Western Nevada College

Year One Report: Mission and Core Themes

Prepared for Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

Submitted August 14, 2019

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Institutional Overview

Western Nevada College (WNC) is a comprehensive community college that serves more than 4,600 students each year primarily within a five-county area of more than 8,000 square miles. Since 1971, WNC has offered a wide range of educational opportunities with a balanced focus on accessible pathways to careers or transfer degrees and sustainable student success.

WNC is one of eight member institutions under the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) which operates under the authority of the Nevada Constitution. NSHE prepares biennial budget requests for the state legislature which meets every two years. NSHE's elected 13-member Board of Regents is responsible for system policy making and oversight. The Board of Regents appoints the NSHE Chancellor who serves as the system's chief executive officer and is responsible for implementing Board of Regents' policies and NSHE strategic initiatives. The president of each member institution reports directly to the Chancellor.

Western's main campus is in Nevada's capital, Carson City, with rural campuses in Fallon and Minden. Western also serves other rural Nevada communities, including Fernley, Yerington, Silver Springs, and Dayton. By offering diverse degree, certificate, and university transfer programs, scheduling classes at convenient times, and offering a number of degrees and certificates completely online, WNC strives to ensure students an accessible, positive, and supportive college experience for all students.

Primarily a two-year institution, WNC does offer one baccalaureate degree in applied science. The main credential areas offered are:
- Bachelor degrees: Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS)
- Transfer degrees: Associates of Arts, Business, Science (AA, AB, AS)
- Non-Transfer Degrees: Associate of Applied Science (AAS), Associate of General Studies (AGS)
- Certificates: Certificate of Achievement, Certificate of Completion

WNC's BAS degree focuses on construction management to prepare professionals for careers in the industry. The AA, AB, and AS degrees are designed for university transfer and are recognized specifically in the NSHE Code regarding transfer within the state. WNC's 11 AAS programs and emphases are designed to prepare graduates for careers in business or industry. Fifteen certificates of achievement granted by WNC require completion of 30 credits; 32 certificates of completion, which require fewer credits, are designed to prepare students for state, national, or international licensing exams.

Program development and planning at WNC since the last full accreditation visit in 2010 have supported NSHE initiatives toward efficiency and affordability, local initiatives to enhance service to rural constituencies, and responses to growth of high tech manufacturing in the region. Examples include gateway course initiatives, WNC's Jump Start College program, and internationally recognized certifications such as the Siemen's Certified Mechatronics Systems Certification.

To reach its wide service area, WNC employs online, interactive video, and hybrid modes of instruction. Through partnerships with area high schools, a significant number of in-person class sections are offered at remote sites in rural areas.

WNC works to smooth student transitions into higher education and enhance student success by recognizing that different students experience different challenges. Retention and cohort programs, such as The Bridge to Success, the Veterans Resource Center, and the Latino Cohort, offer encouragement, preparation, and assistance to students and their families to help overcome common barriers.

The Western Nevada College Foundation, founded in 1992, supports WNC students by raising funds through employee giving, special events and campaigns, and individual, corporate, and private foundation solicitations. The WNC Foundation is a non-profit, 501(c)3 that connects the college to the community for the purpose of raising funds and developing friendships that support the college strategic initiatives, projects, and student scholarships. The Foundation will award more than $250,000 in scholarships during the 2017-18 academic year. Projects such as the new Industrial Technology Lab and the Biophysical Science Lab are examples of the impact community donations foster through the Foundation.

WNC's 52 full-time and 180 part-time instructional faculty is recognized as professional, accessible, and focused on student success. Faculty dedication is reflected in an ongoing commitment to exploring partnerships with industry representatives in technical training, with school districts and charter schools in dual credit and preparatory pathways, and with sister institutions in the state to leverage strengths and enhance transfer pathways for students. WNC faculty have won system-wide teaching awards and received the WNC President's Team Award for their dedication to building the Jump Start College program.

WNC's student profile includes a wide variety of ages and ethnicities (34% minority, 57% women, 36% full-time, 40% ages 25 and older) and the growth in the region continues to increase diversity. WNC students enter college with a variety of goals, needs, and expectations, and WNC offers students opportunities to pursue their interests and aspirations in an affordable and nurturing environment. The Associated Students of Western Nevada (ASWN), WNC's student government organization, actively represents the student body and participates in the committee structure of the college.

WNC has been regionally accredited since 1975. The college's 2010 accreditation visit came at a time of extreme budgetary uncertainty for the entire state. Eight years later, the landscape is significantly changed with high tech industry flowing into the region, notable shifts in the state's perspectives on education, and an institution that has weathered a sluggish economy and emerged with an entrepreneurial spirit. The NWCCU Evaluation Team who visited WNC in 2018 noted the college's commitment to transparent communication, innovative strategies for serving students, and service to students from rural areas as well as success in securing external funding as evidence of a positive direction. With student centered commitments steering WNC's path, the future continues to look bright with valuable opportunities for students in northern Nevada.

Preface

Brief Update on Institutional Changes

Since the Spring 2018 Year Seven Self-Evaluation report and site visit, the following significant institutional changes have been made or are ongoing at Western Nevada College (WNC):

Executive Leadership Changes

- Dr. Vincent Solis was selected as WNC President in July 2018, coming to the College from the Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs position at Laredo Community College in Laredo, Texas. Dr. Solis brings over 25 years of higher education experience and leadership to WNC, with a background in serving rural communities and increasing enrollment and success for underserved student populations.

