Standard 4: Diversity

4.3 Feedback on correcting previous areas for improvement (AFIs)

AFIs continued from last visit:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AFI Number &amp; Text</th>
<th>Apply to</th>
<th>AFI Rationale</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Candidates have limited opportunities to interact with diverse faculty.</td>
<td>ITP,ADV</td>
<td>Candidates have limited opportunities to interact with faculty who represent multiple racial/ethnic groups in the unit. Although efforts are being made by the unit and institution, not all candidates are ensured interactions with diverse faculty.</td>
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Western has sought to diversify its faculty in the same way it is successfully diversifying its student body. The approximately 20% of the faculty who contribute to this diversity reflect a dedicated pattern of hiring that has increased steadily over the past two decades. As one example, the fifteen-member department responsible for providing all educational foundations courses consists of faculty members with the following diversity characteristics: two under-represented, two international, two recently naturalized citizens, and one physically disabled person. Several in the same department who would be categorized as non-minority have extensive experience living, working, and conducting research in developing countries and are fluent in languages other than English. These individuals regularly present and publish on international and minority issues. Even with a narrowly defined understanding of diversity that excludes consideration of sexual orientation, class and religious background, and rural-urban tension, the composition and the role of this one department ensure that every teacher education candidate interacts with diverse faculty.

Nevertheless, owing to its geographic location and its mandated mission to the region, Western realizes that it must regularly adjust its operational definition of diversity. For instance, a number of the Spanish-speaking residents of the region come not from Mexico but from Central and South America and arrive with very different cultural experiences compared to their Mexican-American counterparts. The tri-state region is also seeing an increase in the number of French-speaking Africans and those whose first language is Portuguese. With more than 135 distinct first languages being spoken in Illinois schools, helping prepare our candidates for linguistic and cultural experiences which cannot be fully anticipated is critical.

Classroom and field experiences are essential in preparing candidates for both the expected and the unexpected, but Western also utilizes other strategies. Consider the following examples.
• Our collaboration with the Golden Apple Scholars program supports the recruitment and preparation of a diverse group of bright and talented high school graduates who have the promise for successful careers as excellent teachers in high-need schools. The Scholars are mentored by diverse and/or diversity-supportive Western faculty.

• Teacher education candidates are encouraged to participate in Undergraduate Research Day. In many instances the research presented results from candidate-mentor research efforts such as the recent investigation of mental health issues among Latinos in McHenry County by Dr. J. Q. Adams and one of his students.

• The interview exercises in EIS 302 (Multicultural and Social Foundations of Education) provide exposure to diverse students and faculty in schools but also allow candidates to interact with international students and the faculty of the Center for International Studies and its Western English as a Second Language program.

Such direct opportunities to work with diverse faculty are complemented by a host of complementary possibilities. Such possibilities abound on campus and include presentations and conferences such as the following:

• Just this fall, Western initiated its Difficult Conversations series. Intended for faculty, students, staff, and administration, these forum discussions provide participants with a chance to discuss topics that are typically avoided.

• COEHS recently sponsored a series of workshops/presentations about engaging and educating recently-arrived Islamic students. An Army officer facilitated many of these, helping candidates understand complex cultural considerations and allowing them to see the more human face of our military engagement in Central Asia.

• As part of Western’s Expanding Cultural Diversity Project and with support from the WIU Diversity Cadre, the Illinois Association for Cultural Diversity (IACD) again sponsored a speakers series and its summer diversity conference – a conference now in its third decade of operation. This year’s conference saw a record number of student participants. The series and the conference are designed to provide large and small group diversity exchanges and to prepare participants to be change agents in their schools, their communities, and the workplace. The work of the IACD is supported by that of Western’s Multicultural Resource Development and Advising Center.

4.5 Evidence for the Onsite BOE Team to validate during the onsite visit:
1.a. “Evidence of proficiency mastery; Scoring guides and student samples show a direct linkage to the diversity proficiencies outlined by the unit for courses identified. Assessments and data related to candidates' proficiencies for helping all students learn. What assessments provide data on the candidates' diversity proficiencies?”

Four initial level unit assessments are linked to the diversity proficiencies at the initial level and provide data to document candidates’ abilities. These assessments are Disposition Check 3 (DC3), Universal Design (UD), Student Teaching Clinical Experience Evaluation (STCEE), and the Western Teacher Work Sample (WTWS). The data from these assessments by diversity proficiency is found in the Proficiencies Data Table.

Program assessments at the advanced level are also linked to diversity proficiencies.

Diversity Assessments Linkage to Diversity Proficiencies – Initial Level
Initial Level Diversity Proficiencies Data Table
Diversity Assessments Linkage to Diversity Proficiencies – Advanced Level

1.b. “What is the unit learning from these assessments?”

