



From the President's Desk

GO WEST. GO FAR.

March 1, 2012

Dear West Colleagues,

After our lengthy preparations, our accreditation team will be visiting us on March 12-15. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many tireless participants who helped to prepare the accreditation self study and get the college in shape for the visit. The visiting team will have about three days with us and will need our full cooperation to get the information they need to verify our self study and to give us their best input on how to continue to improve toward reaching our stated mission.

During the visit, I am asking that you make yourself available to team members. Please familiarize yourselves with the team bios and photos posted online at <http://www.wlac.edu/events/index.html#accreditation>. As you encounter the team members, you might want to give them a proper West welcome; they have a demanding task that they perform as a collegial labor of love. If you have a name tag, please wear it. It helps the visitors tremendously. Equally important, please wear a smile. Our visitors are colleagues who go through accreditation at their own colleges; we should show our appreciation for their work on our behalf by being most welcoming. From recent personal experience, I know how well West can greet someone with open arms!

Please be available on campus as much as possible. I have asked that vacation be limited during the accreditation visit to urgent matters, so we can operate at our full capacity. The visiting team members anticipate that we are putting our best foot forward during the visit, so we need to rise to that expectation. But team members will also want to talk to many of us and see us in action.

Many of us will have formal opportunities to meet with our visitors. The accreditation team will schedule appointments with various faculty, staff, administrators and student leaders through my office to follow up on the self study. They may also make some visits to classrooms and offices and could approach any of us or our students with substantive questions or just a request for directions. We are required by the Accrediting Commission to give them full access to the information they need to verify that we meet the accreditation standards under which we operate. If a team member asks you for information, please cooperate to your best ability. If you do not have that information, please let them know that you will follow up, so they can have what they need. Then immediately seek help from your colleagues, supervisor, or my office if you don't know where to get the information. Our guests have a huge challenge to get to know the college in depth during such a short visit, so we need to help them as best as we can.

The visiting team members are also available to you. They have scheduled two open forums for anyone to drop by to speak with them. See <http://www.wlac.edu/accreditation/index.html> for the visit schedule, including open forums. In these forums you may ask the team members questions about accreditation visits and standards or discuss with them any matters pertaining to West's accreditation process or the self study content. Our team chair has been very specific to encourage members of the college to approach team members and talk to them. Please do so, but also be mindful of their busy interview and writing schedule.

At the end of the visit, the team chair will give the college a preliminary oral report of the team's findings. If you are available, please attend this public report scheduled for **Thursday, March 15 at 1:00 PM** in the new lecture hall in the **General Classroom Building, Room 160**. Because final recommendations come from the Accrediting Commission and not from the visiting team, this report is a highly structured, non-interactive event. We will follow the standard practice of listening to the chair's report, thanking the team for their efforts and bidding them a safe trip as they immediately depart from the campus. Of course, we will then have our own conversation and celebration of the conclusion of this process. The final report and recommendations will be published after the Accrediting Commission meeting in June 2012.

Nabil Abu-Ghazaleh

President