

To: Members of the Western Illinois University Board of Trustees  
Cathy Early, Chair            Bill Epperly  
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Lyneir Cole                      Yvonne Savala

From: Joe Rives, Vice President, Quad Cities and Planning

Date: January 28, 2014

Re: January 2014 Strategic Plan Update

This month's *Strategic Plan Update* discusses Western Illinois University's participation in the Higher Learning Commission's Persistence and Completion Academy. This includes an invitation for all interested members of the campus community to serve on subcommittees studying and improving freshmen retention in Macomb and the Quad Cities; and also a subcommittee studying and improving retention of on-line students.

#### Background

As described in previous *Strategic Plan Updates*, institutional participation in the Persistence and Completion Academy is a four-year, empirically-based continuous improvement process focused on increasing student success by defining, measuring, implementing, evaluating, and adjusting (where appropriate) institutional programs, policies, and procedures dedicated to increasing student retention and graduation rates.

Vice President Biller and I co-chair the Western Illinois University's Academy Steering Team. Initial Steering Team membership is displayed in Table 1 (attached). Steps taken to date include:

- Evaluated of the benefits of and applying for Academy participation (July-August 2013).
- Received Commission approval for Academy participation (October 2013). Western is in the first cohort of 15 participating institutions.
- Sent an institutional team to the Academy's Information and Planning Workshop in Saint Charles, Illinois, (December 2013). Dr. Kristi Mindrup, Assistant Vice President for Quad Cities and Planning; Angela Bonifas, Associate Director, Institutional Research and Planning; and Sara Lytle, Assistant Director, Admissions attended a two-day workshop to learn Academy expectations and protocol.
- Institutional Research and Planning is leading efforts to preparing a data book of empirical sources to support future analyses (December 2013-January 2014).

### Next Steps

Western Illinois University will host an Academy mentor site visit. Our mentor will help evaluate empirical readiness and needs before beginning Academy work.

Dr. Michael (Mike) Wilds, Professor of Criminal Justice, Attorney at Law, Director of the Crime and Justice Institute, and Accreditation Liaison Officer for Northeastern (Oklahoma) State University is assigned to Western Illinois University. We are very fortunate to have Mike as a mentor. He is well known for his work in student success, at the Commission, and Northeastern is very similar to Western Illinois University. They have:

- A main campus in a rural area. Tahlequah has a population of 16,333, and NSU offers 55 bachelor's degrees, 24 master's degrees, and one doctoral degree with a total enrollment of 8,887.
- A branch campus in an urban area. Tulsa has population of 393,987 and the Broken Arrow Campus enrollment is 1,858.
- An academic portfolio that includes providing off-campus instruction at various locations in Oklahoma, as Western does in Illinois.

Mike will be in Macomb January 29-30, 2014. The focus of his visit, as defined by Academy protocol, is to spend eight hours on campus learning about availabilities and capacities of institutional and secondary data sets. His schedule is displayed below, with members of the campus community attending these meetings shown in Tables 2.

<u>Date/Time*</u>	<u>Meeting</u>
<b>January 29<sup>th</sup></b>	
10:00 AM	Arrive in Moline and drive to Macomb
1:00	President's Leadership Team
1:30	Initial Academy Steering Team
2:30	Advising
3:30	Institutional Data and Reporting
<b>January 30<sup>th</sup></b>	
8:00	Enrollment Management
9:00	Admissions and Financial Aid
10:00	Distance Learning
11:00	Quad Cities
12:00	Travel to Moline
TBD	Dinner and Exit conference with Vice President Rives
* All meetings are held in the President's Conference Room (Sherman Hall, Room 205). Meetings including Quad Cities faculty and/or staff will be connected to Riverfront Conference Room 205.	

While this visit is data-focused, Mike will continue to visit throughout the four-year process, and there will be many opportunities for student, faculty, and staff engagement and feedback throughout the process.

Three other immediate next steps are recruiting members of the campus community to serve on the Steering Team and subcommittees, participating in the Academy Roundtable, and developing/launching an Academy website.

Following the University's inclusive planning model, I will provide a project update and solicit members from the Civil Service Employees Council, Council of Administrative Personnel, Faculty Senate, Quad Cities Faculty Council, and Student Government Associations-Macomb and Quad Cities. This presentation and request was also made at the Saturday, January 25<sup>th</sup> Alumni Council meeting. I am also asking that interested members of the campus community contact me if they are interested in volunteering in this important project.

An institutional team will attend the Academy's Roundtable Workshop in Saint Charles, Illinois, March 12-14, 2014. Institutional representatives from all 15 participating colleges and universities will meet with their mentor (I am serving as a mentor for National American University), Commission staff, and Academy cohort colleagues to begin drafting initial institutional action plans. Western's plans will be further developed as subcommittees are formed and implemented.

A website will be developed to provide access to all Academy documentation, agendas and minutes of the Steering Team, other materials, and opportunities for review and feedback. The new website will be available from the University Planning Website when it is developed.

Western Illinois University begins Academy participation with positive momentum, which will serve as an important trend as we increase student persistence and completion rates.

- The fall-to-spring retention rate improved from 82.2 percent (fall 2012 to spring 2013) to 89.3 percent (fall 2013 to spring 2014).
- The percentage of new first-time freshmen in good academic standing or earning semester honors after their first semester improved from 70.4 percent for fall 2012 freshmen to 78.2 percent for fall 2013 freshmen.
- *U.S. News and World Report's* 2014 rankings show that Western Illinois University out-performs its predicted graduation rates by eight percent.

