career ladders and 2) Students demonstrate progression through educational pathways. The Pathways philosophy does not assume that degree attainment is a full measure of success.

Five indicators that encompass educational and workforce areas were used to assess the Pathways core theme. Each of these indicators was supported by an assessment measure with analysis supplemented by both state measures, such as the Student Achievement Initiative (SAI) and local evaluations, such as the instructional program review process. The data gathered and used in evaluation supports decisions regarding resource allocation, program selection, and program improvement.

4.A. and 4.B Assessment and Improvement

The college meets or exceeds the thresholds for outcome indicators identified by the institution to assess the Pathways core themes. However, it doesn't appear that indicators align with each Pathway the institution has identified. The indicators and assessment results are thus:

1. Educational pathways provided by instructional programs are aligned with career ladders.

This indicator was analyzed using labor market information from the Washington State's Workforce Explorer, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the Occupational Outlook Handbook. This information indicates that all degree and certificate programs are developed with specific occupations in mind. Although, it appeared that five programs out of 40 indicated that the level of College certification granted in those programs was below the educational hiring requirement in those fields, it was found that there was a misalignment of LWIT program titles and employment titles. This issue has been resolved. Program title changes have since been changed to align with the accurate employment title for which students are being trained.

2. High school students make substantial progress by completing four or more quarters or graduate over a two-year period.

The Academy earned its highest level of performance in 2008 when evaluated against its historical performance, but the institution wants more longitudinal data to determine trends. Over the five years studied, the performance indicators rose slightly and then dipped slightly before rising again. Retention data collected initially reported low retention rates; however, some data was missing due to the different collection systems in place, thus missing actual student progress information. In the time since the self evaluation, the high school staff developed an in-house data collection system with the assistance of the Gateway to College grant that can be accurately compared to the institution's data system to monitor students' progress. It is expected that this additional report will assist in more accurately reporting student success rates.

3. Basic skills students transition to non-basic skills classes.

LWIT basic skills students transitioned into college at a higher rate than its peer institutions in the consortium of five Washington community and technical colleges to which it belongs. These results are based in part on the institution's commitment of resources and staff. It has developed seven I-BEST (Integrated Basic Education and Skills training) certificates, included library staff in providing information and research skills development activities for students, dedicated specific student services personnel to assist in recruiting and advising students, provided orientations to college for students, implemented intensive follow-along advising shared by advising staff and faculty, and provided funding through grants for supportive services and scholarships.

4. Developmental English and math students reach the required degree or certificate levels in those subjects.

The College institutional research office produced a report that the majority of students move from the developmental writing sequence into college writing at much lower than the national average.

The institution hypothesizes that these low rates in writing may be attributed to these low rates in writing to "factors as varied as the assessment and placement system in use, to classroom methodology, to the lack of a writing center, or to the characteristics of the

student body at the College.” A new faculty research group was charged with developing recommendations for improving the writing program in Spring 2011. At the present time, the English faculty is continuing to work with technical faculty to develop curricula and delivery methods based on successful curricular changes that the math department has developed that better meets the needs of technical students. One faculty member will be piloting an applied approach to writing for Social and Human Services students in Spring 2012 for possible further adaptation for other programs.

LWIT developmental math students progressed through the sequence of all developmental math courses at higher rates than at the national rate, but still lower than the institution would like to see. The institution desires more data on these successes, but believes that at least two factors influenced these positive results: the addition of a supporting lab and that mathematics faculty have redesigned the curriculum to better meet the needs of students in the technical programs.

5. Students stating an intent to transfer to baccalaureate programs do so at an increasing rate

LWIT’s transfer rates have increased in recent years--in 2004, 4.4 percent of the students who stated their intent to transfer did so. By 2008, 19.6 percent transferred to another college--before the College added the BTAD degree program. Expectations are that transfer rates will continue to increase, those rates will include those enrolling in BTAD in 2009, and the 2010 approval of direct transfer degree agreements with other colleges in technology, pre-nursing, and business. A proposal to add a baccalaureate degree in transportation and logistics is being developed at the present time, which should also eventually increase the transfer rate.

As reported in the self-evaluation the institution recognizes areas needing further development, and perhaps, improvement in regards to assessing the Pathways core theme: “The Pathways core theme review process produced data supporting ongoing initiatives as well as making new recommendations for improvements to programs and services. While the data sets used in the evaluation of this core theme are meaningful and produced excellent preliminary results for this study, the information gathered will be refined and made more useful for review of the pathways theme.”