- Former Acting President Mark Ghan is now the Vice President for Special Projects and General Counsel, overseeing General Counsel, Human Resources, and Information and Marketing Services.

- Dr. Kyle Dalpe joined WNC as Vice President of Instruction and Institutional Effectiveness in July 2019. Dr. Dalpe comes to WNC from Truckee Meadows Community College in Reno, Nevada, where he most recently served as Dean of Technical Sciences. This office, formerly titled Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, oversees all academic divisions, the Scheduling Office, and the Institutional Research and Effectiveness Office.

- Interim Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs Scott Morrison returned to the Liberal Arts Division Director role in July 2019 after two years in the vice president role. Interim Liberal Arts Division Director Kim DesRoches returned to her position as full-time academic faculty.

- Interim Vice President of Finance and Administration Darla Dodge has assumed the duties of Chief Financial Officer effective July 2019, with a search for a permanent Vice President of Finance and Administration beginning in fall. VP for Special Projects and General Counsel Mark Ghan assumed oversight of administrative areas, while the Chief Financial Officer oversees finance, budget, Child Development Center, and auxiliary services.

- The Dean of Students office has been renamed the Chief Enrollment and Student Success Officer, and a national search is being organized to fill this position in early 2020. Professor Jeff Downs was selected to fill this position on an interim basis beginning August 5, 2019. To provide additional support, Director of Financial Assistance JW Lazzari is taking on a one-year Interim Executive Director of Enrollment Services and Financial Assistance role. Dianne Hilliard, who has served as Interim Dean of Student Services since 2018, returned to her role as Registrar.

New Strategic Plan Approved

- The Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) Board of Regents approved the WNC 2019-2025 Institutional Strategic Plan in March 2019 following a year-long collaborative creation process across the WNC community.

Academic Division and Student Services Updates

- The Career and Technical Education division has changed its name as of July 1, 2019 to Professional and Applied Technology (PAT). The name change reflects the division mission, which is "WNC prepares students for professional and technical careers." The new name is representative of the college-level work and training done within division programs and eliminates confusion with secondary education programs, which often use "Career and Technical Education" as a name.

- WNC is partnering with Nevada Peace Officers Standards and Training (POST) and University of Nevada, Reno to institute a POST Academy on our campus beginning in the 2020-21 academic year. Thirty participants are expected within the first year of operation.

- The college will bring a new Bachelor of Applied Science degree to the Board of Regents this academic year. This program is being designed to be a next step for several of the college's Associate of Applied Science degrees.

- The Academic Faculty Mentoring and Advising Initiative will match students with academic faculty advisors beginning in August 2019. The WNC Counseling Office will assign students to FERPA-trained academic faculty for advising and mentoring that includes class selection, career exploration, and other support. This initiative is being implemented due to student demand identified in the most recent Associate of Arts program review and in support of improving student retention and completion rates.

- A year-long Intentional Design Course for academic faculty is being run by the Department of Instructional Innovation through the Division of Learning and Innovation. Participating academic faculty examine their classes through an exploration of best practices in teaching and learning, assignment and course design, and learning outcome achievement. Up to three faculty members may be selected via an application process and receive one three-credit course release per semester to support their participation. The course culminates in the development of a strategic plan for the following academic year.

- WNC has implemented the Starfish Enterprise Success Platform to help increase student retention and persistence, course completion and degree/certificate attainment, and to better serve part-time students. Starfish was implemented at the beginning of the summer 2019 semester.

- Beginning with the 2018-2019 Award Year, WNC disbursed $143,834.13 in Nevada Promise Scholarships, which covered the full cost of registration fees for students who graduated from Nevada high school in 2018 and completed all the required steps to earn the scholarship during their senior year of high school. As of July 16, 2019 WNC has awarded $276,516 in Nevada Promise Scholarships for the 2019-2020 Award Year, which will cover the full cost of registration fees for students who graduated from Nevada high school in 2018 or 2019 and completed all the required steps to earn the scholarship during their senior year of high school.

- In February 2019, Ruffalo Noel Levitz Senior Executive Kevin Crockett and Vice President Catherine Shultz visited WNC to provide enrollment, retention, and recruiting consultation. Out of their visit, WNC has prioritized action on the following recommendations:
    - Use data to measure effectiveness of short-term recruitment (yield)
    - Enhance efforts focused on market penetration (communication, website)
    - Enhance promotion of on and off campus events
    - Increase the size of the student recruitment team
    - Align financial aid and admissions
    - Strengthen dual enrollment
    - Implement faculty advising
    - Create alternative programs
    - Enhance activity in Fernley
    - Enhance use of advisory group feedback

New Standing Committees

- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee oversees diversity, equity and inclusion as it relates to strategic planning and performance for the proposed standing committee.

- Healthy Campus and Environment Committee promotes physical, mental, emotional, and environmental wellness through implementation of programs across all WNC campuses and the communities they serve.

- The Information and Communication Technology Accessibility Committee (TICTAC) establishes standards of a college wide policy to ensure compliance with the 2017 Board of Regents policy and any and all applicable federal and state laws governing access by an individual with a disability to information and communication technology at WNC.

