

Focused Interim Report

submitted to the

Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

by

Lake Washington Technical College

September 16, 2009



LAKE WASHINGTON TECHNICAL COLLEGE

11605 132ND AVENUE NE
KIRKLAND, WASHINGTON 98034-8506
(425)739-8100 FAX(425)739-8298
www.lwtc.ctc.edu

AL COLLEGE

KIRKLAND, WASHINGTON 98034-8506
(425)739-8100 FAX(425)739-8298
www.lwtc.ctc.edu



Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Response to Recommendation 1	2
Response to Recommendation 2	12
Response to Recommendation 3	21
Response to Recommendation 6	25
Response to Recommendation 7	29
Conclusion.....	34

Appendices

Recommendation 1 Appendices	R1.1
Recommendation 2 Appendices	R2.1
Recommendation 3 Appendices	R3.1
Recommendation 6 Appendices	R6.1
Recommendation 7 Appendices	R7.1

Introduction

Lake Washington Technical College (LWTC) received its last comprehensive evaluation in November 2006. The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities reaffirmed LWTC's accreditation in January 2007 with four commendations and ten recommendations.

Five of the recommendations included bookstore operation, part-time faculty employment, financial planning, debt use and limits, and investment policy. In January 2008, the Commission accepted a progress report on these recommendations and determined that the College met accreditation criteria in these areas.

The remaining five recommendations deal with:

- institutional effectiveness (Recommendation 1),
- educational assessment (Recommendation 2),
- student placement (Recommendation 3),
- library and information resources (Recommendation 6),
- communication and shared decision making (Recommendation 7).

The Commission requested a Focused Interim Evaluation of Recommendations 1 and 2 in the spring of 2008. It also asked that progress addressing Recommendations 3, 6, and 7 be evaluated in fall 2009. This report is the first progress report regarding Recommendations 3, 6, and 7 since the Comprehensive Evaluation.

In April 2008, on the eve of the focused interim evaluation, LWTC sent a Focused Interim Report to the Commission on progress addressing Recommendations 1 and 2. The report noted significant changes in organization, planning, and execution of comprehensive efforts to better address institutional effectiveness and educational assessment.

The Focused Interim Evaluation, conducted the same month, noted the major efforts underway but concluded that the College had yet to demonstrate how its efforts had resulted in greater institutional effectiveness and enhanced teaching and learning. In June 2008 the Commission determined that LWTC's efforts in these areas did not yet meet accreditation standards and scheduled a focused interim evaluation for fall 2009 to assess College responses to the five outstanding recommendations.

This report addresses the major efforts to address those recommendations. Since the November 2006 Comprehensive Evaluation, the College has worked diligently to address the recommendations. A centerpiece of these efforts is the implementation of an effective assessment system that utilizes research and best practices to guide actions that enhance Lake Washington Technical College's mission to provide students with high quality education.

Recommendation 1 Response

Recommendation 1: *“The evaluation committee was concerned that the College develops and implements a written college-wide institutional effectiveness plan. The plan should clearly define its institutional evaluation and planning processes, ensure that they are ongoing and systematic, and ensure that assessment results influence resource allocation to improve its instructional programs, institutional services, and activities.”*

In response, the College began work on Recommendation 1 by instituting:

1. a major strategic planning effort.
2. fresh initiatives in instructional assessment.
3. a new and more inclusive budget development process.
4. new student assessment and placement practices.

As noted in the Focused Interim Evaluation report of April 2008, this work has been continuous. The report also noted that not enough time had elapsed for the College to use its new institutional effectiveness efforts, gather and analyze research data, make recommendations for action, and document the changes made.

“While much progress has been made, the College has yet to use the results of regular and systematic institutional assessment. Since the planning and evaluation strategies are so new, the College has not had time to utilize the results of its assessments toward improving its programs. In summary, the College should provide evidence of institutional effectiveness through using the results of its institutional assessment processes in a regular and comprehensive manner.”

The report herein will demonstrate that the College has reached the stage of documenting improvements in institutional effectiveness following a full cycle of goal setting, planning, data gathering, analysis, and or action. This work has progressed in instructional assessment, student services, research and development, budget planning, and student placement and retention.

Planning the Institutional Effectiveness System

November 2006: Full-scale Evaluation by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities.

January 2007: Accreditation reaffirmed with four commendations and ten recommendations, including Recommendation 1 on institutional effectiveness.

Winter 2007: The College began an extensive strategic planning process. The process involved a retreat with over 60 employees from all constituencies and final feedback from over 300 students, faculty, staff, and advisory board members.

September 2007: The Strategic Plan 2007-2012 (**Appendix A**) was approved by the Board of Trustees. The plan, an 85 page document, identified eight strategic directions for action, designed to better accomplish the College’s mission of preparing students for “today’s careers and tomorrow’s opportunities.”

The Strategic Directions:

- 1: Educational Pathways
- 2: Learning Environment
3. Student Success
4. Faculty and Staff
5. Shared Decision Making
6. Recruiting and Marketing
7. Financial Success
8. Institutional Effectiveness

Appendix B is a schematic of the Strategic Plan, showing strategic directions and major outcomes. Planning committees were created for each strategic direction to develop outcomes for each direction.

Implementing the Institutional Effectiveness System

April 2008: The Institutional Effectiveness Committee (IEC) was formed by the President. Reporting to the Executive Cabinet and responsible for Strategic Plan implementation, IEC will provide overall direction of the strategic planning process. IEC, meeting biweekly, reviewed the work to date and decided on a practical implementation plan that:

1. honored the priorities for action already defined.
2. integrated the plan with other major college initiatives such as Title III projects.
3. adopted a plan for outcomes measurement (**Appendices C and D**).
4. built on the existing College committee structure.
5. reported regularly to all constituencies including the President, Executive Cabinet, Instructional Council, College Council and the College community.

Action tasks defined by the strategic planning committees became the Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) for the College. KPI's provided each strategic direction with measurable outcomes to determine success in meeting that direction. An additional KPI for student retention was later added.

Summer 2008: IEC assigned KPI's to each committee around which to organize their work. The KPI's were based on the priorities defined by the strategic planning committees. The committees identified:

1. how each KPI would be measured.
2. baseline measurements and targets for the coming year.
3. strategies to be used to realize the 2008-2009 targets.

Emphasis on data: Recognizing that successful action in these eight areas would require extensive research and data collection, the President elevated the Executive Director of Research and Development (R/D) to cabinet level status and tasked the R/D office with providing leadership and coordination of institutional research efforts.

As a result, the R/D office produced seven surveys during 2007-09:

- Two graduate surveys

- One exiting student survey
- College climate survey
- The CCSEQ survey
- An employer survey
- Withdrawing student survey

3

Fall 2008: The implementation plan was shared with the College community at a general College meeting. IEC formed eight strategic directions committees, developed a working assignment for each committee and appointed a liaison to work with each committee chair and report back to the IEC on a bi-monthly basis.

The critical task for the strategic directions committees was to measure how well KPI's were being met and make recommendations to IEC for further actions. IEC, in turn, would make recommendations to the Executive Cabinet for action in the spring of 2009.

Integration: Integration of the strategic directions with the Student Achievement Initiative (SAI), developed by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, is a good example of benefits from joint efforts. The Initiative was developed because of system-wide research that showed about 40 per cent of entering students leave before earning 15 college credits. SAI created five milestones as measurements by which the College would track its retention rates. The SAI was incorporated into the Strategic Plan as a ninth strategic direction.

Other activities that were integrated with the institutional effectiveness initiatives included:

1. all instructional assessment activity.
2. activity under the Federal Title III grant.
3. the I-BEST program development of pathways for ESL and Basic Skills students.
4. The goals of the College Council.
5. priorities of the Budget and Finance Committee.
6. work under the State's Opportunity Grant program.
7. the Federal TRIO grant for improving outcomes for students with disabilities.

IEC's focus to integrate these initiatives within the Strategic Plan helped minimize duplication of effort, a move that became even more relevant when state budget reductions led to personnel cuts across the College.

