



# ACCREDITATION EVIDENCE

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## Center for Teaching, Learning & Innovation

### Overview of the Quality Initiative

Western Wyoming Community College (Western) is a public two-year institution in the southwestern part of Wyoming. The college serves a geographic area of more than 23,000 square miles; within this service area, Western provides a wide variety of degrees, certificates and workforce training to its more than 5,000 students. At its heart, Western is a teaching institution, with more than 80 full-time faculty and 250 part-time faculty providing a range of face-to-face, online and hybrid courses. The Center for Teaching, Learning and Innovation (CTLI) will provide a much needed way for the institution to support its core mission by providing faculty with the resources and expertise to enhance instructional quality. The CTLI will focus on several key endeavors:

- Develop further a network of skilled faculty who can collaborate on effective instructional practices
- Create a physical space to deploy, evaluate and integrate new instructional technologies
- Provide a home for instructional designers and technologists where they can easily work with faculty to enhance course delivery methods and instructional effectiveness
- Organize and lead new faculty orientation and mentoring
- Oversee ongoing instructional enhancement for existing faculty

Instructional quality has been shown to have one of the greatest impacts on educational outcomes. With this in mind, the CTLI will work to build a network of skilled faculty members who can work together to identify innovative and effective practices that can be employed throughout the institution. One of the primary goals of the CTLI is to have faculty leading faculty as Western's greatest educational resources are its valuable faculty. Utilizing this resource to increase student success is a natural way to take advantage of this resource, but also a tangible way to recognize that faculty are uniquely situated to help their colleagues.

New instructional technologies and practices are being introduced at a dizzying pace; unfortunately, individual faculty often lack the resources to evaluate each new development. At the same time, instructional designers and technologists, who are tasked with determining the value of new teaching practices, are often one step removed from the classroom. In many cases, they are actively engaging with the most technically savvy faculty and motivated instructors but lack meaningful opportunities to connect with the majority of faculty. The CTLI will provide a way to systematically demonstrate and evaluate new technology and state of the art instructional practices using input from instructional designers and faculty. There will also be focus on ensuring that implementation of new teaching practices and technology will be introduced in a coherent and open process that focuses on long-term support and training.

Currently, Western employs an Instructional Designer, Instructional Technologist, and an Instructional Technology Assistant. While these positions work within the same department, they do not share a common workspace, their individual offices are ill designed for meeting with multiple faculty, demonstrating new technology and collaborating on projects. In addition to the limitations within the physical space, their roles within the institution are somewhat truncated. These professionals provide valuable faculty support; however, there exists no way to systematically deploy their expertise. Faculty access of these resources is less than ideal and is

often dependent on word of mouth rather than a dynamic delivery system that better understands the needs of faculty and provides support of resources designed to truly enhance instruction rather than simply responding to problems. The CTLI will provide a centralized location for the staff to collaborate and innovate with one another and the faculty.

Perhaps the most taxing period for faculty is during their first teaching assignment. Learning the ins and outs of institutional processes, coupled with digesting diverse curriculums and all that teaching a new course (or courses) entails can be a daunting task. Western has worked diligently to provide better onboarding for new faculty; however, new faculty have reported that the content of these sessions has mostly revolved around institutional practices, human resource requirements and familiarization with physical spaces. Relatively little time is devoted to instructional needs. Once the school year begins in earnest, most instructional support is informal in nature. A major goal of the CTLI is a consistent and deliberate platform for new faculty. This support will begin prior to the start of the academic year and remain in place throughout a faculty's first contract year. An important feature of this support will be a mentoring program that allows new faculty the opportunity to learn from veteran faculty.

Finally, the CTLI will provide logistical and technical support for instructional training. The goal is to provide a conduit for the training that faculty request, allowing them to access in-house support and education that is relevant and actionable.

### **Significance and Relevance at this time**

The CTLI is particularly significant for Western at this time. In the past two years, the institution has completed several climate surveys and each has identified instructional support for faculty as a primary area of need. There is also a perception that institutional direction with regard to faculty support is disjointed and that each new initiative is nothing more than a "flavor of the month." This perception has created a resistance to change, and there is little appetite to fully commit to anything new when something newer will soon take its place. The CTLI is committed to getting Western off the perpetual treadmill of change for change's sake. The goals of CTLI have been established by faculty for the benefit of faculty.

