

Wilderness Education

LAKE TAHOE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Comprehensive Program Review



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Spring 2016

SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Wilderness Education (WLD) is one of the most popular programs at Lake Tahoe Community College attracting out of the area students. WLD provides valuable vocational certificates and offers Chancellors Office approved Certificates and AA degrees in the following areas of concentration: Climbing, Snow Skills, Water Skills, Search and Rescue.

WLD has an FTES of 32.67 as of 2014-2015. Courses are reliably enrolled but there is room for improvement translating enrollment into actual students in the classroom. WLD is instructed entirely by adjuncts. The program is managed by a part time coordinator.

As a result of this Comprehensive Program Review, the following goals and objectives were established for the next five years. These CPR goals are aligned with the college's strategic plan.

1. **Increase support for WLD staffing.** Create a full-time WLD Faculty position. Provide for training support to WLD Adjuncts. Recruit new WLD Adjuncts to counter declining Adjunct interest. Increase pay for WLD Instructional Assistants.
2. **Improve communication with WLD students.** Increase enrollment by increasing percentage of enrolled/waitlisted students who turn into attending students. Improve channels of communication, email, face to face, and social media, between WLD director and WLD students.
3. **Improve WLD and LTCC Risk Management.** Motivate LTCC Administration to address risk management issues. Conduct a risk management audit. Implement recommendations from audit.
4. **Formalize and Increase Land Access.** Over 80% of the land in the Tahoe Basin is managed by the USFS or California State Parks and LTCC does not currently have formal permission to use this land. Many lands just outside the Lake Tahoe basin are prime course venues but LTCC does not currently have any access to these lands.
5. **Improved equipment storage.** As the WLD program has increased, the amount of associated gear has grown but storage space has not increased. Due to the valuable nature of much of this equipment, this space needs to be secure while remaining accessible to WLD Adjuncts.

SECTION 2: INTRODUCTION AND PROGRAM HISTORY

Overview and Review of Previous Program Review

Wilderness Education falls under the CTE division. The previous WLD program plan occurred during the 2008-2009 academic year. WLD courses originally resided within Physical Education until WLD became its own separate department in Academic Year 2006-2007. The arrival of the modern WLD program can be usefully traced to 2010-11 when the first Chancellor's Office approved WLD Certificate was issued.

WLD has struggled to support adequate staffing at the Coordinator/Director level since its inception. The original WLD Coordinator left largely because the position did not provide basic medical benefits. Somewhat ironically, increased focus on hours worked mandated by the 2010 Affordable Care Act has significantly reduced the ability of the current WLD Coordinator to teach WLD courses and coordinate the program. In order to comply with these rules, in May 2016, the WLD Coordinator was only paid for 5 hours of work. The position still receives no medical benefits. Clearly, it is not realistic to expect WLD Coordinator staffing with this level of support.

More significant are the program impacts that follow from not having a full time faculty in WLD. While the vast majority of WLD instruction takes place in the field, WLD class evaluations almost always occur in the classroom. These evaluations are conducted by full time faculty who rarely possess any understanding of the course content. Since these evaluations almost never occur in the field (where most WLD instruction occurs), LTCC is missing the opportunity to observe and evaluate WLD instruction and risk management where it matters the most.

The WLD program is staffed by adjunct faculty and a part time coordinator. WLD employs approximately twenty different adjunct faculty members in an academic year. It appears that there will be eighteen different adjuncts used during AY 2015-2016. In addition, WLD employs a similar number of instructional assistants. Several instructors teach one course and several more work for only one quarter out of the year. The infrequent nature of their employment requires a large amount of support to accomplish basic LTCC requirements (paperwork, grades, hours, assessments).

The largest academic change to the WLD program since 2008-2009 is the addition of the Search and Rescue Area of Concentration. Multiple new courses were created and new instructors brought on to teach them. Student interest in these courses has been strong. Some Search and Rescue specific equipment has been acquired but instruction would be improved with additional equipment. Limited budget and storage are challenges to acquiring this equipment.

Reviewing the 2008-2009 Program Review shows many similar issues remain. Concerns about **risk management/safety, land access, staff training, marketing, sustainable staffing, and facilities** could be copy and pasted into this CPR. These recommendations from 2008-2009 are summarized in bold and updated below:

1. **Create and maintain a safe environment.**

Although WLD has a remarkably good track record with avoiding serious injuries during courses this will not continue forever. Language in 2008-2009 plan emphasizing safety is now replaced by risk and risk management (if safety were truly the goal, there would be little argument to justify any course that involves risk). Absent a robust Risk Management Plan, the consequence of a serious accident could be significant.

