



INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP ABSTRACTS

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NCIA annually bestows the Instructional Leadership Award to active instructional administrators who exemplify academic leadership through their creativity and innovation; their sustained commitment to instructional issues and challenges; and their substantial impact on college organizations.

NCIA recognized Kevin Li, Dean of Instruction at Wilbur Wright College in 2012, as the recipient of the Instructional Leadership Award for Region 4, as well as the National Award for Outstanding Instructional Leadership. In support of Dean Li's application, nominators highlighted his focus on supporting faculty engagement and development. As shared below, Kevin "models integrity, perseverance and high standards." In this abstract you will read how Kevin's leadership has aided in the development of a successful Math on Demand (MOD) program and a culture of quality improvement via formative assessment.

MATH ON DEMAND



Kevin Li, Dean of Instruction
Wilbur Wright College

Wilbur Wright College, one of the City Colleges of Chicago, is proud of Kevin Li, Dean of Instruction, for all of his accomplishments and inspiring leadership. Winner of the *2012 National Award for Outstanding Instructional Leadership*, he is most noted for his work with faculty engagement, innovative programs, and accreditation. Quoting one of his nomination letters, "Kevin is dedicated, motivated, and displays an unsurpassed work ethic. He is incredibly intelligent yet able to communicate effectively to a diverse faculty, staff, and student body. Hands

down, Kevin Li is the most effective Dean of Instruction I have served under in nineteen years. In fact, I find it difficult to imagine our college without him." Kevin's nominations were particularly unique and worth noting since they were all written and submitted by faculty members.

Under Kevin Li's guidance, the Dean of Instruction's Office has supported faculty engagement and development. He has led changes in faculty in-service and orientation programming, including a conference-style selection of break-out sessions. This has proven popular amongst our faculty, as it allows choice and self-directed professional growth.

Dean Li has also supported Wright College's new Center for Teaching and Learning, a faculty-led organization that allows faculty and staff to share promising practices and unique interests. In this initiative, as well as all that he does, the Dean

of Instruction values individual strengths, while setting a tone of high caliber, research-based work. He collaborates with the faculty on the Academic Affairs committee and department chairs meetings, offering helpful guidance on curricular revisions and other academic matters, while always remaining respectful of academic freedom.

Dean Li models integrity, perseverance, and high standards while supporting faculty and staff in their work with students. His door is always open, and it is in the informal conversations where Dean Li's wisdom, compassion, and support manifest most powerfully. He meets the faculty where they are and offers resources to help them move forward in their work in the classrooms, as well as their contributions to college-wide programming and initiatives.

Dean Li has mentored faculty interested in assessment,



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accreditation, research, and leadership. He is also a font of knowledge on situated cognition and psycho-social skills, helping faculty and advisors engage deeply with the holistic placement program and understanding the complex backgrounds and needs of students.



As with his own staff, Dean Li gently pushes faculty beyond their comfort levels, while offering ongoing support so that they can stretch themselves and develop stronger commitments to their craft and to the institution. He is a master at bringing disparate groups together and finding common ground in important values, leaving all concerned with renewed pride and energy.

Kevin Li helped to develop the Math on Demand (MOD) program. MOD classes are more than just developmental math. They represent a holistic approach to the whole student model. Students learn math by doing math, and students learn how to be college students by understanding the commitment and being engaged in the process. Motivation, homework, studying, registration, joining clubs, setting goals, creating objectives, networking,

and utilizing resources are concepts often taken for granted by successful college students. Unfortunately, for most students who require developmental course(s), these concepts are less obvious.

While the primary focus of MOD is to improve math skills, there is also the added value of exposing students to what it means to be a college student.

A brief history of the Math on Demand program at Wright College:

- 2009: Kevin Li, Dean of Instruction received the IICCA Innovation award for Wright's *Classroom individualization* efforts
- 2010: Changed the program's name from *Classroom Individualization to Math on Demand*
- 2011: Expanded the programs' offering to include all levels of remedial math
- 2012: Illinois' Lieutenant Governor Shelia Simon visited Wright College to observe the Math on Demand program; also endorsed the MOD program in a later released report "Illinois Community Colleges - Focus on the Finish".
- 2013: The MOD program was relocated into a brand new, state-of-the-art math lab

The MOD program has steadily improved course retention and success since its inception in 2009. In Summer 2013, the program achieved astounding retention and course success rates, at 98% and 91%, respectively.