- Outreach and Enrollment Management Committee (OESC) identifies and implements best practices in outreach and enrollment of new and former students. The OESC oversees workgroups that advance and assess targeted strategies to impact recruiting and enrollment.

Other Institutional Changes

- In an effort to enhance the safety of students, faculty, staff and visitors to WNC, an agreement and memo of understanding was put in place, effective July 1, 2019, between the University of Nevada Reno and WNC to deliver effective, efficient and professional police and security services. This agreement combined staffing to enhance the level of safety and security services currently provided and to provide a law enforcement presence for immediate response to a

critical event, as well as sharing of resources between the University of Nevada, Reno, Western Nevada College and the Carson City Sheriff's office.

● The WNC public website underwent a significant update in July 2019, with major design work completed by Webmaster Kaila Sankaran. The updated website improves usability and simplifies navigation for students, community members, and faculty and staff.

Response to Topics Previously Requested by the Commission

Following WNC's Spring 2018 Year Seven Self-Evaluation report and site visit, NWCCU gave WNC three recommendations. Recommendation 1 is to be addressed in a separate ad hoc report and site visit in Fall 2019. Recommendations 2 and 3 are addressed below as addenda to this Year One report.

Recommendation 2 Addendum

Recommendation 2: *Western Nevada College fully implement plans for catastrophic event(s) that significantly interrupts normal operations, resulting in a comprehensive continuity and recovery of operations plan (Standard 3.A.5).*

WNC has long included catastrophic event planning in its operations; however, this information was not included in our Spring 2018 Year Seven Report. Plans have been activated in actual campus disruptions, and the plans are reviewed, revised, and upgraded regularly. In response to NWCCU Recommendation 2, the college formed an Emergency Preparedness Advisory Group to identify the specific vulnerabilities, opportunities and barriers to the full implementation of the college's plans, and develop pathways to mitigation.

1. **Establishing and Defining Planning Leadership**: Under new executive leadership, coordination of continuity efforts has been delegated to the Environment Health and Safety department. The department works to 1) facilitate development of a college plan, 2) create a set of tools for unit-level continuity planning, 3) coach and lead units towards planning and exercising of unit plans, and 4) report to executive leadership on progress. Emergency preparedness, operations, and recovery functions remain under the authority of the Vice President of Finance and Administrative Services. Designating a specific Continuity Coordinator has clarified responsibility for planning, testing, training, and exercising particular elements of preparedness plans, especially between Facilities, Public Safety, and Environmental Health and Safety offices.

2. **Active and Ongoing Continuity/Recovery Planning:** The Emergency Preparedness Advisory Group meets twice monthly to develop and refine the college Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP), the college Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), and unit level planning efforts (see Exhibit A). While WNC has had a strong EOP for many years, the advisory group keeps plans active through review and ongoing improvement, and provides a forum for needed recovery plan development and review.

3. **Creating Living Documents:** The Emergency Preparedness Advisory Group drafted a new Emergency Preparedness, Operations and Recovery Policy 11-2-1, which was approved by College Council on March 4, 2019. This new preparedness policy is intended to supplement the emergency operations plan that was approved by College Council in September 2015 and a new interim continuity of operations plan released June 2019. The advisory group's ability to review, exercise, and update the two plans on a regular basis is in line with best practices for emergency and continuity planning. Similarly, reporting units across the college worked with the advisory group to develop unit-level COOPs, representing an update from continuity self-study and needs analyses conducted in 2016.

4. **After Action Reporting**: After action reports are a critical component to fully implemented preparedness plans, as this documentation allows for analysis and continual improvement. All drills conducted now require an after action report submitted to the Continuity Coordinator. Minor business unit disruptions are considered limited COOP activation events, which will now also warrant after action reports.

Recommendation 3 Addendum

Recommendation 3: *That WNC evaluate holistically the alignment, correlation, and integration of programs and services, develop comprehensive plans that articulate priorities and guide decisions, and utilize assessments results that are a) based on meaningful institutionally identified indicators of achievement, and b) used for improvement by informing planning, decision making, and allocation of resources and capacity (Standards 3.A.4, 4.A.4, 4.A.5, 4.B.1).*

Beginning in 2017 and concluding at the end of 2018, the WNC and the wider community worked collaboratively to develop a new 2019-2025 institutional strategic plan. A critical focus for this new plan's development was the holistic integration and alignment of WNC programs and services to our mission, values, and core themes. The campus community wanted a plan that allowed for easier alignment of ongoing departmental goals and priorities to the larger institutional plan. There was also a clear need for responsiveness to changing priorities and challenges that would be incompatible with an inflexible institutional plan.