The NCATE off-site review team noted that the unit takes diversity and our responsibility to promote the learning of all candidates seriously. As they noted, WIU "has devoted considerable effort toward ensuring that its conceptual framework and course offerings help candidates develop the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions to facilitate learning of students from diverse backgrounds.” We believe, as the critical theorist and multicultural educator Peter McLaren explains, “You can’t teach people anything . . . You have to create a context in which they can analyze themselves and their social formations and lives” (Singh, 2006). Such a context is reflected in the WIU conceptual framework, curriculum, and clinical experiences. An extensive evaluation of how and to what level our candidates meet these established diversity proficiencies is found in the report The Assessment of Candidate Diversity Proficiencies. A brief summary of the report’s findings is provided below.

"WIU’s Teacher and Professional Education unit has six diversity proficiencies:

1. Acknowledging cultural and individual differences.
2. Adapting instruction and assessment to cultural and individual differences.
3. Connecting classroom activities to cultural and individual differences.
4. Incorporating multiple perspectives of cultural and individual differences into their professional behavior.
5. Contributing to the classroom and/or school climate that values cultural and individual differences.
6. Communicating in a culturally responsive and respectful manner.

Four assessments provide data that are used to evaluate the extent to which the unit prepares candidates to demonstrate acceptable performance relative to each of these diversity proficiencies. Two of these assessments, Disposition Check 3 (DC 3) and the Student Teaching Clinical Experience Evaluation (STCEE), are scored by mentor teachers and assess dispositional and performative dimensions of teaching. The other assessments, the Western Teacher Work Sample (WTWS) and the Universal Design for Learning (UD), are evaluated by program faculty and assess use of formal and procedural knowledge. Overall, all candidates demonstrated acceptable or target performance on the indicators for the diversity proficiencies assessed using DC 3 and the STCEE, with two-thirds of the candidates demonstrating target level performance. Overall, the data from the WTWS and the UD indicate that on average 40% of candidates were rated at the target level, 57% were rated at the acceptable level, and 3% were rated as unacceptable. With 97% of the candidates demonstrating acceptable or target level performance on the WTWS and the UD, the unit is successful in assisting candidates in developing and using the formal and procedural knowledge embedded in the diversity proficiencies. The number of candidates earning acceptable or target ratings for each of the four assessments provides evidence that the unit prepares candidates to integrate their knowledge and understanding of individual and cultural diversity into their professional behavior, instruction, assessment, and classroom environment in ways that can ultimately positively impact the learning of all students.

The Assessment of Candidate Diversity Proficiencies

1.c. Placements for the advanced programs. How diverse are these experiences? What is the diversity of the students in these schools?

Diversity Demographics for Advanced Program Placements

1. Examples of cooperating teacher assessments of candidates’ ability to work with students from diverse populations. Quality of candidates’ experiences working with students from diverse populations. What experiences are provided? How does the unit ensure all candidates have experiences?

Copies of student teaching mentor teacher assessments of the abilities of four candidates to work with students from diverse populations are available at the following links.

Candidate A Diversity Proficiency Assessment Evaluation
Candidates also have opportunities to work with diverse populations during their field and clinical experiences. In EIS 302 (Multicultural and Social Foundations of Education), candidates complete a required observation in a diverse school setting to assist them in understanding the range of diversity in many school settings. Upon completion of this observation, candidates create written reflections in which they begin to consider the knowledge and skills they will need as future teachers to ensure that all students learn. In addition to this required observation in a diverse school setting, the unit maintains a database that tracks the experiences of each candidate. The Illinois School Report Card is used to identify the diversity characteristics of each experience. This information is also maintained in the database.

3.a. Data on how candidates are meeting proficiencies necessary to work effectively with students from diverse populations?

Data on WIU’s six diversity proficiencies is found in the Proficiencies Data Table. An analysis of the data indicates that 100% of the candidates earned acceptable or target ratings from their mentor teachers in the dispositional and performative assessments of their ability to work effectively with students from diverse populations. Ninety-seven percent of candidates earned acceptable or target ratings from program faculty in the assessment of their ability to use formal and procedural knowledge embedded in the diversity proficiencies to impact the learning of diverse students.

3.b. What are candidates expected to learn?

WIU Teacher and Professional Education candidates are expected to be able to recognize and acknowledge cultural and individual differences and adapt instructional and assessment activities to cultural and individual differences. While working with students, they are expected to connect classroom activities to cultural and individual differences.

Candidates are expected to incorporate multiple perspectives of cultural and individual differences into their professional behavior and make contributions to the classroom and/or school climate that show that they value cultural and individual differences.

Candidates are expected to communicate in a culturally responsive and respectful manner in all aspects of their practice.
3c. What are they learning? What do the data indicate about the programs’ preparation of candidates to help students from diverse populations learn at the same levels?