The primary changes that need to occur regarding this Risk Management Plan are largely outside of WLD and within existing LTCC departments. A Risk Management Audit, ideally conducted by an outside entity, would be a prudent move to help identify specific areas of concern.

2. Assure access for all WLD field courses through the appropriate permit process.

Land access is a priority issue in the 2008-2009 Plan and much of these concerns remain. Currently it appears that LTCC access to LTBMU lands is likely to continue largely unchanged. If this proves accurate, LTCC is on better footing in this regard than it was nine years ago. LTCC and WLD still have challenges accessing public lands outside the Tahoe Basin. The 2008-2009 Plan also mentions sustainable transportation options and recommends LTCC acquire a van to provide access to field locations. While providing transportation to students does present new challenges and risk exposure, the current paradigm of assuming students have their own personal vehicle is not particularly equitable or environmentally sustainable.

3. Continue to be current with trends in outdoor education methods

LTCC support of WLD staff training is likely worse today than it was in 2008-2009. The professional development model adopted by LTCC has been a poor fit for an adjunct staffed and CTE based program. WLD adjuncts have largely given up hope that LTCC is a resource to support their professional development and continuing education. In turn it is more difficult for the program to recruit and maintain qualified instructors.

4. Support market outreach and promotion programs.

Spreading the word about the WLD program remains a challenge. In an effort to market WLD course, WLD currently maintains a Facebook page and an Instagram account. These are useful resources to attract new students but would benefit from more frequent content updates.

5. Provide suitable and sufficient on-campus facilities

The two primary facility concerns from 2008-2009 were classroom and storage space. Issues around being assigned classrooms at the high school are no longer present. Scheduling rooms has become much better on campus but issues with doors being locked still arise far too often. These can be especially challenging given that many WLD courses occur on the weekends when it can be hard to find assistance to address these issues. Additionally, adjuncts occasionally realize their classroom is not “smart” too late to request a projector cart.

The storage space issue is more of a challenge today than it was in 2008-2009. WLD has accumulated more equipment that needs to be safely stored and made accessible to instructors. The WLD storage area is bursting at the seams which creates organization and inventory challenges.

Data Trends

Since 2010-11, shortly after WLD Certificates and AA Degrees became Chancellor's Office approved, WLD has awarded two Certificates. Since 2012-2013 WLD has awarded seven AA degrees. WLD offers four areas of concentration within the AA degree. These areas are: Climbing, Snow Skills, Water Skills, and Search and Rescue. Search and Rescue was added as an option in 2014-15. Though unofficial, eight students have filled paperwork to graduate with WLD AAs in 2016. Recent graduates from WLD have gone on to work as professional mountain guides, wilderness rangers, and have continued their studies at four year institutions.

It is too early to expect to see Search and Rescue AA degrees but students are expected to graduate with these in the next few years. Noteworthy is the absence of Water Skills graduates. While the recent drought has cancelled some whitewater classes

AWARDS

	Award Type	Award Title	Awards Conferred
2010-11	Certificate	Snow Skills	1
2012-13	AA Degree	Snow Skills	1
2013-14	AA Degree	Snow Skills	2
2014-15	AA Degree	Climbing	4
	Certificate	Climbing	1

Demographic information for WLD has remained relatively consistent. The WLD program skews male and white, which largely reflects similar patterns in the outdoor industry. While it is difficult to draw solid connections between demographics of staff and students, the WLD program has lost several strong female instructors over the last few years and this might have an influence in the slightly declining percentage of female students. Regardless, the 33.6% female representation in WLD is below what it should be.

The 12.5% Hispanic student representation in WLD is basically half of the 24.2% Hispanic representation at LTCC overall. WLD should be included in LTCC outreach efforts to the Hispanic community.

