**Recommendation 7 – Financial Resources (2012)**

In order to meet the standard, the team recommends that the college integrate planning, evaluation, and resource allocation decision making in order to systematically assess the effective use of its financial resources and use the results of the evaluation as the basis for institutional improvement and effectiveness in a manner that assures financial stability for the institution. *(Standard III.D.1. and III.D.3.)*

West has demonstrated its ability to assure financial stability via systematic, collegial financial planning in lean years and fat: for the 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 fiscal years, transparent processes involved college leadership in directing funds towards enrollment growth and implementing the college Educational Master Plan; the fiscal years from 2008 to 2012 saw similarly thoughtful, widely-understood processes used to make judicious cuts, often on very short notice. The growth initiatives resulted in a net xx% growth in FTES over from 2006 to 2009; the cuts contributed to modest surpluses in three out of four very difficult years. The single budget deficit was in 2008-2009, when the cuts occurred in the middle of the year already underway.

For 2012-2013 fiscal year planning, the college has refined its planning processes. The college recognizes the usefulness of more and better data on the effects of expenditures and budget reductions. For the fall, 2012 program review process, the PIEC revised the instrument to that end. New topics to be addressed included:

- The effect of past allocations
- The effect of unfunded requests in the past
- The expected effect of a hypothetical resource reduction

West piloted a new web-based program review instrument, IES, in fall 2012. [carry-over of data and plans, other advantages]. As those responsible for completing program review rose to the challenge of providing better data and analyzing them carefully, November program review workshops drew leaders from all across the campus. Their eagerness to do a quality job resulted in one 3-hour workshop running for 5 hours. The dean of research and planning addressed an email to the group, “Dear Program Review fanatics.” Deadlines were extended from early to late November to allow more time for thoughtful analysis.

The validation stage of the program review process was also strengthened. In previous cycles, a dean would read the program reviews from those he or she supervised, and decide whether they were adequate. This year, deans will work in pairs on the validation, using a rubric designed to see to it that each program review is complete. Incomplete ones will be returned for further work.
In devising a rubric to use in prioritizing resource requests, the Planning and Intuitional Effectiveness Committee (PIEC) reviewed the 2011 Principles for Prioritizing Programs and Services and requested that the College Council update them. Based on the new priorities, the PIEC developed a prioritization rubric at its December XX meeting so that it could be fully discussed before being applied to the planning for the 2013-2014 fiscal year. At the same time, the PIEC scheduled formal reviews of the previous years’ planning process for early winter and the current Program Review process (including its integration with planning and other processes) for the late spring.

The college is committed to continue using its cycle of integrated planning, resource allocation, plan implementation and evaluation including:

- Aligning plans
- Strengthening information collection and dissemination, such as Program Review
- assessing our levels of achievement
- discussing our plans and our progress
- using results to make decisions leading to institutional improvement.
- documenting progress on implementation matrices.