Communicating Effectively: Regular reports and updates were given to the stakeholders including the President, Executive Cabinet, Instructional Council, and College Council. The College community was briefed at regular all-College meetings. Liaison between IEC and the strategic directions' committees kept each other informed of implementation progress.

A progress report was given to the Board of Trustees in March 2009. The Trustees then held a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis workshop in June 2009 (**Appendix E**). The outcome of this work was to direct the President to pursue three goals for LWTC in the coming years:

1. Pursue baccalaureate program pathways
2. Pursue high demand workforce programs
3. Develop strong business and industry partnerships

Another result of the strategic planning committee work was a decision by Instructional Council and the Vice President of Instruction to launch a fresh examination of academic standards and AAS degree requirements (**Appendix F**).

Improving Institutional Effectiveness – Analysis to Action

With the major elements in place to implement the institutional effectiveness plan, work moved forward in the last half of the 2008-09 year to analyze data collected to measure KPI’s. Recommendations then moved in the following progression:

Strategic Directions Committees
to the
Institutional Effectiveness Committee
to the
Executive Cabinet (chaired by the President)

Executive Cabinet decisions were made on the recommendations and those approved were assigned to Cabinet officers, notably the Vice Presidents of Instruction, Student Services, and Advancement, for action.

In several instances the findings have led to new KPI’s and targets for 2009-2010, or new strategies for committee action in the coming year. IEC determined that efficiencies would be achieved if Strategic Plan implementation structure is built around the College’s existing division structure. This will reduce the number of committees and locate strategic planning work within the established LWTC structure. In a time of reduced budgets and high enrollment, it continues to be important to increase efficiencies and minimize duplication of effort.

The following table provides specific examples of current efforts in support of the Strategic Plan. The numbering system follows the “desired results” shown in the Summary Chart of the Strategic Plan (**Appendix B**).

Strategic Direction 1 - Educational Pathways

Direction	Desired Result	Research	Action
1.1	Remove barriers to Prior Learning Assessment (PLA).	Analyze state level efforts to identify the scope of PLA and best practices.	Strategic Direction Committee 1 will submit revisions to PLA procedures to the Instructional Council in fall 2009.
1.2	Establish multiple and well-defined entry and exit points.		Establish three new I-BEST programs that integrate basic skills and English as a Second Language (ESL) with technical course work which enables students to achieve entry level positions in professional-technical fields.
1.3	Conduct a needs assessment for Continued Education program expansion.		Work in progress by R/D for 2009-10

Direction	Desired Result	Research	Action
1.4	Expand articulation and transfer agreements in Major Related Programs (MRP's) and the baccalaureate program.	Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB), 2008 Strategic Master Plan, Legislative authorization, and regional labor market surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop transfer programs to baccalaureate institutions from existing Associate in Applied Science programs in pre-Nursing and technology. Establish feeder programs from eight regional community colleges to have their AAS Multi-Media, Digital Design, and related program graduates transfer directly to LWTC's Bachelor of Technology in Applied Design program (BTAD).

Strategic Direction 2 - Learning Environment

Direction	Desired Result	Research	Action
2.1	Enhance equipment and technology to reflect current industry standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct ongoing surveys of training needs of industries through faculty assessments and advisory committee input Conduct facilities planning to determine future building needs to house instructional programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed a million-dollar, state-of-the-art lab in collaboration with the ED Corporation. The lab opened in Fall Quarter, 2008 and features advanced automation training. Requested and received funding to construct an 83,000 square foot building on the main campus to house the Allied Health programs. Construction will begin in October, 2009.
2.2	Train and educate employable graduates preparing them to adapt to changing job markets.	Analyzed 2006-07 State Board Data Base and Student Achievement Initiative (SAI) data that showed a significant loss of students prior to achieving their Associate degree (see also Recommendation 3 Response). Further data is needed to assess the impact of the revised intake and placement and advising processes in Student Services.	Greater emphasis on faculty and counselor advising about career enhancements with completion of the AAS degree. Develop new strategies for faculty work with students on retention.
2.3	Increase access to learning.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity Grant funding (\$75,000) to provide financial aid and wrap-around services to students in financial need. Currently the program has a 90 % retention rate.

Direction	Desired Result	Research	Action
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue expansion of I-BEST programs that integrates basic skills and English as a Second Language (ESL) with technical courses.
2.4	Develop and implement rigorous curriculum and global outcomes. (see also Recommendation 2 Response)	A CCSEQ student survey showed increased student levels of understanding in the five global outcomes including critical thinking skills. Increases found in knowledge of mathematics concepts but minor changes in written communication skills between 2005 and 2007. A correlation appears between lack of entry level prerequisites and student program completion rates. Students are satisfied with their learning of non-technical skills needed for employment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes in pedagogy and in methods to improve student learning in the global outcomes. Revised intake, placement, and advising procedures were implemented. Prerequisites are operational in the Student Management System (SMS) and in review by instructional departments.
2.5	Increase participation in professional development activities.	Staff development survey, Title III assessment, and faculty participation rates in global outcomes assessment (Recommendation 2, Appendix C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Created the Summer Institute on assessment for faculty. A faculty member was selected to lead the faculty development program. Conducting ongoing training on Faculty Advising Support Tools (FAST); the program enables faculty and Student Services to exchange information on students with difficulties.
2.6	Align core academics with technical programs.	Analyze SAI data on student completion rates and lack of entry level prerequisites.	Enforce pre-requisites; instructional departments are reviewing the need for prerequisites and for the placement of academic courses earlier in programs of study.
2.9	Sustainability		LWTC's new Allied Health building will be at the "silver" LEED efficiency level.

Strategic Direction 3 – Student Success

See also the Recommendation 3 narrative and appendices.

Direction	Desired Result	Research	Action
3.1	Develop individualized assessment and placement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyzed SAI data on student retention rates that showed improved numbers of students passing the math placement test but mixed results in English testing. More research is needed to measure the impact of changes to the intake process, the prerequisite system, testing, and the Early Alert System. 	Developed and implemented a new intake process, prerequisite system, and testing.
3.2	Student Services Plan	See 3.1 above	In addition to the new intake process, with Title III funding, FAST and the Student Intervention process were developed.

Strategic Direction 4 – Faculty and Staff

Direction	Desired Result	Research	Action
4.1	Promote an engaged workforce.	The Professional Development program enrollment data from Human Resources shows 63 % of College employees are engaged in professional development. The professional development program is determined by an annual survey analysis conducted by the Staff Professional Development Committee.	Despite operating budget reductions, the Professional Development program continues and has a goal to increase participation in 2009-10.
4.2	Provide an effective, safe, and supportive workforce environment.	The percentage of employees registered for Electronic Alert Messaging (EAM) increased from 24% to 38% (2007-08 to 2008-09). In the College Climate surveys of 2005 and 2009, the numeric scores generated by employees regarding involvement in the decision making processes showed improvement (see also Recommendation 7 Response).	Continue to increase enrollment in EAM, conduct additional emergency drills, and pursue aggressive measures in dealing with possible a possible influenza breakout at the campuses.

Direction	Desired Result	Research	Action
4.3	Recruit and retain faculty.	Human Resources data shows virtually no change in the number of permanent, full-time, faculty in 2009. Several new full-time faculty have been hired for the 2009-10 year.	Continue the President's and Vice President's commitment to increase the number of tenure-track, full time faculty.