DEMOGRAPHICS

	2010-11		2011-12		2012-13		2013-14		2014-15	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Male	280	60.6%	306	57.8%	255	59.9%	217	60.3%	209	65.1%
Female	182	39.4%	221	41.8%	164	38.5%	140	38.9%	108	33.6%
Unknown	0	0.0%	2	0.4%	7	1.6%	3	0.8%	4	1.2%

	2010-11		2011-12		2012-13		2013-14		2014-15	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
African American	0	0.0%	1	0.2%	3	0.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Asian	13	2.8%	13	2.5%	15	3.5%	8	2.2%	9	2.8%
Hispanic	45	9.7%	41	7.8%	48	11.3%	44	12.2%	40	12.5%
Native Amer/Alaska Native	1	0.2%	4	0.8%	4	0.9%	2	0.6%	1	0.3%
Pacific Islander	0	0.0%	1	0.2%	1	0.2%	1	0.3%	0	0.0%
White Non-Hispanic	370	80.1%	441	83.4%	329	77.2%	285	79.2%	249	77.6%
Two or more races	18	3.9%	20	3.8%	21	4.9%	14	3.9%	15	4.7%
Unknown	15	3.2%	8	1.5%	5	1.2%	6	1.7%	7	2.2%

	2010-11		2011-12		2012-13		2013-14		2014-15	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Age < 25	134	29.0%	150	28.4%	143	33.6%	124	34.4%	111	34.6%
Age 25 - 49	271	58.7%	299	56.5%	237	55.6%	183	50.8%	174	54.2%
Age 50 +	57	12.3%	80	15.1%	46	10.8%	53	14.7%	36	11.2%

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Median Age	28	28	27	26	25
Youngest	15	13	14	15	13
Oldest	71	70	72	77	68

Productivity

2014-15 COURSE STATISTICS

WILDERNESS STUDIES PRODUCTIVITY* (2014-15):	207.57
% FULL TIME INSTRUCTORS** (2014-15):	0%
% ADJUNCT INSTRUCTORS** (2014-15):	100%

2014-15 COURSE STATISTICS

LAKE TAHOE COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRODUCTIVITY* (2014-15):	259.25
% FULL TIME INSTRUCTORS** (2014-15):	39%
% ADJUNCT INSTRUCTORS** (2014-15):	61%

WLD productivity is measured at 207.57 which compares to 259.25 overall LTCC productivity. Examining the WLD productivity on a course by course basis, it appears student enrollment numbers are the largest determinant of productivity. The highest WLD course productivity score was WLD 116: Mountain Weather with a score of 464.01 and an average end of term enrollment of 28. WLD enrollment often appears strong during registration but declines when class begins and fewer students actually attend. This dynamic is exacerbated by a mostly ineffective waitlist system.

2014-15 ANNUAL PROGRAM REVIEW

Wilderness Studies

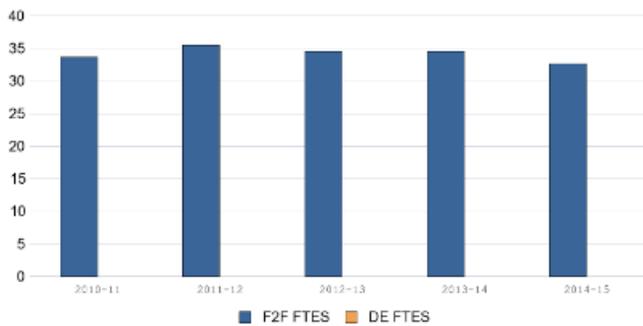


WILDERNESS STUDIES SUMMARY

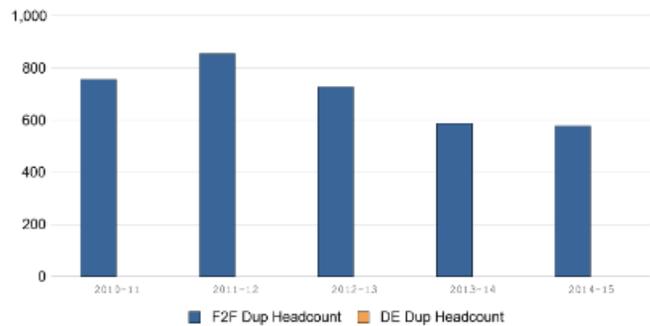
This report contains data from Academic Year (AY) 2010 to 2014. Information on program size based on full-time equivalent students (FTES), Student Success, and Student Achievement are presented below.