The new strategic plan, approved by the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) Board of Regents on March 1, 2019, allows for this by focusing on annual program and department level strategic plans created in alignment with supervising units and assessed at the end of each calendar year. A summary of this cycle is represented on the below chart (see Exhibit B for a more detailed overview):

Annual Goal & Assessment Planning

November: President Creates Annual Strategic Plan

December: VPs Create Annual Strategic Plans

January: Directors and All Reporting Units Create Strategic Plans

Annual Assessment Reporting

Following November: President, VPs, Directors, and All Reporting Units Write Annual Assessment Reports

Following December: IRE Compiles Annual Institutional Assessment Summary Report

Following January: IRE Updates 2019-2025 WNC Strategic Plan Indicators and Assesses Institutional Goal Achievement

Annual Program Assessment Feeds into Five-Year Program Review

Annual Strategic Plans, Assessment Reports, and Five-Year Program Review Inform:
- Annual Budgetary Requests and Funding Allocation
- Annual Curriculum Review
- Creation of New WNC Strategic Plan on Seven-Year Cycle
- Mid-Cycle and End of Cycle Effectiveness and Mission Fulfillment Reports
- NWCCU Accreditation Reports

The institutional strategic plan has been written with core themes representing WNC's major areas of focus (Transfer Education, Professional Education, and Lifelong Learning), and our institutional objectives organized under NSHE goals (Access, Success, Close the Achievement Gap, Workforce, and Research). This organizational structure allows for programs and services to more easily identify how their work is contributing to institutional priorities. The cycle of annual planning and assessment additionally allows reporting areas to document their work toward these goals, respond dynamically to new opportunities and challenges, and apply assessment results to new annual plans and projects. Taken as a whole, these collected annual reports facilitate holistic assessment of strategic plan alignment, institutional progress, and resource allocation.

The planning cycle begins with the President's Office, which creates an annual plan in alignment with the institution's strategic plan. Reported goals indicate alignment with specific core themes, objectives, and institutional key performance indicators (KPIs). The plan also articulates how progress toward these stated goals will be measured and assessed over the course of the year. The Vice Presidents then create their own annual plans in alignment with both the President's plan and with the institutional plan. Academic divisions, programs, and administrative areas then create their plans in alignment with the Vice President plan above them. At each level, annual plans articulate goals that are aligned with the offices above them and with the institution's strategic plan, as well as how they will measure progress toward achievement of these goals.

At the end of the fall semester, all areas submit annual assessment reports that include progress toward achieving stated goals, how assessment results will be used to inform projects and planning moving forward, identified needs for additional budgetary support, and recommendations for the upcoming year. These assessment reports coincide with the beginning of the budgetary cycle, allowing for formal budgetary requests to be made with supporting assessment data collected over the course of the prior year. The Budget Committee overseeing resource allocation requests has updated their request process to require alignment of requests to specific strategic plan core themes, objectives, and indicators (see Exhibit C).

Holistic analysis of plan alignment and progress toward institutional goals is conducted across multiple areas. The President and Vice Presidents complete a comprehensive review of their reporting units in order to offer guidance and feedback regarding alignment with current institutional priorities and application of assessment results to upcoming plans. Assessment and Planning Lead Faculty, a newly created position to help oversee and guide academic program planning and assessment, work with Academic Division Directors to review course-level and program-level assessments to ensure comprehensive assessment of student learning outcomes and meaningful application of assessment results. The Academic Planning and Assessment Cycles Workgroup brings academic faculty and division directors together with IRE and the VP of Instruction and Institutional Effectiveness to evaluate the functionality of cycle timelines for academic programs. This workgroup was formed in response to questions about when planning and assessment should occur in order to have the most meaningful application and impact on curriculum changes, budgetary requests, and related course and program management. The Program Assessment and Review Committee (PARC) facilitates five-year program review of academic programs and administrative areas, reviewing collections of past annual assessments as a whole for trends, challenges, and progress over time in order to guide improvement and planning moving forward. The Strategic Planning for Institutional Excellence (SPFIE) committee reviews annual reports from all standing committees for alignment with and progress toward institutional goals, and provides guidance for committee structure and planning moving forward based on reviewed reports. Additionally, SPFIE adapted, with permission, an institutional effectiveness (IE)

rubric from the State University of New York System in order to conduct a holistic annual assessment of WNC's planning and assessment processes (see Exhibit D). The first such assessment was conducted in January 2019, with plans to continue conducting IE assessment annually.

Annual strategic plans, assessment summary reports, mission fulfillment reports, IE assessments, and program reviews are shared with the campus community online via WNC's public website and WestNET intranet (intranet link requires login). Significant assessment projects, completed academic and administrative goals, and other successes are celebrated at college and division meetings, as well as in the Western Weekly college newsletter (see Exhibit E).

The Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (IRE) is instrumental in facilitating, collecting, reporting, and guiding planning and assessment efforts campus-wide. The IRE Office completes regular assessment summary reports, annual mission fulfillment reports, maintains comprehensive institutional data dashboards, and works with departments on ad hoc reports and requests to support planning and assessment. The Planning and Assessment Coordinator position within IRE has been moved from a temporary to permanent position, demonstrating WNC's commitment to supporting and maintaining comprehensive planning and assessment cycles. In addition, the Director and Programmer/Analyst positions within IRE have moved from part-time shared services with Great Basin College to full-time positions dedicated to WNC. With three full-time positions, IRE has a greatly improved capacity to support planning and assessment.

Mission, Core Themes, and Expectations

Executive Summary of Eligibility Requirements 2 and 3

2. AUTHORITY: Created in 1971, Western Nevada College is one of eight member institutions operating as the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE). NSHE operates under the authority of the Nevada Constitution, Nevada statutes, and NSHE policies.

The *WNC Policy Manual* contains provisions that define the authority, roles, and responsibilities of the college entities that facilitate the functioning and operation of WNC.

WNC is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities.

