Recommendation 6 – Library Collection Development and Security (2012): In order to address recommendations made by two previous visiting teams and to meet Standards, the college should develop a consistent, sustainable and sufficient funding stream to develop quantity, quality, depth, and currency in Library resources and services. Moreover, the college should take necessary steps to evaluate and correct security measures to protect the Library collection. (Standard II.C.1, II.C.1.c., IV.A.2.b.)

Recommendation 7 (2006): The college should address the inadequacy of its library collections. (Standard II.C.1)

Library Collections
For many years, the state of California’s Telecommunications and Technology Infrastructure Program (TTIP) provided most of the funds that West used to purchase books and electronic resources for its library. After a significant decline in 2002-2003, TTIP funding was generally stable until 2009-2010, when TTIP eliminated funding to individual libraries. The loss of TTIP funding left the library without a consistent source of support for the collection.

The library has consistently requested resources through West’s cycle of assessment, planning, resource allocation, and reassessment. However, in discussing the 2012 visiting team’s recommendation, administration and librarians have recognized flaws in the way West has applied that cycle to the library. Issues have been identified at several levels of the cycle: Program Review and validation; the Vice President’s prioritization of resource requests and subsequent budget allocations; and the communication of the results of the process back along the loop.

In Program Review, the Library and Learning Resources Division uses the template for Academic Divisions, which focuses on courses. Analysis of the library was not specifically elicited, which may partially explain the lack of attention to the library collections needs. The template is flexible enough to accommodate analysis of library collections, but the librarians would have had to introduce their own data; division-specific data provided for analysis deals only with the courses taught by librarians and learning skills faculty. Probably more critically, the librarians had long been accustomed to making do with whatever funds were available; rather than systematically identifying the level of funding needed, they had focused their energies on making optimum use of the funds provided by TTIP. [Evidence: Documentation of how librarians figured out where to spend collection funds. 2006 Self Study mentions using circulation data to identify areas that are big users. ]

In the 2010-2011 Library Program Review, librarians cited Title 5 CCR § 58724 benchmarks in support of a request for $150,000 to maintain and update print and electronic resources. Yet Title 5 benchmarks are of limited utility: if one contemplates even the most basic differences among California Community Colleges, such as their curricula and their proximity to university and other libraries faculty use in preparing courses, it becomes clear that Title 5 standards are not
a one-size-fits all measure of need. Community colleges across the state report not having funding at the Title 5 levels. When TTIP funding was at its height, West spent nowhere near this amount annually. At the same time, West does meet another Title 5 standard, holding 80,000 volumes to support 7,000 FTES. The Program Review instrument did not ask how not having the requested resource would impact the program. [evidence: 2010-2011 PR at http://www.wlac.edu/orp/planning/program_review/Part1AcadDivNew-16Div.pdf Need support for the assertion that T5 levels are not usually met.]

At the next step in Program Review the dean supervising the Library and Learning Resources Division validated its Program Review. In 2010-2011, she did not request evidence to support the $150,000 resource request, and the process continued without the librarians being asked to provide further data or analysis to support it. When the Vice Presidents prioritized the resource requests from all parts of the campus, they placed the library’s request at the top of the list, where it remained through to the final budget. However, given the lack of data-based argument for the $150,000 amount, in 2011 they allotted a lesser amount, which in fact was the amount that had already been billed for subscriptions to electronic resources.

The final step in the cycle should have been wide communication of the resulting decisions, including an analysis of their impact. Librarians did not understand which part of their resource request had been met, and their buy-in to the planning cycle suffered.

In the 2012-2013 cycle, the librarians have stepped up to produce a data-based analysis of collection needs. In their 2012-2013 Program Review, they present focused data on current needs at West. One source is the section of the Course Outline of Record, available electronically, which lists representative reading assignments for the course. Sampling this data, the library estimates that $50,000 would purchase the books needed to fill this gap.

Other sources of information on library needs include
- reference desk documentation of student research needs that the collection does not meet
- records of missing titles
- a newly-reconstituted faculty and student advisory group
- faculty and student surveys
- book lists prepared by academic division chairs.

The next step in Program Review is validation. This year the validators will use a rubric designed to assure that sufficient data are presented in the Program Review, and that the analysis of the data is sound. When the resource requests reach the prioritization stage, there should be enough associated data for the Vice Presidents to make an informed recommendation that accounts for the library’s identified needs. The college has committed to meeting identified needs for the library.

Security Measures
A circular staircase connects the first, second and third floors of the HLRC. Midway up the striking circular staircase that connects the main floor of the library to the main shelving floor, a mezzanine provides seating and casual reading materials, especially paperback novels. This attractive architectural feature creates a gap in library security, as a book dropped over the railing of the seating area can fall into the lobby outside the library.

In consultation with library staff, plant facilities personnel designed an upgrade to the wall separating the main floor of the library from the lobby. By moving the wall x feet into the lobby, they aligned it with the walls of the balcony above the mezzanine, eliminating the security gap, while providing space for xxx. This project will be completed over winter break in 2013. As a result of this action, the College is confident that the collection will be secure.