Should you have any questions about the materials in this *Update*, want to become involved in the Persistence and Completion Academy, and/or have feedback for the continued successful implementation of *Higher Values in Higher Education*, please contact me.

cc:	President Thomas	CSEC Pres. Mattson	Associate Provost Neumann
	Provost Hawkinson	COAP President Moon	Associate Provost Parsons
	Vice President Bainter	Faculty Council Chair Pillutla	Assistant Vice President Williams
	Vice President Biller	Faculty Senate Chair Rock	Planning, Budget, and IR Staff
	Vice President DeWees	SGA Chair Markey	President's Office Support Staff

Table 1  
Initial Steering Team Membership

Gary Biller	Vice President, Student Services/Co-Chair
Joe Rives	Vice President, Quad Cities and Planning/Co-Chair
Angela Bonifas	Associate Director, Institutional Research and Planning
Andy Borst	Director, Admissions
Chris Brown	Administrative Aide to the Vice President for Quad Cities and Planning
Lindsay Fender	Assistant to the Vice President, Quad Cities and Planning
Rhonda Kline	Director, Institutional Research and Planning
Angela Lynn	Registrar
Sara Lytle	Assistant Director, Admissions
Caleb Markey	Finance; Accounting Major/Chair, Student Government Association
Wendi Mattson	Office Manager Theatre and Dane/President, Civil Service Employees Council
Kristi Mindrup	Assistant Vice President, Quad Cities and Planning
Dana Moon	Assistant to the Dean, College of Education and Human Services/President, Council of Administrative Personnel
Brenda Parks	Director, Administrative Information Management Systems
Nancy Parsons	Associate Provost
Padmaja Pillutla	Associate Professor, Accountancy and Finance/Chair, Quad Cities Faculty Council
Steve Rock	Professor, Economics and Decision Sciences/Chair, Faculty Senate
Ron Williams	Assistant Vice President, Academic Affairs

Table 2  
Meetings with Dr. Mike Wilds, Persistence and Complementation Academy Mentor  
January 29-30, 2014

**Presidents Leadership Team**

Dr. Jack Thomas	President
Dr. Ken Hawkinson	Provost and Academic Vice President
Mr. Brad Bainter	Vice President, Advancement and Public Services
Dr. Gary Biller	Vice President, Student Services
Ms. Julie DeWees	Vice President, Administrative Services
Dr. Joe Rives	Vice President, Quad Cities and Planning
Ms. Kerry McBride	Business Administrative Associate

**Initial Academy Steering Team (See Table 1)**

**Advising**

Billy Clow	Dean, College of Fine Arts and Communication
Sharon Evans	Associate Dean, College of Fine Arts and Communication
Rick Hardy	Director, Illinois Centennial Honors College
Jacquelyn Holan	Academic Advisor
Kin Moreno	Academic Advisor
Russ Morgan	Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Missy Phillips	Certification Officer; Director, Education and Human Services Advising
Chris Ramsey	Director, Academic Advising Center, College of Business and Technology
Kenny Wheeler	Academic Advisor

Table 2  
Meetings with Dr. Mike Wilds, Persistence and Complementation Academy Mentor  
January 29-30, 2014

**Advising (continued)**

Ashley Wilkinson	Academic Advisor
Curtis Williams	Associate Director, Quad Cities Student Services
Ron Williams	Assistant Vice President, Academic Affairs
Michelle Yager	Director, University Advising and Academic Services Center

**Institutional Data and Reporting**

Angela Bonifas	Associate Director, Institutional Research and Planning
Lindsay Fender	Assistant to the Vice President, Quad Cities and Planning
Rhonda Kline	Director, Institutional Research and Planning
Angela Lynn	Registrar
Brenda Parks	Director, Administrative Information Management Systems

**Enrollment Management**

Bob Andersen	Director, Financial Aid
Gary Biller	Vice President, Student Services
Andy Borst	Director, Admissions
Jessica Butcher	Assistant to the Vice President for Student Services; Director Community Relations
Rick Carter	Director, Distance Learning, International Studies, and Outreach
Terri Hare	Director, University Scholarship Activities
Sarah Jewell	Assistant Director, Admissions
Angela Lynn	Registrar
Sara Lytle	Assistant Director, Admissions
Nancy Parsons	Associate Provost
Ron Williams	Assistant Vice President, Academic Affairs

**Admissions and Financial Aid**

Bob Andersen	Director, Financial Aid
Andy Borst	Director, Admissions

**Distance Learning**

Rick Carter	Director, Distance Learning, International Studies, and Outreach
John Drea	Associate Dean, College of Business and Technology
Anne Gregory	Chairperson, Curriculum and Instruction
Hoyet Hemphill	Chairperson, Instructional Design and Technology
Lea Monahan	Director, School of Nursing
Jenifer Tibbitts	Assistant Director, General Studies Degree Program

**Western Illinois University-Quad Cities**

Audrey Adamson	Assistant Director, Quad Cities Student Services
Scott Brouette	Assistant Director, Quad Cities Student Services
Kassie Daly	Assistant Director, Quad Cities Admissions
Lindsay Fender	Assistant to the Vice President, Quad Cities and Planning
Alex Hall	Financial Aid Adviser
Lloyd Kilmer	Assistant Dean, College of Education and Human Services-Quad Cities
Kristi Mindrup	Assistant Vice President, Quad Cities and Planning
Jim Patterson	Assistant Dean, College of Business and Technology-Quad Cities
Curtis Williams	Associate Director, Quad Cities Student Services