	Total Sections	F2F Sections	Dist Ed Sections	Total FTES	F2F FTES	Dist Ed FTES	Total Duplicated Headcount	F2F Duplicated Headcount	Dist Ed Duplicated Headcount
2010-11	60	60	0	33.68	33.68	0.00	756	756	0
2011-12	65	65	0	35.51	35.51	0.00	856	856	0
2012-13	54	54	0	34.54	34.54	0.00	728	728	0
2013-14	45	45	0	34.57	34.57	0.00	588	588	0
2014-15	43	43	0	32.67	32.67	0.00	578	578	0
4-Yr Chg (10-11 to 14-15)	-28.3%	-28.3%	--	-3.0%	-3.0%	--	-23.5%	-23.5%	--
1-Yr Chg (13-14 to 14-15)	-4.4%	-4.4%	--	-5.5%	-5.5%	--	-1.7%	-1.7%	--

RESIDENT FTES



DUPLICATED HEADCOUNT



Over the last five years WLD has focused more on providing pathways for completion and less on providing community recreation opportunities. The number of course offerings has been reduced and a few non-degree awarding courses have been dropped. Total Sections have declined 28% but total FTES has only declined 3% indicating that overall enrollment remains strong. Non-degree students continue to be a significant portion of total WLD students but they are more likely to be taking courses that are part of the WLD AA than in the past. This allows for the community to benefit from acquiring knowledge and skills, while supporting the courses needed for WLD students pursuing a degree.

It is important to note that winter quarter is the busiest quarter for WLD based on the number of classes/sections. The winter season 2013-2014 was a significant drought year which forced a number of snow based class cancellations. This was followed by the 2014-2015 winter which was even drier and a drought year of historic proportions. While enrollment numbers were reduced during these winters, overall FTES was still relatively strong from 2010-2011 through 2014-2015.

In 2008-2009 the WLD program was largely dependent on non-degree seeking community members seeking recreational opportunities. With the elimination of repeatability, reliance on this type of student was no longer feasible. WLD has rapidly transitioned to a program based upon degree seeking students that is complemented by a smaller number of non-degree seeking students. This represents a total flip from the model in place less than a decade ago. To achieve this with only a 3% FTES decrease (during a time when overall LTCC FTES decreased 22.7%) is stunning.

Many of these non-degree seeking students are drawn to WLD because it offers courses resulting in nationally recognized certificates. WLD 128B: AIARE 1, WLD 128C: AIARE 2, WLD 107A: Wilderness First Aid, and WLD 107B: Wilderness First Responder are among the strongest draws to these students. Over the last five years the WLD program has awarded roughly 150 of these nationally recognized certificates every year and produced over a thousand of these professionally recognized certificates since 2008-2009.

WLD and LTCC have gained a reputation as a high quality and affordable venue to earn these certificates. Many of these students are travelling from several hours away and return to their communities as spokespeople for WLD and LTCC. This particular slice of student is quite valuable for their ability to spread the word about WLD and LTCC, but their ability to enroll in WLD class has been compromised by technological and advisory barriers to enrollment. Complaints about enrolling and registering are the most common topic of communication from non-degree seeking WLD students.

While changes like repeatability and increased class size have challenged WLD, the program's FTES has largely remained steady. Enrollment in lecture based courses, WLD 100, WLD 101, WLD 116, and others have increased significantly. The vast majority of students enrolling in these classes are pursuing the WLD degree.

COURSE SUCCESS

	2010-11		2011-12		2012-13		2013-14		2014-15	
	Enrollment	Success								
Male	489	87.8%	525	87.2%	458	92.1%	358	91.8%	373	91.7%
Female	274	88.5%	318	84.8%	243	93.0%	202	91.8%	173	94.2%
Unknown	0	0.0%	2	0.0%	9	100.0%	3	100.0%	4	100.0%

Students are successfully progressing through WLD courses and the WLD program. Rates of success have remained relatively consistent over the last five years. WLD course success for (males and females) is roughly 10% higher than LTCC 2014-2015.

Budget

The WLD program has a relatively modest budget consisting primarily of adjunct and instructional aide salaries (and associated benefits), supplies, and equipment. The Adjunct and Classified Salary data from 2010-2012 do not appear to be consistent with same data from 2012-2015.