Strategic Direction 5 – Shared Decision Making

Direction	Desired Result	Research	Action
5.1	Develop principles and practices for communications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct and analyze College Climate surveys. November 2006 Comprehensive Evaluation. 	The Strategic Direction 5 Committee articulated institutional values regarding effective communication within the College.
5.2	Develop user-friendly communication and technologies.	Information Technology Services (ITS) conducted research to develop better a communication system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All campuses are now wireless. New platforms for the LWTC internet and intranet websites are in development and will be in operation in fall 2009. They will feature easier access and usability.
5.4	Support cross departmental initiatives.		<p>Several initiatives have created closer integration of work between College units:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Services and Instruction: prerequisites and FAST Library and Instruction: Library Action Plan, support for new instructional programs, expanded service, and information resources Research and Development and Educational Assessment: Merging educational assessment into institutional effectiveness initiative.
5.5	Create an enhanced sense of ownership and promote participation.		(see Recommendation 7 Response)

Strategic Direction 6 – Recruiting and Marketing

Direction	Desired Result	Research	Action
6.1 – 6.3	Recruitment and marketing process; comprehensive and realistic marketing plan; develop an “enviable” community reputation		Research efforts will be further developed for the College Advancement Office.

Strategic Direction 7 – Financial Success

Direction	Desired Result	Research	Action
7.1	Develop a financial plan.		A three-year financial plan is in place. The 2009-10 annual operating budget was developed by the Budget and Finance Committee and approved by the Board of Trustees. A healthy financial reserve is maintained per Board policy and the College has weathered a series of budget reductions with minimal impact on services to students and instructional programs.
7.2 – 7.3	Develop financial decision-making and procedures and promote participative financial planning (see also Recommendation 7 Response)		The Budget and Finance Committee has a diverse membership, uses an open and transparent process to develop the operating budget proposal including budget hearings, and communicates with all College constituencies.

Strategic Direction 8 – Institutional Effectiveness

Direction	Desired Result	Research	Action
8.1 – 8.3	Develop and implement College effectiveness measures, document and implement the institutional effectiveness plan, and report results to the stakeholders.		<p>The institutional effectiveness program is in place. The following key documents have guided the research, analysis and resulting actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Plan 2007-2012 • Strategic Directions • Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) • Multiple research project and data collection efforts

Direction	Desired Result	Research	Action
8.4 – 8.5	Develop a student feedback loop.	Conducted graduate surveys and exit surveys and evaluated student performance in educational assessment activities.	Taken action across the College to improve student success including retention, global outcomes skills, and job placement and success.
8.6	Student success assessment measures established		(see Recommendations 2 and 3)

Summary

The institutional effectiveness effort has moved the LWTC from the development to implementation to action. This has been done as a College-wide collaborative effort and has made far greater use of research data and best practices to improve the College's operations.

New opportunities to improve R/D's research processes have emerged. The development of measurable outcomes for the KPI's, coupled with new research and programming expertise in the Research and Development Office and Information Technology Services has led to a new appreciation of the benefits of accurate and reliable data. It has created the opportunity to strengthen the College community's acceptance and use of research and data tracking. To further support this work, R/D held review of current research efforts in July 2009 and several new goals and objectives were identified (**Appendix G**) for 2009-10.

The institutional effectiveness effort has reshaped the College's decision making processes, using integrated efforts to achieve the strategic directions. And it has become the basis for prioritizing LWTC's work and the allocation of resources. And the institutional effectiveness process has enabled LWTC to better align its efforts with accreditation standard 1.B (**Appendix H**).

Recommendation 2 Response

Recommendation 2: “*The evaluation committee recommends that the College establish a process for documenting the results of educational outcomes assessments and provide evidence that its assessment activities lead to the improvement of teaching and learning.*”

Subsequent Reports and Evaluations

On April 5, 2008, the College reported on progress in addressing Recommendation 2, highlighting the following changes:

1. Formation of the Educational Assessment Committee (EAC). The EAC first met in January 2007, and was charged with developing and monitoring an assessment system based on three elements; global outcomes assessment, program outcomes assessment, and program review.
2. Improved faculty professional development and mentoring. Discussions of the outcomes assessment system were at each faculty in-service day. In winter 2008, a group of global mentors was selected from the faculty to refine the global outcomes assessment system and to mentor other colleagues on how best to implement this system. Through March and April 2008, a consultant was hired to present program outcomes to faculty and to help faculty in each program design a program outcomes grid.
3. The piloting of a campus-wide assessment of student performance in the critical thinking outcome.

The Focused Interim Evaluation conducted in April 2008; however, concluded that the College remained out of compliance Standard 2.B. This was based on two major concerns: some program outcomes were still incomplete or inadequate and the College had not provided sufficient evidence that assessment was being used to improve teaching and learning.

In response, LWTC took the immediate step of updating and formalizing both its short-term plans and strategic plans for educational assessment. These plans were presented to the Board of Trustees at its May 2008 meeting and submitted to the NWCCU as attachments to the College’s June 9, 2008 response to the Focused Interim Report.

Implementing the Educational Assessment System

The College implemented the revised plan submitted to the NWCCU within two weeks after its June 9, 2008 response. The global outcomes mentors presented a revised plan for global outcomes assessment to the faculty at the year’s final in-service day; that plan was documented through the *Educational Assessment Handbook*. In July, a Director of Instructional Assessment was hired and her first assignment was to coordinate a Summer Institute on Assessment for faculty. This Institute allowed faculty to begin detailed work on required assessment activities for the 2008-09 academic year.

Although some aspects of the short-term plan were modified as the system evolved, the activities described in both the short-term plan and the strategic planning documents have been completed. Under the guidance of the Director of Instructional Assessment and the Educational Assessment Committee, the assessment plan has been followed throughout one full academic year and it began its second annual cycle with the Summer Institute on Assessment offered for

faculty professional development from July 24, 2009 - August 7, 2009. The calendar showing the full assessment cycle is in **Appendix A**.

The redesigned system defined educational assessment as consisting of three major activities, each of which is linked: Global Outcomes Assessment, Program Outcomes Assessment and Program Review.

Global Outcomes Assessment: Global Outcomes were developed to provide a common core of skills and knowledge considered essential for all technical program students. The five outcomes were developed collaboratively across departments and were implemented.

The five outcomes are:

1. Critical Thinking.
2. Teamwork.
3. Global and Cultural Awareness (Diversity).
4. Communication.
5. Technical and Information Literacy.

Global Outcomes Assessment occurs in each professional technical program. Each program has a global outcomes matrix that shows which courses are responsible for teaching the five global outcomes. The global outcome is taught each time the course is offered and a random sampling of results is taken annually from selected courses and programs. Faculty responsible for submitting their results are alerted prior to the quarter's start and are first required to submit an assignment that they will score using a global outcomes rubric standardized at the department level.

After the assignment has been completed and students' work graded, the instructor then returns a completed global outcomes packet to the Director of Instructional Assessment. The packet requires reporting student performance as well as a "closing the loop" analysis by faculty of how to improve student learning. Supporting materials for global outcomes assessment can be found at the assessment website (www.lwtc.edu/oa) and also in the document library. The master matrix showing the placement of global outcomes in all programs can be found in **Appendix B**. **Appendix C** shows faculty and students participation in this assessment activity.

Program Outcomes Assessment: Program Outcomes are tracked using a Program Outcomes Grid (POG). Each professional technical program reviews its POG bi-annually at an autumn meeting with the program dean, faculty, and Director of Instructional Assessment. An assessment plan is developed at this meeting. In the spring the results are analyzed to determine needed program improvements. Each program is responsible for setting four program outcomes: one focused on employment outcomes, two focused on assessment of student technical skills, and a fourth assessing student performance on global outcomes. Supporting materials for program outcomes assessment can be found at the assessment website (www.lwtc.edu/oa) and also in the document library.

Program Review: Program review occurs every five years for every instructional program. The revised format relies heavily on quantitative data and includes an analysis of results gathered from global and program outcomes assessments. All programs are listed on a five-year rolling calendar that schedules the year of their next review. Supporting materials for the program review process can be found at the assessment website, <http://www.lwtc.edu/oa>, and also in the document library.