In the Fall 2013 term, the MOD program has seen significant improvements in student placement. Provided a student has a passing grade at the end of the term, the student is able to re-take the placement exam, allowing him/her to potentially bypass one or two levels of remedial math. In level 1 approximately 30% of students who took the placement exam skipped one level of remedial math, placing them into level 3 and 3.2% double-jumped straight into credit-level math. In level 2, 6.3% skipped a level, reaching credit-level math. Due to the Math on Demand program, 69 students bypassed one or more semesters of remedial math, collectively saving these students over \$23,000 in future tuition.



Kevin Li has been leading accreditation efforts at the college for more than six years. He believes that accreditation efforts have to be systemic and aligned. He has approached this task by building structure and arriving at processes that are inclusive and participatory.

Wright College joined the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) pathway offered by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) in 2008. In six years, the college has initiated and completed nine AQIP Action Projects. The college successfully reaffirmed its accreditation last October, 2012.

From Dean Li's perspective, assessment drives quality improvement efforts. He uses formative assessment to identify areas for improvement, in classrooms or the college as a whole. Increasingly, the college's accreditation efforts are tied to and aligned with its strategic planning and budget proposal and planning.

Under Dean Li's leadership, Wright College developed a culture of quality improvement by identifying a team of key staff and faculty who make up the AQIP Steering Committee. The Steering Committee is comprised of representatives

from faculty council, academic affairs, the assessment committee chairperson, action project leaders, administrators, professional and clerical staff, students, and alumni, as well as the chief engineer. The committee effectively covers the entire spectrum of the college's stakeholders.

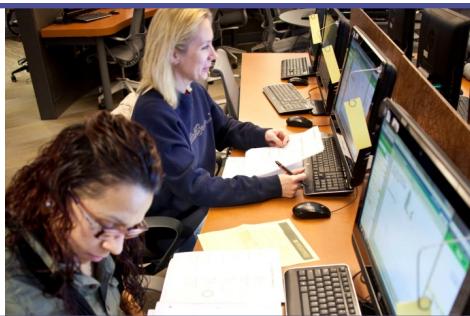
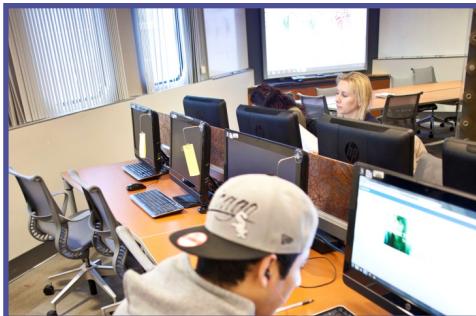
Although the AQIP Systems Portfolio, the college's self-study, is submitted to HLC every four years, the college has committed to update the Systems Portfolio every two years. This higher degree of internal accountability allows the college to review and analyze data more frequently to reflect and build upon the college's overall performance.

The Systems Portfolio writing team is comprised of nine subcommittees which represent the nine AQIP categories. Altogether, the AQIP Systems Portfolio team includes approximately fifty stakeholders who review assessment and evaluation data, along with higher

education trends and promising practices that impact community colleges. The Systems Portfolio is constructed in a wiki site, which allows information sharing, input, and suggestions from a wider pool of faculty, staff, and administrators.

Wright College continues to emphasize the need to approach quality improvement tasks holistically and analytically. A college-wide AQIP Retreat is held every semester. During the retreat, Dean Li and his team employ business analytic tools and techniques, such as force-field and fishbone analysis to elicit input and suggestions. For Wright College and Dean Li, the sum is always greater than its parts. The college relies on collective wisdom to improve and move forward.

The college community is proud of its relationship with Dean Li and expects to continue developing new initiatives with positive results for its students under his strong leadership.



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