Internal reorganization helps make this initiative relevant. In the past Distance Education was responsible for instructional design and support of learning technologies, while Student Learning oversaw faculty mentoring and Human Resources was in charge of new faculty onboarding. Moving forward, *Online and Innovative Education* (which takes over all of the functions of Distance Learning) will have responsibility for all of these functions. This office will also have administrative responsibility for the CTLI. The QIP provides an opportunity to establish operational structures for the CTLI and the *Online and Innovative Education* department to make both successful.

Western is also undergoing institutional changes that make the CTLI an important component of its ability to meet the needs of its future students. The college has turned over a large portion of full-time faculty within the past five years, a third of faculty have fewer than three years at Western and many of these individuals are in their first tenured teaching role. This type of turnover provides both challenges and opportunities. There is an inherent challenge in supporting a large number of new faculty, finding a way for these individuals to have the time to

participate in training when the day-to-day schedule is often overwhelming. The opportunity lies in the fact that the CTLI has an opportunity to play a positive role in Western's culture.

### **Potential for Significant Impact**

The CTLI presents an opportunity for Western to focus on its most important role, educating students. This opportunity comes at a time of challenge within for the institution as Western is facing declining enrollments and tightening state budgets. Together, these have led to financial strain within the college and created an impetus to provide programs and delivery methods that are more adept at meeting student expectations, while providing content and curriculum that is correctly aligned with stakeholders' needs. The CTLI allows faculty an opportunity to collectively determine appropriate learning outcomes and the most efficient and successful ways to achieve them. It also affords them the resources and expertise to support the integration of new technology and course delivery methods. All of these have the potential to help the college discard inefficient practices, while adopting relevant and innovative strategies that can help the college reach new students and provide learning outcomes that are more closely connected with external demands.

The Center for Teaching, Learning & Innovation will provide an opportunity for faculty and students to experience quality education. Professionals in the CTLI will focus on research, assessment and implementation of the most relevant, state-of-the art teaching and learning practices so faculty can focus on instruction. They will then be provided with professional development opportunities and hands-on-training to ensure proper execution of new practices.

Along with the roll-out of new teaching practices, a focus on enhancing existing courses will be a focal point. The CTLI professionals will facilitate the development of a faculty-driven course quality rubric. The foundation of the rubric will be built on best practice; however, by including Western faculty in the creation, we will be able develop a rubric unique to Western, with which faculty are comfortable utilizing, that will serve the needs of all stakeholders.

### **Alignment with Mission and Vision**

Western's mission is focused on students and the education they receive. The CTLI is dedicated to enhancing that core function. Using a combination of internal and external resources, the CTLI will help faculty better meet the needs of students. Western also understands that education is not a static process; stakeholders have evolving demands and student expectations change. We must be willing to adapt to these changes, developing practices for a landscape that is in constant flux.

Western has established six *Guiding Principles* that enunciate institutional priorities, these help delineate the deployment of institutional resources as well as the focus of college initiatives.

1. Learning is our purpose
2. Students are our focus
3. Employees are our most important resource
4. The community is our partner
5. Adapting to change defines our future

## 6. Ethical standards guide our actions

The goals of the CTLI align with these established priorities.

- Learning is our purpose, by focusing on quality instruction students are provided with the best possible environment to succeed in their educational endeavors and faculty are given the support they need to facilitate this outcome.
- Students are our focus, learning and students go hand-in-hand, while the CTLI is responsible to enhance the instructional quality within the institution. This effort will also lead to better outcomes for students providing them with knowledge and skills to succeed at the next stage, whether that be the workforce or a transfer institution.
- Employees are our most important resource, Western is committed to providing employees with the support and resources necessary to excel in their roles; the CTLI is a clear demonstration of this commitment. This employee-directed effort that will be given the full spectrum of support to be successful
- Community is our partner, meeting the needs of our community requires an institution that is responsive to local needs and requests, whether that be revised curriculum or new modalities. In order to successfully make these changes, Western must not only have the willingness to make changes but the technical and pedagogical expertise to do so. The CTLI will have a key role in this effort.
- Adapting to change defines our future, in addition to the aforementioned need to partner with our community stakeholders and adapt to evolving industry needs, we must also have the ability to integrate new technology and content delivery methods into our institution and the CTLI will be instrumental in this effort.
- Ethical standards guide our actions, as a faculty driven effort the decision and organizational structure of the CTLI will consist of an inclusive process seeking to reach a consensus about purpose and outcomes. Continuous input from faculty and the opportunity for all stakeholders to participate in important decisions will help create a initiate reflective of a collective set of needs.