3. MISSION AND CORE THEMES: Western Nevada College's Mission and Core Themes (2019-2025) were approved by the NSHE Board of Regents in March 2019. The mission and core themes development resulted from a collaboration of internal and external community stakeholders, including students, staff, faculty, and regional leaders, ensuring that it reflects the needs of WNC's service area and can be easily understood by the wider community.

Standard 1.A: Mission

1.A.1: The institution has a widely published mission statement, approved by its governing board, that articulates a purpose appropriate for an institution of higher learning, gives direction for its efforts, and derives from, and is generally understood by, its community.

Mission Statement: WNC contributes to solutions for the 21st century by providing effective educational pathways for the students and communities of Nevada.

The Board of Regents of the Nevada System of Higher Education approved the mission statement of the 2019-2025 Western Nevada College Strategic Plan in March 2019.

The mission statement is posted online, included in the print and digital versions of the annually updated *Academic Program Guide*, on posters in classrooms, hallways, and common areas throughout the campuses, and as a rotating slide on informational screens in common areas.

The mission statement sets forth a purpose that is appropriate for an institution of higher education and the mission of a comprehensive public community college. It focuses on the diverse and meaningful educational pathways that we provide for our students and communities. These pathways include transfer degrees for students continuing their education at the university level, professional degrees and certificates designed to match the workforce skills needed for today's Nevada, and a wide range of continuing educational opportunities for personal enrichment and professional development.

The mission statement was developed in collaboration with internal and external community stakeholders, including students, staff, faculty, and regional leaders, ensuring that it reflects the needs of our service area and can be easily understood by the wider community.

1.A.2: The institution defines mission fulfillment in the context of its purpose, characteristics, and expectations. Guided by that definition, it articulates institutional accomplishments or outcomes that represent an acceptable threshold or extent of mission fulfillment.

WNC developed its mission statement through a lengthy and inclusive process that involved members of both the College and the communities it serves. In doing so, WNC ensured that the mission statement encapsulated the characteristics, purposes, and expectations essential to providing higher education opportunities that meet the needs of its students.

The mission statement guides the development of institutional priorities which inform WNC's strategic planning process through three core themes: Transfer Education, Professional Education, and Lifelong Learning. These themes serve as pillars of the institution's mission and individually embody its key elements. Additionally, WNC has adopted NSHE goals to serve as broad objective areas shared under each core theme: Access, Success, Close the Achievement Gap, Workforce, and Research. NSHE developed and adopted this set of goals in 2018 as a collaboration between the Board of Regents and the chancellor. This set of goals represents a clear statement of focus from system governance and a shift in the way system-wide leadership is articulated. The NSHE goals provide a framework for institutional reporting and system level discussions on progress and institutional alignment within the state. Progress toward meeting specific objectives within each NSHE goal area is measured by key performance indicators (KPIs) at the institutional level. Annual academic program and administrative area strategic plans are in alignment with the institutional plan and allow academic programs and administrative offices to create localized performance indicators that better reflect dynamic initiatives and priorities.

The *Annual Mission Fulfillment Report,* along with associated data trends and summaries produced by IRE, present updates on mission fulfillment and strategic plan achievement. This report is reviewed by WNC leadership, SPFIE, the Accreditation Committee, and is shared with the wider WNC community through the public website and WNC intranet. This report is highlighted in all-college presentations during Welcome Back week at the start of each academic year. In the past, WNC has defined mission fulfillment as meeting or exceeding at least 90% of thresholds across all of the core theme objectives. The new institutional plan structure differs significantly with KPIs measured across all themes in many cases; goal areas adopted from NSHE provide a convenient structure but also require careful consideration of weighting to appropriately represent mission fulfillment for a community college. The process for defining thresholds for each indicator is ongoing and will involve college-wide collaborations as the productive alignment of annual area plans depends upon the clear guidance and feedback to all areas and departments. Thresholds will be in place during the fall 2019 semester.

Standard 1.B: Core Themes

1.B.1: The institution identifies core themes that individually manifest essential elements of its mission and collectively encompass its mission.

For the 2019-2025 institutional strategic plan, WNC has decided on three core themes that encompass the educational pathways included in our mission statement:

- **Transfer Education**: Associate of Arts (AA), Associate of Science (AS), and Associate of Business (AB) degrees that may be transferred to four-year institutions and applied toward the completion of a bachelor's degree.

- **Professional Education**: Associate of Applied Science (AAS), Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS), and professional certificate programs that prepare students to enter the workforce or advance their careers.

- **Lifelong Learning**: Continuing education or credit courses taken for personal enrichment, professional development, or skill enhancement.

Centering our core themes on the educational pathways we provide builds a framework focused directly on our students and their achievements. Transfer education and professional education pathways serve our students and the communities in which they live by advancing career opportunities and imparting skills to successfully navigate our increasingly complex and connected world. Lifelong learning is both a product of and a purpose for a community college, recognizing that educational opportunities outside of formal degree paths drive innovation and access for all populations of learners.

1.B.2: The institution establishes objectives for each of its core themes and identifies meaningful, assessable, and verifiable indicators of achievement that form the basis for evaluating accomplishment of the objectives of its core themes.

WNC has adopted NSHE's five goal areas of Access, Success, Close the Achievement Gap, Workforce, and Research as a framework to organize objectives shared across all three core themes. Organizing our objectives under NSHE's five goal areas allows for clear alignment between WNC and NSHE, while sharing objectives across all three of our core themes ensures that we monitor achievement of these critical goal areas throughout all educational pathways. Under each objective, specific KPIs measure progress toward success for each core theme. The chart on the following two pages demonstrates this structure.