Core Theme Two: Student Achievement

The Student Achievement core theme states that the college “enables students to gain the skills and knowledge needed to achieve their goals and participate as citizens in the global workforce.” LWIT strives to place student learning at the center of courses and programs.

Based on student feedback and discussion with faculty, this objective appears to be foremost in the college’s goals. Students have close relationships with instructors and professors, demonstrating a high level of respect for the instructional faculty. The faculty members bring a very strong background in applied knowledge of the programs and

professions that are being presented and taught. These strengths are similarly evidenced in catalog entries, class descriptions and outcomes specified as required for degrees.

LWIT student achievement is measured against the following types of indicators:

2.1 LWIT students graduating with degrees and certificates of proficiency programs will demonstrate technical skills suitable for employment in their chosen fields. (p. 99 self-study)

Addressed in Indicators:

- 1.A- Program Learning Outcomes
- 1.C-Licensure Exams and prep

2.2 Students graduating from LWIT will demonstrate global outcomes. (p. 99 self-study)

Addressed in indicators:

- 3.A graduate reports
- 3.B wages results
- 1.B global outcomes

2.3 By 2012, increase graduation rates (p .99 self-study) Not specifically addressed in core themes section. No plan of action or data to support increase other than the enrollment increases that occur annually at most campuses in the nation.

2.4 LWIT will demonstrate that college curriculum and facilities are aligned with current industry practices and implement a process to ensure identification and responsiveness to future trends. (pg. 99 self-study)

Addressed in Indicators:

- 3.B wage results and industry partnerships
- Obtaining Job Improvement- Employer relationships

Core Theme intended Outcome # 1, Students obtain necessary skills and knowledge

Indicator 1.A:

Course Learning Outcomes and Assessments- Upon individual review of programs, syllabi and course outcomes are thorough and concise. Appendix O (pp. A91-A100) gives an example of a sample syllabus, this example is used campus-wide but content is at the discretion of the individual deans.

Program Learning Outcomes and Assessment- Tracking of changes and outcomes are measured and evaluated at three levels within the program (the faculty, deans and director of educational assessment) through a Programs Outcomes Grid (POG). The example provided at Appendix P (p. A101) gives a small window into the controls in place for the accounting A.A.S. degree. If changes are made to the POG for any program the changes and results of such changes must be documented on the POG sheets. Outcomes are then changed in the outcomes deliverables in the college catalog. Learning outcomes are also

evaluated at an interdisciplinary level through the CRC committee, where content, outcomes and prerequisites can be changed to further match overall outcomes.

Institution-wide Learning Outcomes (Global Outcomes) and Assessment – Global outcomes were derived from past academic goals of the college before the cultural shift and new overall goals that build upon principles in the college’s strategic plan. Students pursuing a certification must be trained in all five global outcomes in classwork before graduation. Students pursuing an associate program will be trained in each of the five global outcomes twice upon graduation. How each outcome is presented and embedded into classwork is developed and assessed at the program level through faculty collaboration. Evaluations to deliver better instruction and outcome goals are also at the program faculty level in combination with the office of educational assessment to better serve the students.

Program Review- Program reviews at LWIT are similar to program review standards across the Northwest. Programs are slated for review every five (5) years or on a regular rotation. Appendix Q (p .A103-A106) shows the review schedule that has been followed from Fall 2008-2009 through Fall 2014. Separate program review documents reflect that these reviews are being maintained and are completed in rotation. In addition, POG references and documents have been included in the documentation.

Indicator 1.B

The global outcomes report is a student survey that is sent out via email or available at a student services office upon final application for graduation. As a result, satisfaction numbers only reflect the views of students that participate in the survey, for better or for worse. While the data provided shows strong support and student satisfaction, the survey may not reflect the views of a truly representative group. However, based on conversations with faculty and students on the subject, the number of students that agree or strongly agree in the report appear to be an accurate reflection.

Indicator 1.C

LWIT’s Allied Health programs appear to be the only programs that use licensure exams as a requirement for graduation from the program. There was data in the self-study provided by the college providing some indicators and measures of success but there was no other statistical data in the appendix to support this. There was evidence in program outcomes and in the outcomes in the College Catalog expressing the importance of and training for licensing examinations.

Core Themes Intended Outcomes 2 : Students Achieve Educational Goals

Indicator 2.A

Student Achievement Initiative (SAI) momentum points are evaluated by the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges (at the state level) in Washington. The SBCTC tracks student progress with measures that are based on explicit criteria, but LWIT interprets the data for use in achievement goals on the campus. LWIT and students have increased their momentum points in the last year and continue to perform above the state requirements for Community and Technical Colleges.