### **Connection with Planning Process**

Western has committed itself to the development of an updated strategic plan. This plan included a review of our Mission, Vision and Values. Through this process, Western's leadership reaffirmed that we exist to prepare students for a changing world through education and education has the potential to both empower and improve our students' lives. The single greatest resource available to help us reach our desired educational outcomes is a knowledgeable and engaged faculty. Recognizing the outcomes the institution desires and the most applicable and valuable resources to reach them will help the college's leadership team incorporate QIP outcome measures into the most current iteration of its strategic plan and allocate sufficient resources to accomplish goals. There is also a recognition that support for this effort must be ongoing.

### **Purpose/Mission**

The mission of the Center for Teaching, Learning & Innovation is to support faculty's endeavors to enhance student learning by serving as a collaborative and inventive environment for professional growth. Three primary goals will guide all objectives and milestones.

**Goal 1:** Increase the efficacy of student learning

*Objectives and Milestones for Goal 1:*

*Develop an online instruction certification course.* Oftentimes, faculty are asked to teach in an online or hybrid environment for the first time and they have little guidance. They are unfamiliar with the best way to transition from the traditional classroom to a more technology based form of instruction. Faculty will be incentivized to participate in an online teaching certification course, facilitated by the Instructional Designer. During this course, they will have the opportunity to build a course piece by piece with hands-on support. Well-prepared faculty will have a positive impact on student outcomes.

*Promote the integration of learning outcomes and assessment in the classroom.* The staff in the CTLI will work closely with Planning, Improvement & Innovation (PI&I) to train faculty on the importance of assessing student learning and best practices measuring their outcomes. Workshops will be conducted to help faculty develop authentic assessments into their course material.

Milestones

Fully developed online certification course	End of Fall of Year 1 (2019)
Pilot group to complete certification course	End of Spring Year 1
Robust online certification course open to all faculty	Year 2
25 % of online faculty complete certification course	End of Year 2
50% of online faculty complete certification course	End of Year 3
Professional development plan to research and study the evaluation of best practices when measuring the efficacy of student learning	End of Year 1
Measurables in place to assess the effectiveness of student learning.	End of Year 2
Assessment of the efficacy of student learning	End of Year 3

**Goal 2:** Enrich the faculty experience by serving as a central location for faculty resources

*Objectives and Milestones for Goal 2*

*Develop a faculty centric webpage housing all resources.* Faculty are often given an abundance of information at once, however, there is no designated person or place that houses faculty resources.

*Enhance instructional support for new faculty.* Western has worked diligently to provide better onboarding for new faculty; however, new faculty have reported that the content of these sessions has mostly revolved around institutional practices, human resource requirements and familiarization with physical spaces. The CTLI will be a consistent and comfortable place for faculty to go for help. This support will begin prior to the start of the academic year and remain in place throughout a faculty's first contract year.

*Facilitate faculty mentoring program.* We hire people and expect them to fit in, be organized, teach effectively, serve as quality committee members, and maybe even serve as successful administrators; however, there is little support for such high expectations. Faculty mentoring allows new faculty the opportunity to connect and learn from veteran faculty.

#### Milestones

Listening session with new-faculty	Pre-implementation
Steering Committee with Faculty Representation	Pre-implementation
Survey of existing faculty (about current technology and instructional support needs)	Pre-implementation
Faculty resources webpage	End Year 1
Analysis of webpage utilization	End of Year 2
Webpage updated based on utilization	Year 3
Analysis of existing Mentor Program and needs assessment for mentoring at Western	End Year 1
Pilot program for faculty mentoring	Year 2
Assess faculty mentoring pilot program	Year 2

Campus-wide faculty mentoring program	Year 3
Analysis of faculty satisfaction	Year 2
Updated CTLI procedures	Year 3

**Goal 3:** Promote innovative teaching and learning by providing multiple avenues for faculty professional development regarding best teaching practices, pedagogical trends and effective ways to assess student learning.

*Objectives and Milestones for Goal 3*

*Provide opportunity to explore and utilize instructional technology that encourages quality teaching practices.* Staff in the CTLI are committed to the continuous research on best practices utilizing technology. Frequent demonstration of new technology will be shared and support will be given to faculty wanting to integrate new technology.

