



Dear colleagues,

We hope that all is going smoothly as you settle in to the fall semester routines. As the academic year continues to unfold, we'd like to provide you with some updates, including new projects that we're working on, and resources intended to provide you with help and support as you work toward continuous improvement and student success.

As always, we're here to help. [Contact us](#) with questions or to let us know how we might assist you. *Please pass this message along to anyone you think might be interested.* Have a great academic year, and **'Go Broncos'!**

Accreditation

Regional Accreditation

WMU to Undergo a 4-year Virtual Assurance Review by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) in Spring 2025

In March 2025, WMU will undergo a virtual assurance review by the Higher Learning Commission. Institutions in Year 4 of the Open Pathway must participate in a virtual assurance review as part of the broader comprehensive evaluation that occurs in year 10, to demonstrate that they continue to be in compliance with the HLC's criteria for accreditation (Higher Learning Commission, 2023).

Over the past few months, the 4-Year Assurance Argument Committee has been working on updating the assurance argument. Committee members have been meeting with campus community members to collect information and insights about significant changes, new activities, and updates since 2021. The committee will continue drafting the final version of the Assurance Argument throughout the fall semester, which will be reviewed in Spring 2025.

Additional details, including timelines and progress updates, will be available on the [website](#).

Specialized Program Accreditation

Updated Policies and Procedures Guide

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness has updated the Policies and Procedures for Seeking, Maintaining, and Transferring Specialized Program Accreditation. This guide provides information on the process for keeping WMU administration up-to-date on your accreditation activities, while ensuring compliance with the Higher Learning Commission's criteria. You can download a [PDF copy of the guide](#) on our webpage.

Tips for Preparing to Initiate a New Accreditation Cycle

As a reminder, all academic programs preparing to initiate a new accreditation cycle must contact the Office of Institutional Effectiveness at the beginning of the process. Accredited programs seeking an extension on their reaccreditation cycle must first obtain written permission from the department chair/school director, college dean, and provost prior to submitting the request for extension to the accreditor. Please contact [Cathe Murphy](#), to discuss your accreditor's process and timeline for document submission.

Accreditation Fee Reimbursement

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness will reimburse the RU for 80% of its annual maintenance of accreditation fees once the RU has paid the initial invoice and submitted a request to IE for reimbursement consideration. "Maintenance of accreditation fees" are limited to those fees published by the accreditor that are specifically identified as "annual fees." IE also will reimburse 80% of separate membership fees in professional organizations that are associated with the accreditor when that membership is a specific requirement for maintaining accreditation.

Please note that reimbursement is not a guarantee, but rather a long-standing practice of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (IE) to encourage compliance with HLC's requirement that all programs that can be accredited are accredited. With the university's move to an SRM model, costs associated with specialized program accreditation continue to be the responsibility of the college overseeing the program.

To request a reimbursement, please email [Cathe Murphy](#), and include your fund 11 department number, an electronic copy of the original invoice, and proof that the payment was initiated from your department (e.g., receipt, Procard statement, signed voucher, etc.).

Assessment

2025 Assessment Mini Grant Program

The University Assessment Steering Committee is now accepting proposals for the 2025 Assessment Mini Grant Program. These awards are being offered to support assessment projects that promote improvements in teaching, learning, as well as curricular and co-curricular program delivery and enhancements. Funding will be awarded for up to a maximum amount of \$2,200. All full and part-time instructors, administrators and staff are eligible to apply. Proposals are due by **Monday, September 30**, by 8 p.m. Click the button below to learn more, and submit a proposal. Contact [Karen Stokes Chapo](#) with questions.

[Submit a Proposal](#)

Assessment Toolkit

Have a question about outcomes assessment? Looking for new tools and/or ideas? Check out the new [Assessment Toolkit](#). This online resource was designed to provide you with comprehensive information to assist with every step of the assessment cycle. Whether you're looking for guidance on best practices, templates, examples, research articles, and much more, this toolkit was designed to help. Take a look, and let us know what you think. We'd love your feedback! Send your comments, questions and suggestions to [Karen Stokes Chapo](#).