Indicator 2.B

LWIT (through information provided in the self-study and through conversation with faculty and administration/student service staff) appears to exceed standards required by the State of Washington. Upward strides are a result of the fact that LWIT is and has been a college that has the ability to bring in a student at any level of education and prepare him or her for college level coursework. Three major contributors to this success are the Lake Washington Technical Academy, the ESL program, and the basic skills program.

Indicator 2.C

The measurement used for the comparison to the state standard in retention for the first 15 credits (or the points awarded and compared to state standards for 30 credits) was unclear. However, the explicit examples in other documentation on success of programs at LWIT suggest that these results are probably true.

Indicator 2.D

As in Indicator 2.C, while the information isn't completely verifiable through provided statistics, one can probably draw the same conclusion as in 2.C

College Resources and Programs Focusing on Students Obtaining Educational Goals

A Title III grant was awarded to the college to support faculty and student services collaboration in identifying struggling students and interacting with them early on in their education careers. In addition to faculty support, monies were supplied to library services, tutoring in academic cores and a writing center.

Core Theme Intended Outcome: Completers Obtain Jobs

Indicator 3.A

Graduate reports for the campus are generated and fed back to the college through a state agency that tracks employment and placement through many different ways, such as social security numbers used in payroll taxes to identify what types of employment students are landing post-completion. Recently the college has made improvements to track student success and job placement in its own database, to more accurately track placement rates and geographic location. This is a practice that appears to be of value

because the Washington state information totals are consistently two years behind current graduating cohorts.

Indicator 3.B

As in 3.A, wages results for completers are generated and fed back from statistical data mined by the state of Washington. The same improvements would apply to these indicators as well.

Student service staff, ERC, and achievement staff have indicated that they are considering implementing another version of the job seeker website and email system. The current system doesn't allow tracking of placement or even which students apply for employment. Talk of a shift from the "connection" point linking students to job opportunities, into the actual "middleman" collecting applications submitted by students, may help in increased tracking and placement.

A strong connection between industry and LWIT is evident in the specific classrooms and lab spaces. Specialized training (that is market-driven through industry partners and advisory boards) is key in the successful outcomes that LWIT students regularly achieve.

Use of Results for Improvement

1. Degree or Certificate Survey- As stated in the self-study, a revision of the 2006 survey instrument was needed. Therefore, the evaluator has no firm platform standard to measure against. It is evident through reports and through conversation with appropriate faculty and staff that LWIT has taken strides to improve survey and report data as a measure of achievement.
2. Analysis of student learning at the institutional level using new versions of surveys- Similar to the above, improvement has been made and should continue.
3. Programs Outcomes Assessments- Continued expansion and improvement to make results feel "closer to home" and the colleges own survey facts.
4. Program Review- The program review data that was provided to the evaluation team was thorough and complete. The POG data sheets are a nice addition and clear indication of changes and improvement for consistently changing workforce development degree programs.

Related to students obtaining educational goals recommendations for improvement

1. TRiO Support services grant- From conversations with student services staff in the TRiO program, LWIT has secured the grant funding that was previously recommended they seek. The learning lab has been established with grant monies and is open to all LWIT students, not only TRiO-identified students.

2. Tutoring –As the college has expanded and improved space through grant money, resources and different types of tutors are available for different student learning styles. Continuing commitment to the success of the Learning Lab and Tutoring services is recommended.
3. Pre-requisites- Curriculum change is evaluated and explored at the program level through collaboration of diverse instructional faculty and through the review of program outcomes and POG review sheets. This practice is ongoing and with continued strategy to “fine-tune,” probably will further improve.
4. Early- Intervention and Faculty Advising- The Title III grant is currently employing an early warning system identifying at-risk students. Communication with instructional faculty and Achievement staff indicates success in its initial stages.
5. First-Year Seminar- Although talk of a first year seminar was discussed with the staff in Student Achievement and faculty members, there is no seminar or orientation to date. Advisors and committed faculty members take dual roles to help orient and advise incoming students.