After the system was defined, the following activities were initiated to improve educational assessment and make it a functional and regular part of the instructional process:

- Faculty training on the revised and simplified global outcomes process occurred in June 2008 and again during fall in-service. Each faculty in-service held during the 2008-09 year contained sessions on educational assessment.
- The Director of Instructional Assessment was hired in July 2008. This was the first time LWTC had assigned a full-time employee to guide educational assessment.
- The first Summer Institute on Assessment was held in July 2008 and August 2008.
- In September 2008, all programs developed a revised global outcomes matrix and were scheduled to assess either the global outcomes of critical thinking, teamwork, or communication in Fall Quarter 2008.
- During Fall Quarter 2008, at meetings including program faculty, the program dean, and the Director of Instructional Assessment, each program developed a program outcomes grid and set an assessment schedule for the 2008-2009 academic year.
- The updated global outcomes matrices and program outcomes grids were placed online in the College public folders system in fall 2008.
- In late fall 2008; the Educational Assessment Committee was assigned as a subcommittee of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee, setting Key Performance Indicators for Strategic Direction Two of the Strategic Plan. This enabled the results of the educational assessment initiative to feed into the Strategic Plan.
- Global outcomes data on critical thinking, communication, and teamwork were collected by the Director of Instructional Assessment in December 2008.
- In January 2009, a calendar identifying all courses scheduled to assess global outcomes was set for winter and spring. This schedule continued the program assessment of the three outcomes analyzed in fall and added a piloting of the technical and information literacy and global/cultural awareness outcomes; results on all five outcomes would be obtained.
- During Winter Quarter 2009, the program review format was revised. Format changes included requirements for more quantitative data and a section was added that specifically identified how assessment results lead to program improvements. Also changed was the timeline for the process so that results can feed into the College budget process. During the revision process, a new calendar for program reviews was created setting a target in which 20 per cent of professional technical programs are assessed each year.
- The Director of Instructional Assessment developed a summary report during Winter Quarter on the results of the critical thinking and communication and teamwork projects. This report combined qualitative information from faculty with quantitative results from College surveys. The summary conclusion is that though room for improvement exists, student learning is taking place and increasing in these global outcomes areas. **(Appendix D)**
- A website was developed to improve communication with faculty and other stakeholders regarding assessment information at www.lwtc.edu/oa.

Improving Teaching and Learning

Each of the implementation steps was taken with the intention of gathering data that would allow programs to make improvements in teaching and learning. The information gained through these preparatory activities led the College to the following activities:

- In Spring Quarter 2009, the Educational Assessment Committee presented its recommendations for maintaining and improving the assessment system to the Institutional Effectiveness Committee.
- Faculty from each professional technical program held a year-end meeting with the Director of Instructional Assessment and their program dean to discuss the results gained from assessment activities listed on the program outcomes grid. These summary “closing the loop” meetings finalized assessment activities conducted in 2008-09 and pointed toward program changes that will occur in the upcoming year.
- The first completed program reviews using the new system were submitted to program deans and the Director of Instructional Assessment at the end of Spring Quarter 2009.
- Because professional development in outcomes assessment remains an ongoing need, the second annual Summer Institute on Assessment was held on three Fridays in July and August 2009. This was a paid professional development activity for faculty and staff that included sessions for individuals new to outcomes assessment as well as experienced people.
- With the scheduling of the Summer Institute, LWTC began its second year using the educational assessment system outlined in the Strategic Plan.
- The RAPID Days prior to Fall Quarter 2009 will continue to provide information and training on assessment methods and analysis.

A listing of activities alone cannot give a comprehensive picture of the qualitative and quantitative data that has been gathered or the improvements in student learning that have been made. Particularly, through the global outcomes assessment process, a great deal of information has been obtained that is directly applicable to classroom instruction. During the past year, 83 faculty assessed over 1,200 students on one or more of the five global outcomes.

Because the completed process requires that instructors not only score student work on each outcome but also complete an analysis of how to improve student learning, detailed practical information as to how instructors and departments can improve student performance has resulted. The examples below are representative of instructor comments and demonstrate the breadth of the programs involved in this assessment effort:

Faculty Commentaries:

“Overall, this [assignment] worked quite well. The next time I introduce this communication assignment, I will reinforce concept development even more by adding a peer review the week prior to the work being due. I think this will encourage students to invest more time and effort into the idea and execution of the drawing, therefore improving the visual communication.”
(Comment from Multimedia Design and Production instructor)

“During the next quarter I will be changing the timing of my presentations on grammar and raising the standards on early assignments. Since most of the residual errors at this point in the quarter are simple careless ones, I will set strict cutoffs early in the quarter. I will also allow more time next quarter to teach and oversee the research process.” (Comment from English instructor)

“Since the referencing of source data was the single lowest scoring skill, I’ll plan on teaching more about that next time. I may design an assignment that speaks specifically to it – for instance assigning an exercise to create a presentation about how to refer to sources and quote source material.” (Comment from a Business Applications Support Instructor)

“The assignment is due in week 5 and again in week 11, but it is crucial that I start laying the groundwork at the very beginning of the quarter for students to begin collecting information for the assignment. Often, I don’t budget enough time at the beginning of the quarter for several lessons that help students to learn how to find information in the textbook to solve their own problems. Students would also do better on this assignment if I had model assignments representing emerging, developing, and mastering work.” (Comment from an English instructor)

A comprehensive look at findings from this year’s global outcomes activities can be found in the report, “Critical Thinking Evaluation, 2006-2009”. **(Appendix D)** This report also uses quantitative data taken from surveys (the 2005 and 2007 CCSEQ and the 2006-2007 Graduate Survey) in analyzing student learning gains on the global outcomes, a methodology that will be discussed in more detail below.

Program Outcome Grids (POGs): The completed program outcomes grids and program reviews for 2008-09 include the results of each department’s analysis of its global outcomes activities, an assessment of student performance on technical skills, and of institutionally-generated data such as employment information on recent graduates. Although the measures used to assess instructional effectiveness differ by program, ranging from student pass rates on certification examinations to student performance on cumulative technical projects, every program assesses the outcome most central to the college mission: student employment.

Each program is also asked to close the loop by analyzing its assessment results and deciding which program modifications are most likely to improve student learning. Faculty are first given the four-column program outcomes grid (see below). They are told the goal is, by year’s end, to fill in all the cells from left to right; from outcome, to measurement, to data source, to results and changes. Thus faculty have an early indication that the purpose of this effort is not simply to conduct assessments; the goal is to use the results of assessments to change and improve programs. Every program “closed the loop” in at least one of its key assessment areas in 2008-09.

For example, in the Culinary Arts program, courses were broken down from a large block of instruction into specific classes with pre-determined lecture and lab hours. This change helped instructors establish clear outcomes and assessment methods in each course.

In the Diesel program, instructors changed the Cooperative Work Experience (Co-op) portion of the program to be more outcomes and student-learning oriented. Students are now asked daily to describe what they did on the job and to self-assess as to how well they had learned that skill in their program. Employees are also asked expanded questions related to student work and how well the training program is aligned with industry standards. The form that Co-Op supervisors fill out has also been re-written to ask employers what specific tasks students were asked to complete and also how well the students performed. An example of the program outcomes grid (POG) form for the Information Technology Applications Development (ITAD) program is shown below.

Information Technology Applications Development POG

Each program on campus completed a POG in fall 2008 and proposed changes for 2009-10 at

Intended Student Outcome (Outcome must be measurable)	Measurable Criteria (How do you know students meet the Outcome)	Data Source (Could be an assignment, test, survey, etc)	Results & any changes made to courses/program based on results
<p>1. Program Outcome <u>Related to employment:</u> Students completing ITAD program will be prepared to obtain an entry-level position in their field</p>	<p>The majority of students who report searching for work in their field will have found a position (institutional data).</p> <p>Industry feedback.</p>	<p>LWTC Graduate Survey, LWTC advisory committees.</p>	<p>In order to increase employment options and meet industry demands a new web development degree program was created in conjunction with MMDP. This offers a more holistic approach to instruction which has succeeded in crossing common college silos of instruction. The development of this program came from an assessment of the two current programs and extensive industry feedback.</p>
<p>2. Program Outcome <u>Related to technical Skill:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design, code, debug, and implement programs as entry-level programmers and application software developers. • Understand and analyze software related problems, and design solutions utilizing appropriate software tools. 	<p>1. Independently solve a computer science problem</p>	<p>Class project and/or examination in ITAD 135 Algorithms and Data Structures course</p>	<p>By ITAD135 the students are able to independently solve CS problems and the problem complexities have increased. However, based on student performance the ITAD 135 course is being redesigned to emphasize more Critical Thinking and independent problem solving.</p>
	<p>2. Design and implement an efficient software program representing the problem solution of the in one of the programming languages studied in the program.</p>	<p>Class project and/or examination in ITAD 135 Algorithms and Data Structures course</p>	<p>In the newly redesigned ITAD 135 students independently design an algorithm that is different or unique in some way and present their algorithm to the entire class.</p>

the year-end meeting on assessment results held in late spring 2009.