[View Toolkit](#)

Assessment Highlights

Last spring, the [University Assessment Steering Committee](#) embarked on a project to highlight and share stories about some of the great work happening across campus to assess and measure the learning and success of our students. We met up with four of your colleagues from various colleges and programs, and asked them about their approaches to the assessment process, and how they determine what their students know, understand, and are able to do. Through these brief [interviews](#), we hope you will take away new ideas and approaches that may help you on your assessment journey.

Interested in telling others about your approach for assessment? Any new techniques you'd like to share? [Tell us what you're working on!](#) We'd love to hear from you and share your ideas with others.

National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE)

This spring, WMU will be participating in both the [NSSE](#) and the [FSSE](#). Through the

NSSE, we invite first-year students and seniors to share their thoughts and perceptions about their learning, classroom and co-curricular experiences, interactions with the campus community and beyond, and more. The FSSE invites all instructors to share their perceptions and expectations for student learning and development. Together these surveys can provide us with holistic insights about the college experiences of our students, the extent to which they engage in educationally effective activities, and their perceptions about the institutional environment that support their learning. These insights can guide us to areas for improvements, both inside and outside of the classroom. Click on the links to review [WMU NSSE results](#), and [FSSE results](#). Look for more information later this fall, and [contact us](#) with your questions.

Awards and Course Evaluation

Faculty Award Nominations Now Open

WMUx - Faculty Development is currently accepting nominations for faculty awards. This early notice is provided to help you prepare and submit your nominations. Submissions can be made at any time before the deadlines. For detailed information on award eligibility, criteria, and nomination guidelines, please visit the [WMUx Faculty Development Awards](#) website. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to [Tonya Dean](#).

Anthology Evaluate - Student Course Ratings System (SCRS) Schedule

- **Evaluation Period:** For most courses, student evaluations open at midnight on the first day of the evaluation period and close at 11:59 p.m. on the last day.
- **Early-Ending Courses:** For courses that end before the regular exam week, the evaluation period starts on the official course end date and lasts for a total of 10 days.
- **Faculty Deadlines:** Faculty members have until 11:59 p.m. the day before the evaluation period starts to make any necessary changes to the course ratings forms.
- **Automatic Enrollment in SCRS:** All faculty members (including full-time, part-time, teaching assistants, and instructors of record) and courses with three or more students enrolled are automatically scheduled in the Anthology Evaluate - Student Course Ratings System each semester.

SCRS Schedule Fall Term 2024

Open Student Course Ratings Period	Monday, Nov. 25, 2024
Closed Student Course Ratings Period	Friday, Dec. 13, 2024
Final Grades Due	Tuesday, Dec. 17, 2024
Results of Student Course Ratings	Friday, Dec. 20, 2024

SCRS Schedule Spring Term 2025

Open Student Course Ratings Period	Monday, Apr. 7, 2025
Closed Student Course Ratings Period	Friday, Apr. 25, 2025
Final Grades Due	Tuesday, Apr. 29, 2025
Results of Student Course Ratings	Friday, May 1, 2025

For more details regarding the Anthology Evaluate - Student Course Ratings System, please visit the following link: [Student Course Ratings System](#), or feel free to reach out to [Tonya Dean](#) if you have questions.

Chair Access to SCRS Departmental Reports

If you are a new department chair, please contact [Tonya Dean](#). She will verify if the update has been made in the Students' Course Rating System (Anthology Evaluate) to ensure you have chair access to review your departmental reports.