Obtaining Jobs improvements

1. Data availability- As mentioned previously, data on job placement is obtained through the State of Washington Department of Labor. While it is a organized system for data collection statewide it does not accurately reflect the successes of LWIT in placing graduates in jobs. Factors that are missed are students using skills obtained at LWIT in professions that are not commonly associated with that degree program. Strides to mine this data locally at the institution level are not easy but will much more accurately identify successes for LWIT.
2. Employer relationship- Evidence of using grant monies to further develop partnership with industry wasn’t immediately apparent or available for review and, in tough economic times, better use of grant funds may be appropriate. The level of industrial relationships that is delivered to the college through strong faculty connections and commitment is evident and is commended.

Student Achievement Core Theme Summary – The Student Achievement core theme, which describes student learning, educational attainment, and employment of LWIT students and graduates, is the convergence of efforts to prepare students for today’s careers and tomorrow’s opportunities. The data examined in support of student achievement is appropriate, and the interpretation of this data show that the student achievement core theme is being implemented. Assessment and implementation of improvement recommendations will ensure the college’s further success in facilitating student achievement in the future. Improvements in successes, participation, identification, and implementation are contributing to the ongoing success of the students at LWIT.

Core Theme Three: External Engagement

Strong ties with business, labor, educational organizations and the community are core to the External Engagement Core Theme (EECT) and to the College's need to establish partnerships to support its mission of preparing students for careers and opportunities. Based on evidence from the Year Seven Report, appendices, supporting documents and interviews with personnel, LWIT has developed outcomes and established measures to support the outcomes of the External Engagement Core Theme, which in turn supports the strategic goals and mission of the institution.

The EECT has three major outcomes, utilizing seven indicators:

- Outcome 1, Employer Engagement
- Outcome 2, College receives supplemental resources through community engagement
- Outcome 3, International Engagement

Although these are the three formal outcomes presented for the core theme, additional outcomes, which give insight into the EECT are listed in Standard 1.B: to create experiential learning for students; to maintain up-to-date classroom practices and curriculum; to support professional development and applied research; to sustain partnerships that improve the offerings of the college; and to engage a variety of organizations to support long-term growth and development for the college.

Standard 3.B Planning

Planning for the development of core themes took place through a collaborative process in 2010. Faculty, staff, students and external partners participated in surveys and focus groups that contributed to the accreditation planning committee's identification of four core themes, which were reviewed and discussed by college councils and forums. While some core themes appear to include programs with parallel efforts and outcomes, this core theme relies on programs that are not necessarily coordinated through organizational structure and may not naturally connect. Because of the shortness of time this institution had to go through core theme planning, there appears to be a general consensus from faculty and staff involved with the External Engagement Core Theme that some of the content of the core theme will likely change or be revised in the future. In fact, concern was expressed that using international student enrollment as a measure for this core theme, rather than including that enrollment within the Student Achievement Core Theme puts international students in the position of being considered income generators rather than part of the general student body.

Indicators selected for assessment are mainly housed in four areas: instructional programs, student support services, fundraising and international programs, but they rely on performance from many other parts of the institution. For example, the work of instructional programs and student support services contributes to employer engagement through providing external workplace experiences for students. The Employment Resource Center provides career exploration, job search assistance and employment

resources for students, alumni and community members. Program advisory committees (from various program areas) offer support and advice on current job needs and curriculum to contribute to program planning and to help graduates obtain jobs. These areas contribute holistically to the EECT's first outcome, employer engagement. The other two outcomes are supported by the work of the Grant's Office, the Foundation, and International Programs. Because the programs and offices contributing to this core theme have such varied and distinct programmatic intent, planning for cohesive core theme outcomes may be a challenge. While activities are being undertaken to achieve stated outcomes, evidence does not suggest a strong connection between those activities and any overarching plan based on assessment of collected data. Is there a well-understood approach to connecting planning, allocation of resources and achievement of outcomes among those responsible for the activities associated with this core theme's intended outcomes? While allocation of funds in these areas can be determined, how does that relate to support for activities specifically designed and assessed to achieve the stated outcomes? (4.A.4 and 4.A.5)

A recent revision of the college's 2007-2012 Strategic Plan aligned it with the newly-created core themes. Planning for the EECT is consistent with this plan, particularly under Student Learning, (2.5 and 2.7) and Financial Success (7.3). Additionally, the college's Strategic Enrollment Plan presents an enrollment target number for international student FTE as a percentage of general student FTE.

Although the college programs contributing to this core theme appear to support external engagement, it is not apparent why some external stakeholders were selected for inclusion (local employers, program advisory committee members, and international programs) while others were not (local school and educational districts, social service organizations or area colleges). (3.B.2) Additionally, although each contributing program has its own planning processes, it is not always apparent how those processes are connected to the planning for the External Engagement Core Theme. Specific data selected by the Institutional Effectiveness Committee used to measure the accomplishment of core theme outcomes has been included with each indicator. For example, results of a survey were used to measure the engagement of advisory committee members and to gain information that could then lead to program improvement and greater committee involvement in workforce programs.

