WCCCD Self-Study Steering Committee Has Been Formed

The District has announced the members of the WCCCD Self-Study Re-accreditation Steering Committee. The members of this committee will be leading the effort to prepare segments of the self-study to collectively address the requirements for the NCA/HLC. This steering committee is comprised of a coordinator, campus liaisons, team leaders, and consultant writers led by a chairperson. Additionally, Higher Learning Commission, St. Louis Community College, Cuyahoga Community College and Houston Community College have been listed as Best Practice institutions and external partners.

WCCCD Mission Statement

WCCCD’s mission is to empower individuals, businesses, and communities to achieve their goals through excellent and accessible services, culturally diverse experiences, and globally competitive higher education and career advancement programs.

“By far the best proof is experience.”
Sir Francis Bacon

WCCCD UPCOMING EVENTS

NCA Self-Study Newsletter

April 18, 2007  IPEDS Spring Collection due
April 20-24, 2007  HLC /NCA Annual Meeting (Chicago, IL)
May 2007  HLC Staff Liaison Dr. Mary Breslin visits WCCCD

WCCCD Board of Trustees Retreat

On February 24, the WCCCD Board of Trustees convened for its annual retreat. One of the primary aspects of retreat focused on the self-study process. The self-study presentation, which included the process structure, updates and achievements, showcased how WCCCD is strengthening infrastructure and providing an effective teaching and learning environment for our students.

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In February 2007, eleven representatives from WCCCD visited St. Louis Community College (STLCC) to share best practices in the HLC/NCA self-study process and other areas of operations. On March 29th, 2007, the District reciprocated its hospitality by hosting Dr. Ron Smith, Consultant to the Chancellor, and Dr. John Ganio, Vice Chancellor for Education of STLCC for a two-day visit. The representatives began their stay by meeting with WCCCD Vice Chancellors and Campus leadership staff for a general Q & A session. Like WCCCD, STLCC is a multi-campus community college serving the metropolitan area of St. Louis, Missouri and is preparing for their NCA/HLC site visit in January, 2008. The representatives candidly shared their knowledge, experience and insight acquired during their NCA/HLC site visit in January, 2008. The representatives candidly shared their knowledge, experience and insight acquired during their NCA/HLC site visit in January, 2008.

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WCCCD Responds to 1999 Consultant – Evaluator Team Report – CHALLENGE #1

According to the HLC Handbook (page 5-2-6), the hallmark of an effective self-study report is an institution’s “summary understanding of and response to the major issues identified by the last site visit team”.

In WCCCD’s 1999 Consultant-Evaluator Team Visit Report, the team cited six challenges. In response WCCCD developed, implemented, evaluated, and enhanced several initiatives. For example, the first challenge cited by HLC/NCA emphasized the need for the District to have a system to enable institutional personnel to track, analyze, and disseminate student information and learning related data.

As a result of planning and research by the IT Department in 2002, the Banner System, a central administrative software system, was installed.

In 2004 the student information modular was added allowing the IT Department to respond to:
• Academic personnel requests for data
• Information used to track student progress
• Generate program and course retention data
• Collect other research data necessary to conduct program review

• Course placement analysis, state-mandated and local reports reflecting institutional effectiveness practices

Other highlights of the recent IT system enhancements that have been implemented include:
• Creation of a Banner Common Center to generate regular reports
• Establishment of a database management team responsible for creating and updating reports for senior administrators
• Implementation of Crystal Reports and Business Objects to meet administrative reporting needs
• Development of a web-based reporting tool
• Installation of a designated server with shared folders that allows District units to use as a communication tool
• Implementation of LaserPhisch software that allows for the digital imaging of documents. The result is the reduction of space and cost, preservation and security of documents, enhancement of communication and online availability and accessibility.

Overall, WCCCD’s response to Challenge #1 has enhanced the practice for collecting, analyzing, reporting, and applying data by the IT Department as part of the institution’s planning and decision-making processes.

Best-Practice: Future Web-Learning

Teaching and learning is at the heart of WCCCD’s work. Currently, the primary instructional delivery mode used by WCCCD instructors with their students is face-to-face classroom instruction. However, the rise in enrollment in distance-learning courses and the use of the Web as a tool for delivery of these courses is becoming a more popular option for both instructors and students. This shift in enrollment trends and delivery mode of instruction supports this change and foreshadows the future learning activity between instructors and students.

WCCCD uses Blackboard as a course management system and instructional delivery mode for distance learning courses. EDUCAUSE Center for Applied Research defines a course management system as a tool that allows an instructor to post information on the Web without that instructor having to know or understand HTML or other computer languages. A recent study by the EDUCAUSE showed that most students using a course management system employ it primarily to access course materials and grades. Thus, the set-up of a course management system makes it easier for instructors to deliver instructional materials to their students, but it is limited in stimulating students to become active learners.

Educators are exploring new ways of using the Web as a student-centered instructional tool that stimulates students to become more active and participatory learners. One example is the Digital Notebook Project at Georgetown University. The vision for Notebook is to provide an online space for students to learn, create, collaborate, and store the evidence of their collegiate work as a detailed portfolio that logs what they have learned throughout their time in college. Notebook will allow students to create their own portfolio that tracks how their thinking has developed from the time they first enrolled in college until they graduate.

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A project like the Digital Notebook is being tested now, and it may become a staple as a mode of delivery for students or admission officers. In turn, students will be able to use their portfolios to share its content with others, such as potential employers or admission officers.

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