*Host workshops & professional development opportunities.* The staff in CTLI will be conducting weekly faculty-centered workshops on best teaching practices. The topics will vary based on need, research and faculty requests.

*Incentivize innovative and quality instruction.* A monetary award will be given to the Innovative Faculty Member of the Year.

*Provide monetary resources to purchase and utilize technology.* An existing challenge for innovating in the classroom and deploying state of the art instructional practices is the lack of department funding. The CTLI will provide a budget for faculty to purchase and implement new hardware, software or other equipment used for instruction purposes.

Milestones

Complete renovation of physical space for CTLI	Year 1
Faculty workshop calendar in place	Year 1
Determine CTLI staff professional development needs	Year 1
Faculty application for technology needs	Year 1
New technology demonstrations	Year 2
Award Innovative Faculty	Years 1, 2, 3



Assessment of Faculty Professional Development needs	Year 1
Faculty Professional Development Plan in place	Year 2

1. Select up to three main topics that will be addressed by the initiative
  - a. Student learning
  - b. Teaching/Pedagogy
  - c. Faculty Development
  
2. Describe how the institution will evaluate progress, make adjustments and determine what has been accomplished.

**Assessment of Goal 1:** Increase the efficacy of student learning.

In order to assess the impact of the CTLI on the efficacy of student learning, we have chosen measures in which both students and faculty are involved.

Western conducts a Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE). The CCSSE is a nationally normed survey used to assess student engagement and includes the questions that the CTLI will impact by researching, providing professional development and guiding faculty into ensuring that quality instruction is having a positive impact on student learning.

Each department is responsible for reviewing their program. Select program-level data will be used to assess the CTLI's impact on student learning.

When the quality rubric is developed, 25% of the online classes will be evaluated by the Instructional Designer each semester. Timely feedback will be provided to the faculty in an effort to promote continuous improvement of the course.

Assessing the efficacy of student learning will continue to be researched and reevaluated by the institution and CTLI staff. Like instruction, assessment continues to evolve and adjustments will be made as needed.

**Assessment of Goal 2:** Enrich the faculty experience by serving as a central location for faculty resources.

In order to ensure the CTLI is enriching the faculty experience, the climate surveys that were used to determine the need for the CTLI will be utilized as an assessment measure. Along with the college-wide climate survey, a satisfaction survey will be deployed to ensure faculty needs are being met. Western faculty and staff will also have the opportunity to leave anonymous suggestions in the Center for Teaching, Learning & Innovation. The suggestions will continuously be reviewed to ensure faculty satisfaction.

Utilization will be tracked by CTLI staff using a web-based project management tool. Each semester the data will be reviewed by the Director of Online and Innovative Education and staff to ensure the proper resources are being used efficiently and effectively. Once per academic year, a staff retreat will take place to reflect on the previous year and make adjustments to current practice.

**Assessment of Goal 3:** *Provide opportunity to explore and utilize instructional technology that encourages quality teaching practices.*

Utilization will be tracked by CTLI staff using a web-based project management tool. Each semester the data will be reviewed by the Director of Online and Innovative Education and staff to ensure the proper resources are being used efficiently and effectively. Once per academic year, a staff retreat will take place to reflect on the previous year and make adjustments to current practice. During this retreat, the staff will begin to plan on the next years' workshop schedule.

### **Evidence of Commitment**

#### Board of Trustees

The CTLI proposal was made to the Western Board of Trustees in September of 2018, the trustees unanimously approved the implementation of the CTLI.

#### Senior Leadership

Western Leadership Council (WLC) is the college's senior leadership team it consists of the college senior leaders (president, vice presidents and deans) along with leaders of the faculty/professional Senate and the Paraprofessional Alliance. This group is the institution's primary decision making body, and they have been fully supportive of this initiative from its inception and have committed to providing the necessary resources to facilitate the stated goals of the CTLI. An initial description of the QIP was made to WLC in October of 2018. A motion was made and sustained at that time to adopt the CTLI as Western's QIP. In subsequent meetings approval was given to filling a technology support position for the CTLI as well as provide funding to renovate existing offices and provide the CTLI with a physical home.

#### Faculty

In November 2018 the CTLI was presented to the college's Academic Council (AC). This group consists of the Vice President for Student Learning, Dean of Faculty, Academic Division Chairs (DCs) and all Academic Directors. AC fully backed this proposal and were particularly supportive of the initiative's focus on faculty and teaching. The DCs appointed faculty within their division to serve on the CTLI steering committee. This committee has a primary responsibility of representing faculty interests in the establishment of the CTLI's goals and outcome measures. The steering committee asked for faculty survey data regarding this proposal as well as qualitative data gathered through focus groups. This data reflects a high level of engagement with faculty in establishing the specific needs that the CTLI should address.