Standard 4.A Assessment

Assessment of the EECT in relation to the college's mission fulfillment is based upon a mission fulfillment framework that was approved by the Board of Trustees last April. This framework also serves the Trustees as a "data dashboard" of indicators that will be used in the future to measure college effectiveness. Mission fulfillment is based upon core theme achievement, which is measured by the measurement and assessment of core theme outcomes.

The External Engagement Core Theme uses a variety of assessment measures set by the Institutional Effectiveness Committee and informed by institutional plans to measure the achievement of intended outcomes. Each indicator is awarded from one to three points, depending upon the level of achievement compared to a given “threshold” of achievement. In some cases, although the process for establishing thresholds is explained, the reasoning behind a given threshold is not completely understandable. Several of the indicators are heavily influenced by the economy. For example, the number of job postings on the Employment Resource Center online job board has been very inconsistent, dropping greatly in 2009, mostly due to labor market conditions. Another similar indicator and threshold is 2.A, Increase in grant revenue. The threshold is set at “consistent increase year over year”. Stated that way, the indicator may be difficult to achieve. The college can track these measures and indicators, but it may or may not have the ability to directly influence a change in them.

Standard 4.B Improvement

While the EECT review process produced data that supports ongoing initiatives and programs, it also produced some new recommendations for improvement and for stronger linkage to institutional and department plans. Because the core themes have only been in place for such a short period of time, closing the loop on assessment and improvement has been a challenge, yet the Year Seven Report identifies several specific changes that could be made to inform planning, decision-making and allocation of resources.

One such change is for the External Engagement Core Theme to drive grant efforts and other funding requests and to ensure that both are aligned with each other and with institutional strategic plans. Another early recommendation for improvement would establish a centralized customer relations management system to improve the analysis of employer engagement and to identify needed program and service offerings. In recent years the college has been successful in connecting with external stakeholders to develop partnerships that have benefitted LWIT students. The EECT enables the college to go beyond narrative description and to put into place a process for specific improvement. By examining each outcome and the measures and the thresholds used for assessment, LWIT has begun the process of refining the elements of each core theme in order to focus on meaningful achievement.

Core Theme Four: College Community

The three outcomes for College Community Core theme—a supportive learning environment, a supportive working environment for staff and faculty, and LWIT is a good steward of resources—supports the college’s mission of preparing students for today’s careers and tomorrow’s opportunities. Per the indicators and criteria the college selected to self-evaluate itself, the college overwhelmingly achieved its goals in a relatively short period of time. Consequently, the team questions how meaningful each indicator is to the core theme with respect to the selected threshold considering the college assessed

itself (and validated by the team) of achieving 24 points out of a possible 27 points based on the predetermined rubric (1.B.2). Within 22 months, reaching perfection was nearly attainable.

On a positive note the evaluators commend the college as a whole for creating a supportive learning environment for students as indicated by the student satisfaction survey and affirmed by the resounding student accolades heard throughout the visit and the conscientious effort by the college to create an attractive, welcoming campus with areas for students to congregate and study both in the new building and older buildings. In addition to faculty using the Faculty Advising Support Tool (FAST) to issue early alerts to students, the availability and accessibility of auxiliary resources such as student development, TRiO, the faculty counselor, scholarships and financial aid, and student programming also support student learning. Although improving graduation rates within disadvantaged target populations is important, the evaluators view graduation rates for *all* students more fitting as an indicator of student achievement.

With regard to the second intended outcome, a supportive working environment for faculty and staff, the evaluators validated the college's assessment that the college generally provides and maintains a positive work environment despite recent budget constraints. Although the college exceeded its threshold for both indicators, the evaluators question the college's ability to continue to maintain a stable number of full-time tenured faculty and faculty in the tenure pipeline with a goal of 5+ fulltime tenured faculty/year and 7+ faculty in the tenure pipeline per year. The evaluators, however, appreciate the college's commitment in addressing the goal of every college program having a fulltime tenured faculty member and the initial consideration to include professional development as possible indicator in the future.