Program Improvements using Program Review: The following are examples of significant program improvements using the program review process.

Accounting: “Accounting identified the need for a bifurcated Accounting program where a student could get a terminal technical degree in Accounting OR a transfer degree in Accounting. In pursuit of this goal, accounting revised and renumbered many of their courses and is currently working with administration and other colleges to pursue a Direct Transfer Agreement in Business. They also reduced the number of credits needed for a degree from 104 to 94.”

Business Applications Support: “In their May 2007 Program Review, Business Applications Support identified a number of certificates with very low completion rates as well as a generally over-complicated program which included too many short certificates. They are currently in the process of combining the three course prefixes they were using (OFTC, BUSA, and CISA) into one program title with a more streamlined pathway to completion.”

Computer Security and Network Technology: “Computer Security & Network Technology spent program funds to advertise in local newspapers, targeting the lower-enrolled winter and spring-starting cohorts. We also are now constantly in contact with the internal Academy and Worker Retaining advisors. As a result, what was once our weakest quarter, Winter, has passed Spring over the last two years in both new student enrollment and total CSNT program population, according to the latest Fact book data (September 2009). Fall 2009 enrollment is at a record level, and the always challenging Spring-to-Fall retention is also very strong. The group focus we bring to Advising Day activities has been emulated by other programs and continues to result in high retention.

“We implemented a major curriculum change this Fall, shortening the program to five quarters (from six) by consolidating the forensics and security studies, and moving the job-critical advanced networking quarter to the end “capstone” position. This should make the program more attractive both to prospective students and to employers of our graduates. The implementation that began in Winter and Spring 2009 involved combining two cohorts, eliminating a serious enrollment “dip”, while holding off hiring a fifth instructor during the financial crisis.”

Environmental Horticulture: “In Environmental Horticulture, the program identified a slight downward trend in enrollment. As a result the program has developed its own marketing plan, has gone into online marketing, and has even taken an interesting look into which online items generate the most student response. In the fall of 2008-2009 the program saw a slight increase in enrollment.”

Integration with Institutional Effectiveness

The final system improvement that has been most beneficial to educational assessment has been the strong connection formed with the institutional effectiveness initiative and the improved access to institutional data this connection has facilitated. Prior to the April 2008, Focused Interim Evaluation, institutional effectiveness and educational assessment ran as parallel efforts, often competing for the scarce resources available for research.

This deficiency was remedied in two ways: first, by increasing staff in institutional research and hiring the Director of Instructional Assessment to guide the educational assessment effort; second, by reframing educational assessment so that it also served as Strategic Direction 2 of institutional effectiveness. This raised the visibility of the initiative and ensured that its resource and information needs were presented to College leadership on par with those of all other strategic directions.

Within the assessment framework designed by the Institutional Effectiveness Committee (IEC), Strategic Direction 2 set three key performance indicators in 2008-09:

- Improvements to the program review process, including the documentation of all program reviews completed and the inclusion of student outcomes assessment data in all the reviews conducted.

- Completion of Program Outcome Grids for every program. Each program now sets a measurable employment outcome, one technical outcome, and also includes results from the global outcomes process. Each program will document its results on the outcomes it sets by the end of Spring Quarter 2009.
- Completion of a Global Outcomes Matrix for each program and documented results for each program on the global outcomes assessments conducted.

The goals set in each of these key performance indicators were met. For example, strategic direction 2.3 was that by 2010, technical and related academic curricula would emphasize rigorous standards and incorporate global outcomes. A quarterly system of global outcomes assessments was implemented, which resulted in changes in pedagogy, curriculum, and delivery to improve student learning.

By spring 2009, 100 per cent of programs had established courses which teach and assess each global outcome; approximately 90 per cent of programs had provided sample assessments and documented results showing student learning as well as evidence of course or program change based on assessments; and approximately 75 per cent of programs could demonstrate that they annually assessed student performance on global outcomes and made changes to curriculum and instruction as needed.

In addition, a faculty-driven professional development program for integration of global outcomes into technical programs was designed and delivered, leading instructors to make changes in curriculum, degree and certificate requirements, pedagogy, and delivery to better meet the needs of students and employers.

Access to institutional and state-level data provided through the educational assessment program's connection to institutional effectiveness has been especially helpful. It allows individuals working with the components of educational assessment to use multiple indices before reaching conclusions about how best to improve student learning in a given classroom or program. As the narrative above demonstrates, much of the information gathered in the processes of assessing global and program outcomes are qualitative. However, access to quantitative data has allowed the educational assessment program to perform analyses like those given in the examples below:

- Statistical information gained from the 2005 and 2007 CCSEQ survey questions on student understanding of math concepts aligned with qualitative evidence from the global outcomes/critical thinking assessments. All of these data points indicated students were improving their performance on critical thinking.
- Data from the state's Student Achievement Initiative supports a preliminary conclusion that programs which lack entry-level prerequisites and ask students to complete all of their technical courses before entering academic classes have significantly lower completion rates than do programs which set prerequisites and ask students to complete academic and technical coursework concurrently.

Since April 2008, LWTC has assigned qualified staff to implement and maintain an educational assessment system that works well for the College. Previous assessment systems were monumental in their complexity and would have been difficult to maintain even had sufficient staff been available. The system as designed is working well for a college of Lake Washington's size, and it addresses concerns raised during the 2006 Full-Scale and 2008 Focused Evaluations.

Summary

The College's educational assessment system has significantly improved the path towards enhanced teaching and learning.

- It was designed collaboratively, including faculty and administrative involvement at every step. Program faculty now meet at least twice annually with their program dean and assessment director to set new assessments, discuss the results of prior assessments, and propose program changes based on those results. Interest in assessment activities is strong, and the College is developing a culture in which assessment is viewed as standard practice.
- The system is regular and systematic. Although some features naturally have been and will be changed in order to improve the effectiveness of the program, it is entering its second full year of operation following the same basic outline. Assessments are scheduled well in advance and occur at regular and predictable times. The tools used to conduct assessments are comprehensive and accessible.
- The system generates sufficient information to make conclusions about ways to improve student performance in classrooms and programs. This information is well-documented and is easily accessible to faculty and administrators.
- All professional technical programs have completed global outcomes matrices and program outcomes grids, and these are located on the public folders system, the assessment website and in the document library.
- All five global outcomes have been piloted through the complete assessment cycle, and data is now available on student performance for each of these outcomes. A packet supporting instructor use of any of the global outcomes is online at the assessment website. The schedule of which classes will be reporting results is set well in advance.
- Each program took at least one of its program outcomes through the full assessment cycle and made recommendations for program change based on an analysis of assessment results. These results (see the ITAD program example above) are documented in public folders and on the assessment website.