WNC Institutional Core Themes and Objectives Grid

		WNC Core Themes		
		Transfer Education	**Professional Education**	**Lifelong Learning**
NSHE Goals	**WNC Institutional Objectives**	*Key Performance Indicators*	*Key Performance Indicators*	*Key Performance Indicators*
Access: Increase participation in postsecondary education	WNC provides access to educational pathways and opportunities	Fall Enrollment	Fall Enrollment	Annual enrollment (unique and total headcount)
		% <18 yr olds/Dual Enrollment	% <18 yr olds/Dual Enrollment	% <18 yr olds/Dual Enrollment
		% 18-24 yr olds	% 18-24 yr olds	% 18-24 yr olds
		% 25+ yr olds	% 25+ yr olds	% 25+ yr olds
	WNC students make an efficient transition from preparatory to college level coursework	Length of time to enrollment in college-level coursework	Length of time to enrollment in college-level coursework	Adult Language and Literacy SLOs
		Length of time to completion of college-level coursework	Length of time to completion of college-level coursework	
		Developmental course pass rates	Developmental course pass rates	
		Rates of enrollment in college-level courses after passing developmental courses	Rates of enrollment in college-level courses after passing developmental courses	Rates of co-enrollment in credit courses
	WNC provides equitable access for students regionally and demographically	Participation by county, age group, race/ethnicity	Participation by county, age group, race/ethnicity	Participation by county
	WNC provides access to dual credit pathways	Participation in dual credit pathways toward transfer degrees	Participation in dual credit pathways toward certification	Participation by high school students, college preparatory pathways
Success: Improve completions/student success rates and increase the number of individuals with a post-secondary credential	WNC supports student learning, progress, and completion	Graduation Rates	Graduation Rates	Completion rates
		IPEDS Education Outcomes	IPEDS Education Outcomes	
		Number of degree/certificates awarded	Number of degree/certificates awarded	Number of successful completions
		Persistence and Retention Rates	Persistence and Retention Rates	
	WNC advances student achievement of learning outcomes at course, program, and institutional levels	SLO achievement rates for institution, program	SLO achievement rates for institution, program	Engagement survey
	WNC builds student engagement with education and the WNC community	CCSSE/Noel Levitz Survey Results	CCSSE/Noel Levitz Survey Results	

		WNC Core Themes		
		Transfer Education	**Professional Education**	**Lifelong Learning**
NSHE Goals	**WNC Institutional Objectives**	*Key Performance Indicators*	*Key Performance Indicators*	*Key Performance Indicators*
Close the achievement gap among underserved student populations	WNC identifies and closes achievement gaps across student populations by supporting achievement across demographic groups in traditional and non-traditional fields	Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity	Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity	Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity and identified employment barriers
		Number Degree/Certificates by Race/Ethnicity	Number Degree/Certificates by Race/Ethnicity	Completion rate by race/ethnicity, by employment barrier
		Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity	Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity	
		Persistence by Race/Ethnicity	Persistence by Race/Ethnicity	
		Enrollment and completion for students in non-traditional fields (NAPE/PIPE)	Enrollment and completion for students in non-traditional fields (NAPE/PIPE)	
	WNC sustains a learning environment that promotes equity and inclusion	CCSSE/Noel Levitz Survey Results	CCSSE/Noel Levitz Survey Results	
Workforce: Collaboratively address the challenges of the workforce and industry education needs of Northern Nevada populations	WNC responds to the needs of industry and provides effective pathways for students toward in-demand occupations	Percentage of NSHE in-demand occupations with established WNC pathways	Percentage of NSHE in-demand occupations with established WNC pathways	Number of programs and courses that are career prep/workforce training, and number of those that are for NSHE in-demand occupations
		Student participation in WNC pathways leading to NSHE in-demand pathways	Student participation in WNC pathways leading to NSHE in-demand pathways	Number students participating in workforce training programs/courses, and # participating in those programs/courses for NSHE in-demand occupations
		Percentage of students who transition to next level training or workforce (NSHE in-demand occupations)	Percentage of students who transition to next level training or workforce (NSHE in-demand occupations)	Percentage of students who participate in workforce training programs/courses, and percentage that are for NSHE in-demand occupations
Research: Co-develop solutions to the critical issues facing 21st century Nevada and raise the overall research profile	WNC contributes to solutions to the critical issues facing 21st century Nevada	*Rather than having separate KPIs for this objective, progress in this area is measured by evaluating the success of innovative projects and initiatives aimed at increasing access and student success, closing the achievement gap, and preparing students for the workforce. Successful initiatives will have a positive impact on KPIs in these other goal areas.*		

Objectives, Key Performance Indicators, and Rationale

All goal areas and objectives are shared across all three educational pathway core themes. Similarly, KPIs are shared across applicable core theme pathways. The rationale for selected KPIs can be best explored by reviewing how each goal area and its specific objectives interacts with each educational pathway core theme.

Goal Area: Access

- **Objective**: WNC provides access to educational pathways and opportunities.