Academic Year	Adjunct Salaries (1000s)	Classified Salaries – IAs (2000s)	Benefits	Instructional Supplies (4000s)	Operating Expenses (5000s)	Instructional Equipment (6000s)	Total Budget
2014-2015	114,664	24,156	9,258	8,350	1,100	0	157,528
2013-2014	88,915	21,000	7,240	7,350	1,150	1,000	126,655
2012-2013	95,040	21,000	8,465	8,650	5,130	3,000	141,285
2011-2012	37,900	1,490	2,919	100	0	0	42,409
2010-2011	41,256	1,490	2,731	100	0	0	45,577

SECTION 3: PROGRAM MISSION AND SLOS

The mission of the Wilderness Education Department at Lake Tahoe Community College is to provide students many opportunities to develop leadership abilities, practical experience, technical expertise, theoretical grounding, health and fitness, and environmental stewardship. The program will emphasize experiential methodologies to combine theory and practice in a strong field based curriculum. Students will gain current and accepted skills, knowledge, and standards in the professional field, while being taught by highly skilled and knowledgeable instructors who exemplify the highest level of standards, integrity, and ethics. Wilderness Education curriculum blends the best of outdoor adventure with the disciplines of college education.

Student Learning Outcomes for this major are:

- Identify the many influences that have shaped wilderness education.
- Identify the management protocols for land use on the local, state, and national level.
- Employ a variety of experiential leadership styles to specific settings.
- Assess good judgment and safety in wilderness settings.
- Apply a working vocabulary and a skills-based knowledge in field-specific topics.

The “Assess good judgment and safety in wilderness settings.” SLO should be revised. Suggested replacement is, “Apply appropriate technique for situation while maintaining reasonable risk exposure.”

Course level SLOs are assessed on a regular basis (i.e., at least once within a 3-year cycle) and instructors have made several recommendations for mastery improvement that are already showing an impact on the WLD program. Equipment recommendations made in the SLO assessment process have supported WLD acquisition of new equipment. Instructors regularly use the assessment process to make recommendations about additional IA support and also to encourage LTCC to acquire additional land access.

	2012-13			2014-15		
	Mastery %	Some Understanding %	No Understanding %	Mastery %	Some Understanding %	No Understanding %
Wilderness Education						
PLO1 Identify the main influences that have shaped wilderness education.				81.7	27.3	15.0
PLO2 Identify the management protocols for land use on the local, state, and national level.				70.0	30.0	
PLO3 Employ a variety of experiential leadership styles to specific settings.				78.5	25.8	
PLO4 Assess good judgment and safety in wilderness settings.	100.0			80.4	21.4	10.0
PLO5 Apply a working vocabulary and a skills-based knowledge in field-specific topics.	100.0			80.5	21.3	10.0
Grand Total	100.0			80.3	23.7	10.8

While assessments are useful, WLD instructors report lack of appreciation for this process. Frequently assessments are distributed long after a WLD class has ended and part-time Adjunct instructors struggle to find the time to fill them out. Additionally, receiving the paperwork so long after the course being assessed has ended contributes to the process feeling inauthentic for the instructors.

SECTION 4: PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The overall goal for the Wilderness Education program over the next five years should be sustainability. The WLD program has evolved from an intriguing idea to a strong academic program that is attracting students to LTCC. These students are graduating with AA degrees and moving on to work in the outdoor profession. While this growth is significant and commendable it has not produced the institutional change within LTCC that is necessary for WLD to be sustainable.

The WLD program has grown tremendously since its inception a decade ago but the support structure has shrunk during that period. The current situation is precarious. Students are moving to LTCC to pursue the WLD degree, WLD success is influencing similar courses at LTCC, but basic staffing support is less today than it was a decade ago when WLD courses were first listed under that heading.

WLD Objective: 1 of 5	Responsible Individual(s) and/or Department(s)	Timeline for Completion
Provide adequate WLD staff support.	LTCC Administration Dean of CTE & Instruction WLD Coordinator	Spring 2017
Representative Activities		
a. Fulltime Wilderness Education Director.	LTCC Administration Dean of CTE & Instruction	Spring 2017
b. Improve WLD Adjunct access to staff development support and increase number of WLD Adjuncts.	Dean of CTE & Instruction WLD Director	Fall 2016
Expected Outcomes	Measures (if quantitative)	Baseline (If quantitative)
Improve WLD instruction and representation within LTCC. Improve WLD risk management and outreach.		
Resource and Budget Implications	Estimated Funding Required	Timeline
Unknown		N/A

Strategic Issue	Strategic Goal	Objective
2. Student Learning, Success, Equity and Achievement	5. Clear and Effective Pathways toward Completion	5.1 Offer programs and courses at the right times, in the right sequences, and through the most effective modalities to facilitate students' timely completion of their educational and professional goals.

