Six-Year Planning: Initiative Summary
Western Libraries

Title: Enhancing Libraries and Learning Commons Teaching and Learning Capacity and Quality

Initiative Description, including statement of purpose and anticipated outcomes:

This initiative will implement a comprehensive, scalable, and sustainable plan for the delivery of quality curricular, curricular-embedded, and co-curricular instruction in the Western Libraries and Learning Commons. A consortium of eight program partners, the Learning Commons offers an array of teaching and learning resources and services to faculty and students that help turn collections into knowledge and learning. In addition to the Library curricular (credit-bearing) offerings, Learning Commons partners provide curricular-embedded programming such as the integrated research and writing workshops for Writing Proficiency/GUR writing course faculty and students across the curriculum. Co-curricular programming includes the Teaching-Learning Academy dialogue group meetings that 75-100 faculty, staff, and students participate in each quarter. This initiative will focus on four areas to build both instructional capacity and enhance quality:

I. Library Liaisons
   Given the advent of the Learning Commons and its expanding instructional programming, librarian subject specialists are working to articulate a formal Liaison Program, including refining their instructional roles, responsibilities, and workload. Since Library faculty and Learning Commons partners collaborate on many instructional offerings, the Liaison program needs to remain strategically and programmatically aligned. As part of this work, faculty expertise must meet changing student and faculty needs. Skill sets not currently resident in the Libraries will be identified in order to fill instructional gaps.

II. Teaching and Learning Programs
   The 2015 student survey confirmed that students value quiet study space in the Libraries as well as specialized resources for doing their individual and collaborative academic work. Increasingly, faculty and graduate students are seeking opportunities to interact with their students face-to-face (outside of their offices and classrooms), as well as to gain pedagogical expertise, particularly in the areas of teaching researching and writing. The Libraries and Learning Commons face increasing challenges to accommodate these multiple programmatic needs.
Additional staff are required to deliver and coordinate the array of instructional programs and services offered by the Libraries and Learning Commons. Also, an additional instructional classroom is needed to accommodate the rising requests for workshops designed for students and for faculty. For example, requests for the integrated research and writing workshops offered to writing course faculty and students have more than doubled since fall 2013. Also needed is a repurposed, upgraded space for teaching and learning forums, such as the bi-weekly Teaching-Learning Academy dialogue groups, as well as a location to showcase teaching and learning exhibits such as the annual teaching showcase sponsored by the Center for Instructional Innovation and Assessment, one of the Learning Commons partners.

III. Virtual Learning Environment
The online information environment has become increasing complex and difficult to navigate, at the same time that faculty have expressed an increased demand for online teaching and learning resources for themselves and their students. While students rely on technologies in their everyday interactions, they frequently lack the pre-requisite skills for applying technologies to their learning needs. Similarly, faculty seek out new instructional skills and strategies for teaching visual literacy both as a way to learn and also as a way to demonstrate learning. The Libraries and Learning Commons represents is ideally positioned to help develop these skills and strategies, but it lacks enough staff to lead and coordinate these efforts. The Online Learning Librarian will work with the Orbis Cascade Alliance and vendor to improve OneSearch, will develop new online learning tools, and will provide support in order to effectively reach students and faculty at a distance.

IV. Assessment of Learning and Program Evaluation
The Libraries and Learning Commons needs to develop a coordinated and sustained assessment plan to track student learning, enact evidence-based teaching practices, and enable data-driven program decisions. Compiling assessment findings across multiple teaching and learning services will deepen shared understanding of what and how students are learning across the Libraries and Learning Commons and will inform enhancements to individual programs and to the overall teaching and learning program plan. Specifically, assessment activities will 1) build a cumulative and comprehensive assessment portfolio that includes multiple data sets to demonstrate learning gains; 2) use assessment information to recommend revisions to overall teaching and learning programming, and 3) integrate Libraries and Learning Commons assessment with campus-wide assessment efforts.
What University units (depts., colleges, etc.) will be involved?
The Libraries’ and Learning Commons’ teaching and learning programs afford faculty and students from all departments and colleges opportunities for instructional resources and services. Expanding capacity to provide even higher quality programming will serve all campus stakeholders across the curriculum.

How does the initiative support the University Mission and Strategic Plan?
The initiative directly supports Western’s mission and strategic goals by fostering and promoting life-long learning and success and by applying Western's expertise and collaborative approach to scholarship, creativity, and research in ways that strengthen communities beyond the campus.

Are there potential partnerships with external organizations/institutions?
Now that WWU is a ChangeMaker campus, potential partnership opportunities have emerged between the Libraries and Learning Commons and Ashoka. The Teaching-Learning Academy was featured in Western’s successful bid to become a ChangeMaker campus and is involved in sponsoring an event as part of the 2015 Active Minds Changing Lives Week, coordinated by Western’s ChangeMaker program. Expanding the Libraries and Learning Commons capacity to offer additional innovative programming could develop into a formal partnership with Ashoka.

Anticipated new positions needed to implement the initiative:

Two full time Tenure Track Faculty Positions:

- Online Learning Librarian - To lead the development, enhancement, and maintenance of the Libraries web presence, including discovery systems, research and course guides, web-based applications, and other services and tools to improve the online library user’s experience.
- Assessment Librarian - To inform and coordinate the Libraries’ assessment activities, including the assessment of teaching and learning outcomes as well as the evaluation of programs, services, tools, and facilities. This librarian would also lead program development.

One Full-time Professional Exempt Staff

- Learning Commons Assistant Director - To assist the director in coordinating the growing demand for Learning Commons resources and services, along with the increased
number of program partners. The new position would include enhanced partner collaborations and professional development opportunities in teaching and learning for faculty across campus.

**New equipment or other one-time costs:**
- One time search committee costs and relocation expenses for two TT faculty and one Professional Exempt Staff position.
- Furnishings and equipment for an instructional classroom
- Upgraded furnishings for Wilson Library 270

**Recurring operating costs:**
- 2 FTE TT salaries and benefits: $180,000
- 1 FTE professional exempt staff salary and benefits: $90,000

**Estimated timeline for implementation**
2015-2017: Hire an Online Learning Librarian and an Assessment Librarian, create a second instructional classroom, and upgrade WL 270 for teaching and Learning forums and programs

2016-2017: Hire an Assistant Director of the Learning Commons

2018-2021: Reassess teaching and learning programming needs and staffing

Potential funding sources (**boldface** all that apply; attach notes from University Advancement and University Relations)
- State operating budget (decision package)
- **New enrollments (tuition-based)**
- **External Education (fee-based)**
- **Reallocation**
- Federal Support (agency: ______ )
- Grants
- Partnerships (organizations/institutions: ______ )
- **Private Funds**
- Other (please specify)