Integrated Program Review

Academic Program Review

WMU is in the process of completing Year 4 of its five-year cycle. A total of 55 degree- and graduate-certificate-granting programs and their concentrations across seven colleges submitted self-study reports between January 29 and April 30, 2024. The Provost's Review phase is underway, and is expected to be completed by October 31, 2024. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness will work with colleges during November 2024 to identify programs for participation in the final year of this first APR five-year cycle, scheduled to begin February 3, 2025. Please watch our [website](#) for updates.

Learner Support Review Process

Members of the Learner Support Review Working Group are completing Phase I activities in preparation to pilot a new Learner Support Review process. For the purpose of review, WMU defines learner support as “any unit, department, program, resource, or service that contributes to the education, growth, and development of learners outside their academic programs.” These offerings typically set goals for learner development, and track and measure learning and process outcomes to test progress toward those goals.

Learner Support Review will be an annual, cross-collaborative process whereby approximately 20 percent of learner supports in the divisions of Academic Affairs; Bronco Athletics; Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; and Student Affairs and the Office of the Ombuds participate in developing and reviewing a comprehensive, online self-study intended to provide evidence of continuous quality improvement, and to identify areas of concentration for strategic planning. Individuals participating in the self-study process will be those responsible for designing and/or delivering the learner support.

The Working Group expects to identify four to eight learner supports to participate in and evaluate a draft training program during fall 2024. Participants will then complete a guided self-study process to identify technical and process-related problems for immediate revision. Participants who complete the pilot will be

considered as having completed Year 1 once the Learner Support Review process is officially underway. Information and an FAQ are available [on our website](#).

****Meet our Doctoral Associate, Michael Osei****

We're so pleased to introduce you to Michael Osei, our new doctoral associate for the Office of Institutional Effectiveness! Michael is an accomplished evaluation consultant currently pursuing an interdisciplinary PhD in evaluation here at Western. With over a decade of experience in evaluative practice, he specializes in applying rigorous methodologies to enhance the quality and effectiveness of evaluations.

Holding an MBA in Total Quality Management from the University of Professional Studies in Accra, Ghana, Michael leverages expertise in the Program Evaluation Standards and Guiding Principles of the American Evaluation Association to establish robust quality assurance frameworks. His professional skills span Quality Infrastructure, Design Thinking, quality systems auditing, Lean Six Sigma, ISO 9001 training, and Data Science. His work emphasizes quality assurance in evaluation, corrective and preventive action (CAPA), needs assessment, cost analysis and meta-evaluation.

He is also heavily involved in numerous professional organizations and associations, and on-campus student organizations, where he has taken on leadership roles, participates in reviewing journal articles and conference proposals, and much more.

As you can see, Michael brings along with him a wealth of talent, expertise and experience, and we're thrilled to have the opportunity to work with him, as he helps us to look at how we approach our work, and find ways that we can improve our practice and enhance continuous improvement efforts.

Coherence and Continuous Improvement

As an institution, we are interested in how effective we are at achieving our mission, vision, and goals. There are three key processes that can inform of us about our effectiveness: assessment, strategic planning and integrated program review. Let's take a look at the relationship between these three processes, and how they fit together to inform continuous improvement efforts. By getting a better understanding of these relationships, **it can help us to build better coherence** in our work.

- **Assessment** - This process involves evaluating the effectiveness and outcomes of various programs, processes and/or initiatives. It provides data and insights on what is working well and what may need improvement.
- **Strategic planning** - This is a process of defining an organization's direction, and making decisions on allocating resources to pursue strategies that will

work toward achieving this direction. It uses the data from assessments to set goals, priorities, and action plans.

- **Program review** - This is a systematic evaluation of a program's effectiveness, efficiency, and alignment with strategic goals. It often uses assessment data to inform decisions about program modification and improvements.

In essence, assessment provides the data, strategic planning uses the data to set goals and directions, and program review ensures that programs are aligned with these goals and are effective. They form a continuous cycle of improvement and alignment within an organization. The more cohesive these processes are, the better informed we will be at understanding where we can make changes for continuous improvement.



WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
Office of
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