Recommendation 3 Response

Recommendation 3: *“The evaluation committee recommends that the College develop and fully implement policies and procedures which guide the placement of students in course and programs based upon their academic and technical skills. Such placement should ensure a reasonable probability of student success (as supported by research, best practices and institutional data) and facilitate advising and student persistence.”*

Improving Student Success via Placement

The previous student placement procedure was permissive, stating that ‘it is recommended that students placing into Adult Basic Education or English as Second Language (ESL) satisfactorily complete those required courses before enrolling in a technical program.’ **(Appendix A)**

This practice was reviewed by in the Student Services and Instruction units, led by the Vice President of Student Services and a Dean of Instruction. A revised placement procedure was approved by the Executive Cabinet in March 2008. The language in the new procedure is prescriptive, stating that students *must* complete courses in ABED and ESL prior to enrolling in a technical programs rather than *recommending* students complete those classes **(Appendix B)**:

“Students who place into Adult Basic Education (ABE) or English as Second Language (ESL) classes must satisfactorily complete those courses at an appropriate level before enrolling in a technical program or college level course that has basic skill minimum requirements. Students who have not completed courses or placement tests in all subject areas (math, English) need to be tested or have placement scores in those areas for appropriate placement into courses.”

In addition to the placement procedure, changes were needed in other areas. English and mathematics faculty changed COMPASS cutoff scores for all mathematics courses effective summer 2007, and all English courses effective Fall Quarter 2008 **(Appendix C)**. These changes were made to ensure that COMPASS accurately placed students into courses that met their academic level.

Additionally, at the time of the November 2006 Full-Scale Evaluation, not all courses that had prerequisites were coded as such in the Student Management System. This meant that a student could register for a course without COMPASS testing, meeting course requirements, or meeting with a student development advisor. Of the Fall Quarter 2006, courses offerings, 223 courses had prerequisites established and turned on. For Fall Quarter 2009, 245 courses have prerequisites established and turned on. Aside from turning on all courses with identified prerequisites, some programs have revised their curriculum, either changing prerequisites or establishing prerequisites where non previously existed.

The first chart below compares retention in programs with and without course prerequisites after fall 2006. For purposes of this comparison, retention is defined as enrollment fall, winter, and spring quarters. Fall cohorts from 2006 and 2008 were compared among five programs. The time period encompasses both prerequisite changes in two programs and the change in the placement procedure. Of the two programs that established new course prerequisites, the Welding program showed a significant increase in retention while the Culinary Arts program retention rate remained consistent.

Programs with New Course Prerequisites

Programs that established course prerequisites after 2006	Fall 2006 Retention Rate	Fall 2008 Retention Rate
Welding	45 % (10/22)	70% (28/40)
Culinary Arts	58% (18/31)	58% (21/36)

Two of the three programs without prerequisites, Social and Human Services and Environmental Horticulture, showed improved retention rates after implementation of the new placement procedures (chart below). This result indicates the change in the assessment procedure may have had a positive effect on the retention of students. Since improvement was not seen in all three programs, additional data collection and analysis is needed to explain the differences in retention rates.

Programs without Course Prerequisites

Programs without course prerequisites	Fall 2006 Retention Rate	Fall 2008 Retention Rate
Environmental Horticulture	69% (20/29)	74% (28/38)
Child Care Manager	69% (11/16)	61% (14/23)
Social and Human Services	50% (11/22)	68% (17/25)

In part based upon the information above, Title III project staff identified two key activities that could positively impact student success:

1. Changing programs that do not have first quarter classes with minimum English/math skills prerequisites. A faculty member is currently working with lead faculty in these programs to identify first quarter courses needing the appropriate COMPASS test scores and/or English/math courses necessary to be ensure student success
2. Developing an "at risk" advising process for students who test into English and math adult basic skills courses. This will connect students with technical program faculty while they are working on core academic skills to enter a program.

Connection with Overall College Efforts

As part of the institutional effectiveness effort, the strategic planning committee for student placement established key performance indicators for placement. Shown below are the first two years of data collected after these cutoff scores were changed. The baseline data is prior to the change in assessment procedure and use of the COMPASS test.

Key performance Indicators for Strategic Direction 3: Effective Individualized Assessment & Placement

Indicator	2007-08	2	22	et	2009-10 target	2010-11 target
-----------	---------	---	----	----	----------------	----------------

	baseline	and actual		
Increase the number of new students who test	47%	49%-target 44%-actual	52%	54%
Increase in the number of new students passing math	66%	68%-target 72%-actual	72%	74%
Increase in the number of new students passing English	59%	61%-target 58%-actual	65%	65%

Although the percentage of students who tested is lower for 2008-09, the total number of students tested increased from 926 in 2007-08 to 1034 in 2008-09. More students attempted and passed mathematics both in percentage and total numbers. Fewer students attempted and passed English. Given that the target for 2008-09 in English was not met, the Strategic Planning Committee will review the data and make recommendations for strategies to meet the 2009-10 targets (**Appendix D**).

Integrating Research Efforts: In 2007, LWTC hired a research analyst to coordinate institutional research, update the College Fact book, and conduct surveys. During 2007, the Office of Research and Development was established. It oversees institutional surveys of considerable benefit to Student Services, including:

1. CCSEQ
2. Exit Survey
3. Graduate Survey
4. Updating the College Fact book
5. Student Achievement Initiative (SAI) data from the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges

The College is using SAI data as a measure for its Title III efforts in student retention, which has helped identify effective retention efforts and where new initiatives are needed. Analyzing SAI data has been done by a data task group that will evolve into a student success committee in 2009-10 (**Appendix E**). Findings from SAI data have produced initiatives including developing an advising process for students in Adult Basic Skills and mailing a reminder letter to students who have earned 75 per cent or more of the credits in their program to apply for graduation.

Retention

To support the revised placement procedures outline above, changes were made in intake and advising processes in Student Services (**Appendix F**).

In the past, students could register for classes without seeing an advisor. Now, if the student has not taken a placement test or taken college courses from another college, they are directed to the assessment center and then to advising. A new flyer, "Get Ready, Get Set, Go!," outlines the procedure (**Appendix G**). This information is given to students at the time of admission and is also printed in the quarterly class sched

The Student Development advising team met in 2008 to discuss how to best serve students on standards of academic progress and students on faculty early alert. The result was recommendations taken to the College's Title III advisory committee for integration into the grant objectives that include improving the early alert system and student persistence.

Student Services directors and counselors also developed new processes for intervening with students before they enroll, during the quarter and after the end of the quarter, which is a more prescriptive advising process than previously used (**Appendix H**).

Early Alert System: The College previously used an early alert system that wasn't effective or easy to use. In developing its new system, the College used similar programs at Walla Walla Community College, Yakima Valley Community College, and Columbia Basin Community College as its model. Adopting the FAST (Faculty Advising Support Tools) system allows faculty to send reports on student behaviors such as not attending, not participating, or doing poorly on tests, signs that a student may need help. Students will initially receive an email and a letter via regular mail with a resource list of services to support their learning (**Appendix I**).

Prior to FAST, faculty submitted few early alert reports. Prior to fall 2008, the highest number of faculty making reports was 17. Within the first 3 quarters using FAST, 43 faculty submitted reports on 226 individual students. The system has allowed for more effective communication to students and more collaboration between student services and instruction. Added features are planned for FAST to give faculty and student development advisors integrated information about their students.

Summary

Since the Full-Scale Evaluation in November 2006, more resources are in place to enable staff and faculty to have greater access to data regarding student placement and retention. The collaborative work necessary to implement the Title III Grant and the Strategic Plan, and assess institutional effectiveness has produced a better coordination of efforts and sharing of data. A revised new student intake process now has a testing procedure that more effectively aligns a student's basic skill and English language level with the course selection. The new intake advising process assures that a student is not being placed in courses for which they do not have adequate basic skill levels.

Identification of basic skill requisites in key entry level classes supports correct student placement. A robust early academic alert system that engages students, faculty and support services appears to be having a positive effect on student retention and success. Regular review of data and survey results has produced meaningful discussions about why certain data is needed and how it can be used to improve student success. Additional research is underway to address the need for more longitudinal data and make ongoing modifications to the intake, assessment, placement, advising, and retention-to-completion cycle.