### Online Learning & Innovative Education

The Online Learning and Innovative Education department will have administrative oversight of the CTLI. This connection means that support of Online Learning and Innovation is essential to the success of the CTLI. The Director of Online Learning and Innovative Education is the chair of the CTLI steering committee and has been instrumental in ensuring that technical and logistical needs are met, as well as establishing a budget and making sure that human resources are in place to meet expected needs.

### **Dedicated Resources**

- **Human:** Director of Online & Innovative Education, Instructional Technologist, Instructional Designer, Instructional Technology Assistant, Faculty Innovators, Faculty Mentors
- **Financial:** Approximately \$550,000 annual budget to employ and operate the functions within the CTLI
- **Technology:** 5 office computers, 4 iPads, 3 MacBook's, 2 laptops, Owl camera, CatchBox microphone, recording studio (to be built), 4 collaboration tables with built-in monitors, 2 public kiosk computers
- **Other:** Western has renovated an existing space to house the CTLI, this space will house appropriate technology, meeting space for faculty collaboration. There will also be direct access to the college's instructional designer and technology support personnel.

Year 1		Year 2		Year 3	
Salaries & Benefits	\$318,500	Salaries & Benefits	\$318,500	Salaries & Benefits	\$318,500
Learning Management System (Canvas)	\$43,000	Learning Management System (Canvas)	\$43,000	Learning Management System (Canvas)	\$43,000
Existing Instructional Technology	\$70,000	Existing Instructional Technology	\$110,000	Existing Instructional Technology	\$110,000
Online Proctoring Service	\$40,000	Faculty Technology Requests	\$15,000	Faculty Technology Requests	\$15,000
Implementation of Recording Studio	\$20,000	Professional Development	\$15,000	Professional Development	\$15,000
Professional Development	\$15,000	Faculty Innovator Award	\$1,000	Faculty Innovator Award	\$1,000
Faculty Innovator Award	\$1,000	Workshops/Visitors	\$5,000	Workshops/Visitors	\$5,000

Workshops/Visitors	\$5,000	New Faculty Mentoring Events	\$1,500	New Faculty Mentoring Events	\$1,500
Wyoming Innovations Conference	\$3,000	Quality Course Review Incentives	\$20,000	Quality Course Review Incentives	\$20,000
		Wyoming Innovations Conference	\$3,000	Wyoming Innovations Conference	\$3,000

### Integration

One of the central goals of the QIP is to establish a framework for utilization of the CTLI into the future. An implicit expectation in all of the CTLI planning is that this effort will be sustainable, that it will provide essential support to faculty and that support that will be accessed regularly without prompting. Each significant milestone of the QIP includes gathering evidence to gauge the faculty perceptions of the center and their beliefs about its value and accessibility. The CTLI steering committee which consists of faculty members from each academic division is invaluable in representing faculty in the design and implementation of the center. Additional faculty will be brought in to initiate faculty mentoring and new faculty onboarding. These outreach efforts with faculty are designed to integrate the CTLI in Western's culture ensuring the final iteration is a reflection of the needs and expectations of the institution.

### Appropriateness and Timeline for the Initiative

3. Describe the primary activities of the initiative and timeline implementing them

#### Primary Activities

Create a comfortable space for faculty collaboration and professional development	To be completed March 2019
Use expertise from steering committee to guide actions	Years 1, 2, 3
CTLI Grand Opening Party	Year 1
Collect faculty resource needs	Year 1
Develop webpage to collect and display all faculty resources	Year 1
Grand roll-out event for faculty resource webpage	Year 2
Make any necessary webpage updates	Year 3

Roll-out faculty workshop program “Ed-Tech Tuesday”	Mid-year 1
Design faculty certification course	Year 1
Conduct needs assessment for faculty mentoring program	Year 1
Modify mentoring program	Year 2
Assess new-faculty preparedness	Year 1
Create and deploy plan to help faculty be more prepared	Years 1, 2, 3
Develop and deliver faculty innovator award	Years 1, 2, 3
Provide faculty a budget to implement emerging technology in the classroom	Year 1, 2, 3