

TRANSCRIPT

Episode 6 - Criterion 4 – Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

Debbie's Bookend - Welcome to the *Leatherneck Accreditation Lab*, a podcast to prepare for Western Illinois University's HLC Accreditation site visit. This is Debbie Kepple-Mamros, Director of Assessment, Accreditation and Strategic Planning. We have several episodes planned. One episode will be released each week up until the site visit on March 29 - 30, 2021.

* TRANSCRIPT *

[LORI]

Welcome to the sixth podcast episode of *The Leatherneck Accreditation Lab*, where we are providing you with information about Western's reaffirmation of accreditation process. This episode is titled Criterion 4: Teaching and Learning - Evaluation and Improvement. Today we continue the discussion of teaching and learning from criterion 3, with a focus on evaluation and improvement. My name is Lori Baker-Sperry, and in addition to serving the university as a professor of women's studies, I am the University Academic Assessment Coordinator. I am joined today by my colleague, Dr. Amy Patrick Mossman. Dr. Mossman serves as professor of English and Director of the University Writing Center.

Dr. Mossman, would you like to get us started and talk a bit about the first section of this teaching and learning portion?

[AMY]

Sure! In the first section of this fourth portion of the assurance argument, we talk about how we *evaluate* the quality of our educational offerings. For example, how we evaluate programs through review, and how we evaluate transcribed credit, including credit from other institutions. We also discuss how we maintain standards for course rigor, student learning outcomes, faculty qualifications, and dual credit courses. We document our record with accreditation, including specialized program accreditations. Finally, we talk about indicators we use to evaluate the success of Western's graduates.

[LORI]

Thanks, Amy!

Where the first section provides more of an overview of policies and procedures for ensuring quality and measuring student success, the second section provides an in-depth look at assessment of student learning at Western. For example, what are our processes for student learning assessment? What do we do to ensure learning goals are achieved in our academic and cocurricular offerings? What are the impacts of our assessment? In other words, how do we use assessment data to make changes and improve student learning in our offerings? And finally, how is our assessment process connected to markers of good practice, such as the participation of faculty and other instructional and cocurricular staff members?

[AMY]

Continuing with the theme of improvement, the third and final section of criterion 4 summarizes the goals and strategies Western has for educational improvement, particularly in the areas of retention, persistence, and completion rates in our degree and certificate programs.

So, for example, we talk about our participation in the Higher Learning Commission Persistence and Completion Academy and the ways in which the resulting data review and analysis led us to make changes in the areas of admissions, aid, and student support. What are our goals for student retention, persistence, and completion? How do those goals tie to our mission? How do we collect and analyze information on retention, persistence, and completion and use it to make improvements? Are our processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing the information reflective of good practice?

And finally, we highlight some specific enhancements we've made in response to data, like our focus on retention for underrepresented populations and students at most risk for not retaining, and the creation of our Reach Program. We discuss other initiatives to support student success like the creation of the Office of Retention Initiatives, the Building Connections Mentorship Program, Leatherneck Success Team, Leatherneck Care Referral Program, Online Absence Reporting, and new scholarship programs.

[LORI]

To conclude, criterion 4 of the assurance argument focuses on how we evaluate and improve teaching and learning in our academic and cocurricular programs to ensure not only that we offer a quality educational experience, but that we are supporting students in that experience so they can complete their degrees and succeed beyond Western.

That's all for this episode. If you have any questions, please feel free to email us at aasp@wiu.edu or check out our web page at wiu.edu/aasp.

Thank you for listening.

Debbie's Bookend This has been an episode of *The Leatherneck Accreditation Lab*, a podcast to prepare for Western Illinois University's HLC Accreditation site visit. Tune in next week when we bring you another episode to prepare the Western Illinois University community for our upcoming accreditation visit.