Recommendation 6 Response

Recommendation 6: *"The evaluation committee recommends that the institution take immediate steps to ensure that the library 24 tion resources are sufficient to provide an adequate core collection and the personnel to accomplish the institution's mission and goals.*

Information resources need to be determined by the nature of the institution's educational programs."

Assessment and Developing an Action Plan

After the November 2006 Full-Scale Evaluation, an action plan was developed to make significant improvements to library operations and information resources. The plan included:

1. recreating the Library Advisory Committee.
2. evaluating staffing needs.
3. assessing the library's information resources.
4. updating library technology.
5. creating a three-year action plan.
6. ensuring that information resources are sufficient to meet the college's goals and support new instructional programs.

In winter 2007, the Library Advisory Committee (LAC) was reestablished. The Committee includes library staff, faculty, and a student government representative. The LAC's purpose is to assess the Library's ability to support the College mission and serve students.

To evaluate staffing and resource needs, the LAC began by reexamining a 2005 study of the Library and information resources prepared by University of Washington library staff, "Assessment of Library Resources and Services and Recommendations for Supporting the Proposed Bachelor in Applied Technology Program at Lake Washington Technical College." The Committee also conducted a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis and assessed ongoing needs based on accreditation standards, and faculty requests. The Committee's research and analysis resulted in the Library Action Plan (**Appendix A**), a blueprint for improvements to the Library and information resources.

Improving Library Services and Information Resources

The Committee determined that additional staff was needed to support the acquisition of new library materials, support the College's educational programs, and to extend service hours. The President approved the addition of a full-time librarian and a full-time library technician

With additional staff, the library's service hours rose from 47.5 hours weekly to 65.5 hours. The Library now staffs the reference desk from 10 am-2 pm, Monday-Friday, and is open on Saturdays.

To better prepare students to access information and do research, the number of information literacy classes offered and students served has increased significantly as shown below:

Information literacy classes offered and students served by year

2007-2008		2008-2009
20 classes	25	57 classes
230 students		751 students

The personnel additions have also enabled Library staff to work more closely with instructional programs and councils. Librarians sit on the Curriculum Review Committee and Instructional Council, major decision making groups in the Office of Instruction.

The LAC, library personnel, administration, and the UW-Libraries report concluded that the most efficient way to improve the collection and provide greater access to our collection was to increase the resources available online.

Starting in 2007, the College increased the Library materials budget to \$100,000. The funding increase allowed the library to acquire new books and electronic databases that support the College’s educational programs and mission.

Since 2007, the library has added the following electronic resources to its collection:

- AP Images
- ARTstor
- Books 24x7
- Britannica Online
- Credo Reference
- CultureGrams
- EBSCOhost (Academic Search Premier)
- Education Resources Information Center (ERIC)
- Ebrary
- Facts on File Online Databases
- First Search
- Health Education Assets Library
- Health Reference Center
- JSTOR
- LexisNexis® Academic
- Lynda
- Mitchell’s
- Nursing and Allied Health Source
- Oxford Art Online
- ProQuest
- Safari
- Science Direct

These electronic resources along with the deployment of new technologies to allow 24/7 access to the digital library are the backbone of our 21st century library, giving students “anytime, anywhere” access.

The Library Advisory Committee also recommended a significant increase in print materials, publicly accessible computers, and the creation of a Digital Media Studio to accommodate the needs of the students (**Appendix B**).

Number of print books purchased each year since 2006		Number of computers purchased each year since 2006	
		26	
2006-2007	283	2006-2007	15

2007-2008	727	2007-2008	10
2008-2009	968	2008-2009	17

Print Circulation by Year		NoodleBib (Bibliographic Citation Tool) Usage by Year		Safari eBooks Usage by Year	
2007-2008	1,152	2007-2008	1,549	2007-2008	263
2008-2009	1,795	2008-2009	3,192	2008-2009	1,033

Appendix C shows significant increases in the use of the Pro Quest data base over the past several years.

Current Status of the Information Resources Collection:

- 42,000 Items (books, eBooks, DVD/Videos) in our collection up from 20,000
- 28,000 full-text eBooks
- Over 6,000 full-text journals
- 350 full text newspapers, broadcast transcripts, and Roper Center polls and surveys
- Over 1.5 million images in our image databases
- Access to the collections and services of more than 10,000 libraries worldwide through interlibrary loan and World Cat
- Broadcast transcripts from the major television and radio networks as well as political transcripts covering Congressional committee hearings, press briefings from the State, Justice, and Defense departments, and presidential news conferences
- Campus news from nearly 300 individual college/university papers
- Wire services, updated several times a day, including respected names such as the Associated Press, Business Wire and PR Newswire
- Non-English language news sources available in Spanish, French, German, Italian and Dutch, including both newspapers and magazines

Support of New Instructional Programs

In the fall of 2008, an additional \$75,000 was added to support new instructional programs. With the additional funding, the information resources were added to support the establishment of the following programs:

1. Bachelor of Technology in Applied Design
2. Massage Therapy
3. Occupational Therapy **27**
4. Physical Therapy
5. Funeral Services
6. Wine Technology

In attaining approvals from state agencies and regional and specialty accreditation bodies, the College successfully demonstrated that the necessary information resources were available to support these programs (Funeral Services is in the process of applying for candidacy by its national specialty accrediting commission).

Assessing Library Effectiveness

The improvement of the Library’s ability to provide an adequate resources and personnel to accomplish the institution’s mission and strategic plan can be shown in excerpts from the latest survey, usage reports, and the ability to support new instructional programs:

Excerpts from 2009 Library Satisfaction Survey

Statement or Question	% of College Community who Answered Positively
In general, I am satisfied with the way in which I am treated in the library.	96%
In general, I am satisfied with library support for my learning, research, and/or teaching needs.	93%
How would you rate the overall quality of the services provided by the library?	93%
The library is a comfortable and inviting location.	90%
Library has convenient service hours.	87%

The survey data reinforces statistical data that shows significant increases in use of Library resources. It also provides qualitative information indicating a high degree of satisfaction with Library services.

Summary

New resources and personnel have significantly enhanced the Library’s ability to support instructional programs, participate in the decision-making processes in the College and more effectively serve students. This in turn has significantly improved the breadth and depth of resources that support both new and existing programs.

Recommendation 7 Response

Recommendation 7: *“The evaluation committee 28 recommends that the College effectively enhance and utilize the institution’s already established system of governance to ensure that there is more open and frequent communication and shared decision-making among the senior administration, deans, faculty and staff.”*

Instructional Council
Staff Development Committee

Appendix B provides examples of documents on the Intranet site available to the College community.

Mission, Vision, Goals, Strategic Plan. The fundamental documents that describe Lake Washington's purposes and plans are available in various documents and websites.

All-College Meetings. President's forums, Vice President of Instruction's "brown bag" lunches, Leadership Team meetings, and RAPID (RAPID is the acronym for Research, Advising, Preparation, In service, and Development) professional development activities provide communication avenues between senior administrators and the College community.

Appendix C provides examples.

Improving Shared Governance

The effort to provide greater opportunity and transparency in the College's governance processes included increasing faculty and staff participation. Participation and involvement in setting College direction and improving day-to-day operations occurred in multiple ways:

Strategic Planning: The Strategic Plan – 2007-2012 is the result of collaborative work within the College community. Completed after the 2006 Full Scale Evaluation, the plan was created with large scale participation and input and was approved by the Board of Trustees in 2007.

The nine strategic direction committees are diverse, with members from all College constituencies. They direct efforts to meet each strategic direction, including setting Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) and recommending efforts to achieve each part of the Strategic Plan.