Data indicate that candidates are meeting expectations for these proficiencies. The second and third diversity proficiencies specifically focus on candidates’ ability to help students from diverse populations learn at the same levels. Data from nine items of the Student Teaching Clinical Experience Evaluation (STCEE) indicate that 81% of candidates earned target ratings and 19% earned acceptable ratings for their ability to “adapt instruction and assessment to cultural and individual differences.” Data from fourteen evaluation items included in the Western Teacher Work Sample (WTWS) indicate that 35% of candidates earned target ratings and 60% earned acceptable ratings for this competency. Additionally, data from six items of the STCEE indicate that all candidates earned acceptable or target ratings for their ability to “connect classroom activities to cultural and individual differences.” Data from six items assessed in the WTWS provide additional support for this competency, with 40% of candidates demonstrating target levels of performance and 57% demonstrating acceptable levels of performance in the evaluation of their ability to connect activities with students’ background experiences and individual needs.

4.a. Plans for increasing the diversity of faculty and candidates?

Plans for increasing the diversity of faculty and candidates are outlined in the WIU Faculty Recruitment Plan, COEHS Faculty Search Plan, WIU Student Recruitment Plan and COEHS Enrollment Management Plan Summary.

4.b. What do the results of recruitment efforts indicate? What plans does the unit have to improve in this area?

The U.S. Census Bureau reported in 2010 the following ethnic breakdown for the citizens of Illinois: 14.5% African-American, 15.8% Hispanic, and 63.7% Caucasian. This statewide distribution stands in sharp contrast with that found in west-central Illinois. Western Illinois University’s main campus in Macomb is located in the center of McDonough County. The ethnic breakdown for citizens of McDonough and the five contiguous counties surrounding it indicates that 2.9% are African-American, 3.0% are Hispanic, and 92.2% are Caucasian. The difference between these two distributions has required that Western employ complex recruitment and retention strategies in its attempt to build a diverse educational environment, and the University has been unusually successful in this effort. Consider the following examples:

- Institutional Research’s most recent Fact Book reveals that over the past five years, 9.8% of Western’s students have been African-American and 5.3%
have been Hispanic. The pattern reflects steady increases each year in the number of students from both groups.

- Although Western experienced a 13.5% decline in the number of applications received from Caucasian students in the past year, the University experienced a 43.6% increase in the number of applications received from African-American and Hispanic students.
- In the fall of 2011, 9.2% of incoming freshmen were Hispanic, and 18.2% were African-American, making this the most diverse incoming class in Western’s history.
- Coincidentally, the University now has its first African-American president and its first African-American dean.

While considerable progress has been made, challenges remain. Graduate enrollment for African-American and Hispanic students in COEHS programs is slightly higher than the overall means for the University, which reveal African-American graduate student enrollment of 4% and Hispanic enrollment of 2.6% in the fall of 2010. The remarkable progress the University has made in its undergraduate efforts will be difficult to match at the graduate level, principally because the vast majority of COEHS graduate students are fully employed and commute to campus from non-urban and less diverse regions.

In light of successes and challenges, the COEHS Enrollment Management Plan Summary specifies objectives to continue to increase the diversity of candidates and faculty:

Goal: Implement programs to increase the diversity mix among its undergraduate and graduate students, staff, and faculty while meeting optimal enrollment levels for the various academic programs.

a. Objective: Assure that all professional programs within COEHS have established a diverse program advisory board that meets yearly and includes key stakeholders.

b. Objective: The College will facilitate and further effective collaboration among academic units to develop, implement, and maintain “Program-2-Program” agreements on a continuing basis. As the majority of students from underrepresented groups enter higher education through community colleges, it is anticipated that implementing these programs will increase the diversity mix as well as overall student enrollment.

c. Objective: Facilitate and coordinate departmental outreach and recruitment initiatives to ethnically and internationally diverse students and organizations such as African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Chinese, Indian, Nepalese, Taiwanese, and International Friendship.
d. Objective: Maintain and improve collaboration and communication with university centers serving diverse student populations such as the Gwendolyn Brooks Cultural Center, Casa Latina Cultural Center, Women’s Center, and Veterans Resource Center.

e. Objective: Maintain and improve collaboration and communication with the Financial Aid and Scholarship Offices so that funding for scholarships is increased and communication of available financial support is communicated widely to students.

f. Objective: Implement specific and appropriate identification and intervention strategies for individuals who may be considered to be “at risk” (p 11).

With the above plans, goals, and objectives, WIU will continue to increase the diversity of its faculty and candidates. WIU’s recent recognition as one of 32 higher education institutions in the nation identified for helping students stay on track and graduate will assist our efforts. As noted in the "Beating the Odds" news release, Western has been recognized by the Center for Student Opportunity’s “College Access and Opportunity Guide” for its retention of first-generation and low-income students and was one of thirteen institutions nationally to receive a “Best Practice” recognition from the Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity for the retention of first-generation and low-income students. Western was one of just fifteen colleges and universities, and the only Illinois university, cited as a “best practice” model institution by the Southern Regional Educational Board for retention and graduation rates. Further, WIU was the only Illinois and the only Midwestern public university among twenty public institutions recognized by The Education Trust for successful graduation rates for Hispanic students.