KPI:	Shared Across Core Themes:
Fall enrollment	Transfer, Professional, and Lifelong Learning
Percentage of students under 18 and in Dual Enrollment	Transfer, Professional, and Lifelong Learning
Percentage of students 18-24 years old	Transfer, Professional, and Lifelong Learning
Percentage of students 25+ years old	Transfer, Professional, and Lifelong Learning

  Rationale: In order to ensure that WNC is providing access to educational pathways and opportunities, it is important to monitor fall enrollment numbers across all core theme areas. Breaking these enrollment numbers down by age additionally gives insight into how accessible each pathway is for younger students who may still be in high school, for students of traditional college age, and for older adult learners.

- **Objective**: WNC students make an efficient transition from preparatory to college level coursework.

KPI:	Shared Across Core Themes:
Developmental course pass rates	Transfer and Professional Education
Rates of enrollment in college-level courses after passing developmental courses	Transfer and Professional Education
Length of time to enrollment in college-level coursework	Transfer and Professional Education
Length of time to completion of college-level coursework	Transfer and Professional Education
Adult Language and Literacy student learning outcome achievement	Lifelong Learning
Rates of co-enrollment in credit courses	Lifelong Learning

  Rationale: Providing preparatory and developmental coursework increases student access to degree, certificate, and other educational pathways. Rates of success in developmental courses and subsequent enrollment in credit-bearing courses indicate efficiency in preparing students to succeed. Additionally, the length of time for that enrollment into college-level coursework, as well as how long it takes to successfully complete that coursework, indicate how accessible our transfer and professional education pathways are for our students.

Within the Lifelong Learning core theme pathway, the Adult Language and Literacy program helps prepare students who may not yet be ready for developmental and preparatory coursework. Assessing student learning outcome achievement within this program is a critical achievement indicator in place of course pass rates. For students involved in any Lifelong Learning coursework or programming, rates of co-enrollment in for-credit courses from our Transfer or Professional Education pathways indicate student readiness for college-level coursework.

- **Objective**: WNC provides equitable access for students regionally and demographically.

KPI:	Shared Across Core Themes:
Participation by county, age group, race/ethnicity	Transfer, Professional, and Lifelong Learning

Rationale: Tracking student participation by county, age group, and race/ethnicity for all core theme pathways allows us to see where challenges and opportunities may exist with regard to improving access for student populations by region and demographics.

- **Objective**: WNC provides access to dual credit pathways.

KPI:	Shared Across Core Themes:
Participation in dual credit pathways toward transfer degrees	Transfer Education
Participation in dual credit pathways toward certification and professional credentials	Professional Education
Participation in dual enrollment, college preparatory pathways	Lifelong Learning

Rationale: Dual credit pathways increase access to higher education by allowing current high school students the opportunity to earn college credit and develop skills necessary for success in college while receiving support from both their high school and WNC communities. Monitoring participation in dual credit and enrollment opportunities across all three core theme pathways helps us ensure that high school students have access to a full spectrum of pathways that support their educational, professional, and personal goals.

Goal Area: Success

- **Objective**: WNC supports student learning, progress, and completion.

KPI:	Shared Across Core Themes:
Graduation Rates	Transfer and Professional Education
IPEDS Education Outcomes	Transfer and Professional Education
Number of degree/certificates awarded	Transfer and Professional Education
Persistence and Retention Rates	Transfer and Professional Education
Completion Rates	Lifelong Learning
Number of successful completions	Lifelong Learning

Rationale: Tracking student graduation, persistence, retention, and IPEDS Education Outcomes within our Transfer and Professional Education core theme pathways is critical for understanding student progress and success semester to semester and within programs of study. Within the Lifelong Learning core theme, non-credit course and program completion rates and numbers provide similar metrics for student progress and success.

- **Objective**: WNC advances student achievement of learning outcomes at course, program, and institutional levels.

KPI:	Shared Across Core Themes:
Student learning outcome achievement at the program and institutional level	Transfer and Professional Education

Rationale: Assessing student learning outcome (SLO) achievement at the program and institutional level establishes how well students are meeting expectations for success within their courses and programs of study. Assessment and Planning Lead Faculty and Academic Division Directors work with academic faculty to establish SLO assessment plans at the course and program level, and apply assessment results to program and course improvements. Tracking SLO achievement at the program and institutional level over time is both a key indicator of student success and a context for annual planning and assessment.

- **Objective**: WNC builds student engagement with education and the WNC community.

KPI:	Shared Across Core Themes:
CCSSE/Noel Levitz Survey Results	Transfer and Professional Education
Engagement Survey Results	Lifelong Learning

Rationale: Fostering student engagement with education and the WNC community is important for supporting success because students who are actively engaged by their campus and college community are more likely to persist semester to semester, participate in classes, and reach their educational goals. The Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory and the Community College Survey of Student Engagement are national surveys given to WNC students that allow the College to compare student satisfaction and engagement across multiple metrics with past WNC satisfaction levels and with national numbers. Engagement within non-credit Lifelong Learning programming is measured via internal student engagement surveys

Goal Area: Close the Achievement Gap

- **Objective**: WNC identifies and closes achievement gaps across student populations by supporting achievement across demographic groups in traditional and non-traditional fields.