Key Committees: The major College governance committees provide opportunity for faculty and staff participation in important decisions regarding budget development, allocation of other resources, curriculum, hiring, and professional development, and, for faculty, tenure review. Key committees include:

1. Budget and Finance Committee: The Budget and Finance Committee plays a key role in development the operating budgets. This includes holding public hearings and setting budget priorities that have been accepted by the Executive Cabinet.
2. Campus Master Plan Design Participants included faculty and staff
3. College Council: The College Council reviews policies and procedures. During the 2008-09 year the Council reviewed College leave policies and practices and worked on KPI's relating to effective communication within the College.
4. Curriculum Review Committee
5. Diversity Committee
6. Educational Assessment Committee (EAC): A faculty committee reporting to the Vice President for Instruction that plans all professional development activities concerning educational assessment. See the Recommendation 2 response.
7. Institutional Effectiveness Committ **30** C is responsible for implementation of the
Strategic Directions and recommen ional changes to the Executive Cabinet.
See the Recommendation 1 response.

8. Instructional Council: The Instructional Council, with a faculty majority, approves program and curriculum changes, and conducts program reviews. For example, the Council approved the applied baccalaureate degree, beginning in Fall Quarter, 2009, and four new Allied Health programs.
9. Staff Professional Development Committee: Conducts surveys and creates programs to meet faculty and staff professional development needs.
10. Tenure Review Committees: An ad hoc committee of faculty and the Vice President for Instruction reviewed the current tenure review process and recommended changes to processes and deadlines.

The Budget and Finance Committee deserves particular note. Its membership includes staff, faculty, and administrators. Chairs of the Strategic Directions Committees also are members. For the past two years, the Budget and Finance Committee has played a major role in setting budget priorities and resource allocations within the College. This work assumed especial importance in the past year when the College dealt with a series of reductions to its operating budget. The Committee also effectively informed the College community about its process and the recommendations it made to the Executive Cabinet. A Budget and Finance email to the College community by the Committee chair (**Appendix A**) explained the budgeting and resource allocation process in detail.

The Intranet website, <http://intranet.lwtc.edu/>, provides greater detail on committee work including agendas and minutes. The site is available to all College employees.

Professional Development: Faculty and staff professional development is largely designed by constituent groups. Examples include:

1. RAPID Days: Non-instructional work days where faculty are briefed on the “state of the College,” engage in professional development activities, and prepare for the coming quarter of instruction.
2. Faculty Development Summer Institute: A day of professional development for (32) faculty. The 2008 and 2009 Institute agendas centered on assessment and evaluation and were designed by the Educational Assessment Committee, a faculty group.
3. Staff Professional Development: Annual faculty and staff surveys of professional development needs provide guidance for the design of programs leading to professional growth and improvement. The Staff Professional Development Committee conducts surveys, assesses survey results, and designs the College’s professional development program annually. **Appendix D** provides examples of the Committee’s recent work.

Board of Trustees Reports: The Trustees invite monthly reports from the major constituent groups on campus. Student, faculty, and staff leaders update the Trustees on monthly highlights from their organizations. Organizations invited to report include the Associated Student Government, the Lake Washington Technical College Federation of Teachers, and the LWTC Federation of Classified Employees. The reports provide another perspective to the Board about the “state of the College.” Minutes of the Board of Trustees meetings include these reports and are posted on the Intranet (**Appendix E**).

Improving Communication

Has the College created a positive climate by fostering two-way communications and substantive involvement in its operations? **31** quantitative effort to gauge the effectiveness of this effort is found in the Climate Survey. This survey provides comparative data beginning in 1996 that measures changes in faculty and staff perceptions

about institutional climate. The current survey, completed in May, 2009, assessed the College climate around issues addressed in Recommendation 7. The following survey questions, compared between the same survey conducted in 2005 and 2009, provide data that is helpful in measuring College efforts:

Excerpts from the 2009 College Climate Survey

Question	Numeric Scores		
	2005	2009	Change
<i>Questions regarding communications</i>			
2. This institution involves its employees in planning for the future	3.04	3.36	+ .32
6. Team efforts are effective on this campus	3.44	3.36	- .08
28. Employees are encouraged to provide suggestions on ways to improve the work flow	3.07	3.30	+ .23
32. Administrators pay attention to what I have to say	3.34	3.39	+ .05
44. Employees are involved in the development and improvement of performance measures	3.20	3.38	+ .18
48. Employee suggestions are used to improve our institution	2.99	3.20	+ .21
<i>Questions regarding shared governance</i>			
7. Each department or work unit has written, up-to-date service expectations	2.82	2.93	+ .11
36. Administrators share information with faculty and staff	3.03	3.51	+ .48
37. There is a spirit of teamwork and cooperation on this campus	3.29	3.18	- .11

Although not definitive, this survey provides longitudinal data that illustrates improvements in a number of indicators regarding communication and involvement of faculty and staff in decision making processes.

Technology “Transparency”

The Information Technology Services (ITS) department is managing a project to replace the LWTC web presence, <http://www.lwtc.edu>, with new technology and a new content management system (CMS). New hardware is in place, a new web site design has been developed, and the technical specifications have been written. The new CMS will allow all employees to be potential contributors to websites. Currently, only a handful of employees have authorization to contribute content to websites and the system has limited technical capabilities. In October, the new CMS will publish timely, relevant content targeted at the segments of the College community they serve.

Through the College’s Title III grant, a system for faculty advisors to submit early alerts for student academic or behavioral problems (FAST) is in operation (see the Recommendation 3 response). Student Services personnel can act on the messages by sending letters, initiating phone calls, etc., to assist students. Tracking and escalation for repeated alerts is also part of the system.

Additionally, ITS has purchased the Street **32** messaging system that allows employees to record a message and have it delivered via text messaging to a pre-defined list of recipients (e.g., attendees for an advising workshop). The system is also capable of accepting

user responses and can be used for outcomes assessment or customer service evaluation purposes. User training will occur this fall. Last winter, ITS implemented a similar system for emergency communication and used it successfully to inform hundreds of subscribers of day-by-day College closures during severe weather conditions.

ITS has deployed or is testing several technologies to improve access to information. Over the last two quarters a wireless network has been installed throughout the main campus and at our Redmond and Duvall sites. Each facility now has 100 per cent coverage. Students and employees can access the Internet, and for staff, our internal network from any location on the campuses. Also being tested are Blackberry devices that will allow employees to receive e-mail on the go as well as synchronized calendar information.

Summary

Efforts continue to improve effective two-way dialogues with faculty and staff, communicate major issues effectively, and operate the governance structure in ways to ensure involvement and input for effective decision making. The governance structure is being used to ensure that there is frequent communication and shared decision-making among the senior administration, deans, faculty, and staff.

Conclusion

It is not an overstatement that a major result of the NWCCU recommendations, particularly Recommendations 1 and 2, has been to change the institutional culture at Lake Washington Technical College. The College-wide initiatives to address the ten recommendations have created cooperative efforts spanning the organizational structure and continue, in the face of record enrollments and a state fiscal crisis resulting in several reductions in operating funds.

Improved institutional effectiveness efforts, a comprehensive educational assessment program, revised student placement procedures and greater efforts to improve student retention are now in place. Closer integration of efforts, particularly between Student Services and Instruction but also between the Library and Information Technology Services has occurred. The work done by Research and Development and Educational Assessment has been integrated to better focus on achievement of the Strategic Plan.

There is a new appreciation of the work needed to move ideas into action. The Strategic Plan 2007-2012, in concert with the LWTC mission and vision, provide the framework for action. The strategic directions committees and the IEC became the organizational framework to implement the Strategic Plan. To implement the plan, Key Performance Indicators were developed to more objectively measure progress. The Research and Development Office has an increased capability to conduct research and provide data for analysis and subsequent action.

Central to this culture change are efforts that directly enhance student success:

1. Curriculum revisions and new teaching and learning strategies
2. New student intake process
3. A revised student placement process and efforts to improve retention
4. Efforts to improve retention and graduation rates
5. Library classes to better enable student abilities to do research
6. Significant increases in the Library's print, non-print and media collections

Parallel to these efforts are further initiatives to have better communication between constituent groups and ensure all members of the College are able to be part of decision-making processes important to their work and to providing service to students.

The responses to the outstanding recommendations reflect the degree to which assessment is now incorporated in all College units. The ongoing work will be to continue to use and improve assessment to enhance the student's educational experience at Lake Washington Technical College.