As with the previous two indicators, the college met or exceeded the threshold for each indicator within the third intended outcome. Although the college includes natural resources in its overarching description of the college community core theme, the third outcome strictly focuses on fiscal stewardship in terms of fiscal integrity and an open and transparent budget, which the college easily met. Consequently, the evaluators encourage the college to explore the possibility of broadening the scope whether a good steward of resources may indeed include natural resources and/or student allocated funds considering the team witnessed many green initiatives already in place including a highly visible recycling program, pesticide free grounds and two LEED buildings. Additionally, based on the conversations heard throughout the visit, consider at what "x" percent does exceeding the state allocated funds becomes a fiscal liability versus an asset.

Section Five

Standard 5.A: Mission Fulfillment

Based on its definition of mission fulfillment, and informed by the results of its analysis of accomplishment of its core theme objectives, LWIT develops and publishes evidence-based evaluations regarding the extent to which it is fulfilling its mission. The college reports a quantitative data of all assessment indicators associated with its core themes, including the number of indicator points possible, threshold performance values, and current indicator points, for each core theme.

The institutional effectiveness committee, charged by the president, regularly monitors the college's internal and external environments to determine how and to what degree changing circumstances may affect its mission and its ability to fulfill that mission.

LWIT has demonstrated that it is capable of adapting, when necessary, its mission, core themes, programs, and services to accommodate changing and emerging needs, trends, and influences to ensure enduring institutional relevancy, productivity, viability, and sustainability. The self-study process has provided evidence that the college is substantially fulfilling its mission, but the college avows that process has also identified opportunities for strengthening its performance and continuing to build on the progress made since 2006. (5.A.1, 5.A.2)

Standard 5.B: Adaptation and Sustainability

The institution evaluates regularly the adequacy of resources, capacity and effectiveness of operations, reviews cycles of planning, practices and allocation of resources. It uses results from its evaluations to make changes for improvement, as needed.

The major plans for the college include a strategic plan, a facilities master plan, an emergency management plan, and the operating, capital and associated student budgets. These are reviewed, evaluated, and revised via the governance committees, including college council, facilities planning, finance and budget, institutional effectiveness, and several others. Via these plans and the governance system, the college then assesses its strategic position, defines future directions and reviews and revises its mission, core themes, and indicators as appropriate. (5.B.1, 5.B.2, 5.B.3)

Findings and Conclusions:

Commendations

- 1) Lake Washington Institute of Technology has created a supportive learning environment for students. All students we spoke with, and we spoke with many, commended the faculty and staff for their passion and dedication to their students' success. Students who may not have believed they would be able to get a postsecondary education have come to this college and found ways to create better and more productive lives for themselves and their families. We commend all faculty and staff whose passion and dedication has made this possible. They are truly appreciated by the people whose lives they are changing.
- 2) The campus is spotless. The grounds are beautiful. There are spaces everywhere that permit students to congregate. This level of attention to detail indicates a pride of ownership by the whole community in the buildings and grounds, and by extension, in the college itself. We commend the faculty, staff, students and administration for the care they have taken with their college environment.
- 3) Lake Washington Institute of Technology is commended for establishing a viable and rigorous bachelor of technology in applied design degree that provides options for students to pursue further education for "today's careers and tomorrow's opportunities."

Recommendations:

- 1) While the program for international students has the potential to enrich the diversity and culture of the college, the evaluation committee recommends further deliberation on the placement of the program within the core themes in terms of effectively supporting student success through assessment and improvement of student achievement and student services. (2.D.1, 2.D.3, 3.A.1, 3.B.1, 4.A.4, 4.A.5, 5.B.1)
- 2) While the committee generally appreciated the well-organized, easy to read materials submitted, especially considering the condensed accreditation cycle, the team noted that many core theme indicators and corresponding thresholds were not well-aligned or challenging enough with respect to each core theme. The team recommends the college now take the time to reflect upon the appropriateness of each indicator and establish meaningful, sustainable goals or thresholds to achieve as the college moves forward with the next accreditation cycle (1.B.2)
- 3) While the team was impressed with the quality implementation of the first college baccalaureate program, there is a general concern about the planning and implementation process for future academic programs, including future

baccalaureate degrees. It is not clear that academic faculty and resources have been appropriately consulted in taking the next steps. (2.C.5)

- 4) The Evaluation Committee did not find consistent evidence that the institution demonstrates an effective and widely understood system of governance with clearly defined authority, rules, and responsibilities. Similarly, the committee did not find consistent evidence that its decision-making structures and processes make provision for the consideration of views of faculty, staff, administrators and students on matters in which they have a direct and reasonable interest. The committee recommends these matters be addressed.(2.A.1)