CPR Objective: 2 of 5	Responsible Individual(s) and/or Department(s)	Timeline for Completion
Improve student contact. Turn registered students into attending students. Increase communication between WLD office and WLD students.	Dean of CTE & Instruction WLD Adjuncts WLD Director	Winter 2017
Representative Activities		
a. Increase communication with enrolled students pre-class to improve attendance numbers.	A&R	Winter 2017
c. Improve process whereby waitlist students enroll into course.	A&R	Winter 2017
d. Continue and improve WLD social media effort. Create quarterly WLD newsletter.	WLD Director	
Expected Outcomes	Measures (if quantitative)	Baseline (If quantitative)
Increase FTES numbers and decrease low enrollment courses.	FTES data	
Resource and Budget Implications	Estimated Funding Required	Timeline
None.	None.	N/A
Strategic Issue	Strategic Goal	Objective
3. Student Learning, Success, Equity and Achievement	3. Clear Expectations and Strong Support	3.1 Establish early, clear expectations for students' performance while providing the support necessary for their success.

WLD Objective: 3 of 5	Responsible Individual(s) and/or Department(s)	Timeline for Completion
Improve the risk management planning for WLD and LTCC more broadly.	VP of Administrative Services Dean of CTE & Instruction WLD Adjuncts WLD Director	AY 2015-2020
Representative Activities		
a. Conduct risk management audit of LTCC.	Outside auditor	Spring 2017
b. Act upon results of risk management audit.	Dean of CTE & Instruction WLD Director	Spring 2018
Expected Outcomes	Measures (if quantitative)	Baseline (If quantitative)
By Summer 2017 have a clear picture of LTCC risk management strengths and weaknesses. By Summer 2018 have a stronger risk management outlook.	Risk Management Audit	N/A
Resource and Budget Implications	Estimated Funding Required	Timeline
Unknown	N/A	N/A
Strategic Issue	Strategic Goal	Objective
3. Community Engagement	7. Heightened community awareness. 8. Community Leadership and Partnership	8.1 Develop and maintain strategic relationships throughout the community in order to strengthen local and regional economic and workforce development initiatives.

CPR Objective: 4 of 5	Responsible Individual(s) and/or Department(s)	Timeline for Completion
Formalize existing land access and increase the land LTCC has access to use for its courses.	Dean of CTE & Instruction Administrative Services WLD Director	AY 2016-2020
Representative Activities		
a. Monitor response from LTBMU to LTCC letter clarifying access status.	Dean of CTE & Instruction Administrative Services WLD Director	Fall 2016
b. Formalize land access status with local California State Parks.	Dean of CTE & Instruction Administrative Services WLD Director	Spring 2017
c. Engage neighboring land managers to formalize LTCC land access.	Dean of CTE & Instruction Administrative Services WLD Director	AY 2016-2017
Expected Outcomes	Measures (if quantitative)	Baseline (If quantitative)
Clarified land access and improved relations with land managers. Improvements to instruction as venue options increase.		
Resource and Budget Implications	Estimated Funding Required	Timeline
Unknown	Unknown	AY 2017-2020
Strategic Issue	Strategic Goal	Objective
Land Access. Strategic Issue #3. Community Engagement.	7. Heightened community awareness. 8. Community Leadership and Partnership	8.1 Develop and maintain strategic relationships throughout the community in order to strengthen local and regional economic and workforce development initiatives.

CPR Objective: 5 of 5	Responsible Individual(s) and/or Department(s)	Timeline for Completion
Increase amount of storage space available for WLD equipment.	Dean of CTE & Instruction WLD Director	AY 2016-2020
Representative Activities		
Expand WLD storage area while maintaining accessibility to adjuncts.	Dean of CTE & Instruction WLD Director	AY 2016-2017
Expected Outcomes	Measures (if quantitative)	Baseline (If quantitative)
Improved security, organization, and accessibility of WLD equipment.		
Resource and Budget Implications	Estimated Funding Required	Timeline
Unknown	Unknown	
Strategic Issue	Strategic Goal	Objective
Strategic Issue #4, “facility resources”		5.1

SECTION 5: RESOURCES NEEDED TO SUPPORT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals and objectives specified in Section 4 of this report do not have any associated budget implications, although they are contingent on having a full time WLD Director.

SECTION 6: APPENDICES

Included in the Appendix are any Annual Program Review (APR) updates and attending Annual Unit Plans (AUPs) from the five year program review cycle preceding the CPR.