KPI:	Shared Across Core Themes:
Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity	Transfer, Professional, and Lifelong Learning
Number Degree/Certificates by Race/Ethnicity	Transfer and Professional Education
Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity	Transfer and Professional Education
Persistence by Race/Ethnicity	Transfer and Professional Education
Enrollment and completion for students in non-traditional fields (NAPE/PIPE)	Transfer and Professional Education

  Rationale: To support achievement for all students across demographic groups toward the goal of closing the achievement gap, it is important to track enrollment, graduation, degree and certificate achievement, and persistence by race and ethnicity, as well as enrollment and completion for students in non-traditional fields. Monitoring these numbers over time help us identify and address gaps in student support and outreach, as well as see areas of strength and success.

- **Objective**: WNC sustains a learning environment that promotes equity and inclusion.

KPI:	Shared Across Core Themes:
CCSSE/Noel Levitz Survey Results	Transfer and Professional Education
Engagement Survey Results	Lifelong Learning

  Rationale: Both the CCSSE and Noel-Levitz surveys include questions specific to student perceptions of equity and inclusion within their learning environment. Comparing WNC student responses both to national survey results and past WNC student responses gives valuable insight into how well WNC is meeting this objective.

Goal Area: Workforce

- **Objective**: WNC responds to the needs of industry and provides effective pathways for students toward in-demand occupations.

KPI:	Shared Across Core Themes:
Percentage of NSHE in-demand occupations with established WNC pathways	Transfer, Professional, and Lifelong Learning
Student participation in WNC pathways leading to NSHE in-demand pathways	Transfer, Professional, and Lifelong Learning
Percentage of students who transition to next level training or workforce (NSHE in-demand occupations)	Transfer, Professional, and Lifelong Learning

Rationale: NSHE's list of in-demand occupations for the state comes from the Nevada Governor's Office of Economic Development, which annually tracks and identifies these occupational trends. WNC can assess whether it is providing effective pathways for students toward these occupations by tracking how many pathways we offer toward these occupations, how many students are participating in these pathways, and the rates at which students transition into or advance within these occupations.

Goal Area: Research

- **Objective**: WNC contributes solutions to the critical issues facing 21st century Nevada.

    KPI: Rather than having separate KPIs for this objective, progress in this area is measured by evaluating the success of innovative projects and initiatives aimed at increasing access and student success, closing the achievement gap, and preparing students for the workforce. Successful initiatives will have a positive impact on KPIs in these other goal areas.

    Rationale: While WNC's academic faculty and students conduct scholarly research leading to publications and presentations, our primary mission as an open-access institution is to provide pathways for success to our students. WNC sees preparing students for success at transfer institutions, within the Nevada workforce, and within our local communities as our primary contribution toward addressing contemporary issues facing our state. As such, the most critical research done at WNC goes into the development and implementation of student support, success, retention, and completion initiatives. As initiatives prove successful, KPIs from our other goal areas of Access, Success, Close the Achievement Gap, and Workforce will see positive gains.

    In annual mission fulfillment reporting, the Research goal area provides a space for reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness and future potential of proposed, new, and ongoing initiatives, such as the expanded prison education program and the development of linked courses for new learning communities.

    Additionally, the Research goal area gives a space to track applied research as conducted by faculty and staff for assessment and improvement purposes, as well as externally-funded research conducted by faculty that supports undergraduate research. Both contribute to solutions for the 21st century by highlighting the important role that faculty play in investigating and resolving issues blocking student access and success across all core themes and in mentoring and training undergraduates in research skills.

Conclusion

The feedback received from the 2018 Evaluation Team led by Dr. Derek Brandes has been extremely valuable in helping Western to focus efforts on areas needing improvement and recognizing the exceptional work and accomplishments of the past seven years. Specific feedback regarding program review, planning, and resource allocation has already motivated revisions that better connect assessment, curriculum, and budget planning cycles. Other feedback led to the college's accreditation committee evolving to better represent all the key areas of the college, including increased representation for the areas of finance and human resources.

Following the 2018 Year Seven visit, WNC's Year One activities centered on completing an inclusive, methodical approach to revising institutional mission, vision, and strategic plans. The chance to reflect on feedback from the evaluation team and from the community at large was extremely positive in helping to refine the mission statement and shape the new strategic plan. During 2018, NSHE formally established strategic goals which presented a framework to organize institutional objectives and measures. As a result, Western's new strategic plan framework shows a sharpened focus on student access, learning, and completion and highlights the institution's vigilance in monitoring and mitigating achievement gaps

WNC is the first institution in NSHE to present a revised strategic plan under the umbrella of new system goals: Access, Success, Closing Achievement Gaps, Workforce, and Research. System-wide feedback on the revised plan was extremely positive as the plan embodies explicit alignment between the student-focused mission of a community college and the system level guidance from the state-wide board.

As we complete our Year One reporting activities and look forward to an ad hoc visit in September 2019, Western is an institution engaged in significant transformation on multiple fronts. Participation in the NWCCU Fellowship on Mission Fulfillment, institution-wide engagement in strategic enrollment management, expansion of online learning and dual enrollment, and involvement in a statewide conversion to completely replace remedial courses with corequisite pathways reflect Western's commitment to best serving our students while ensuring compliance with the expectations established by the system, the state, and NWCCU.

As we have completed our first few steps into the next seven-year cycle, the trajectory of the college continues toward a culture of inquiry which is data informed, inclusive, transparent, and student focused. Most importantly, there is recognition that a healthy college is always evolving and that vigilance and consistency are the keys to maintaining an institution that will continue to put students first.