

Automotive Technology Program

Response to External Review Report 4/16/2012

We thank the evaluation team for their efforts and time spent assessing the WSU Automotive Program. Overall, we agree with their assessment.

The faculty is in overload every semester, since we cannot hire another instructor to replace the faculty member who retired in December, to reduce the overload, we plan to recruit and train adjunct faculty to teach in the Independent Shop program. This program has the lowest amount of required training and it is also an evening program. Even though adjuncts may be easier to find for an evening program, we will start a search for them immediately to ensure we are covered for the fall semester and beyond.

As far as diversity, there has been no preferential treatment given to white males during the hiring process of faculty. The most qualified candidates have been awarded faculty teaching positions based on expertise and experience, not race, gender, or any other factors. While there has been a "diversity preference" of points awarded to applicants during past search committees, this has not resulted in the hiring of any "diverse" faculty members. Future faculty members will be hired based on the same technical qualifications that have been used previously.

The advisement weakness that was identified is truly a concern to the department. This can indeed cause students to "fall-through-the-cracks" as was stated in the report. Ideally, there should be a designated departmental advisor/coordinator. Student advisement is currently being handled by each instructor (for the students in their own program). Currently this is a huge load on many of the faculty because they are also completing their Master's degrees, but it should be easier once they complete their degrees by this time next year. It is planned that during the summertime, the secretary will be the primary advisor for students since the faculty are not available. We have a new recruiter who will also be utilized as an advisor in the summertime, however, it is not anticipated that the recruiter will do student advising during the regular school year because that is the prime time for on the road recruiting of students for our program. In addition, the department plans to utilize help from the dedicated college recruiter for advising.

Our Automotive Department website is also setup to provide the most requested pieces of information required by potential student. The website information can be changed as required to better meet our needs.

We do not currently have a formal meeting specifically designed to discuss student learning outcomes, however, the faculty members do informally discuss testing techniques and methods. The hands on test given for the engine mechanical courses have been standardized for Toyota, Chrysler, General Motors, and the Independent Shop programs. Other classes have similar standardization among final examinations. Further collaboration among faculty members who teach similar classes will be beneficial.

There is another area of improvement that we have identified. Starting fall semester 2012, we will use the same automotive knowledge entrance exam for all incoming and outgoing (graduating) students. This will make the test results easier to interpret regarding "did any learning take place?"

As to the issue of orienting new contract / adjunct faculty, we currently only hire people who are qualified to teach the classes we offer. If additional training is required, we send them to that training at our expense.

In addition, going forward we plan to do the following:

1. The program manager or department chairman will meet with the new faculty one-on-one in a short training session.
2. We will make sure the new faculty member is aware of the NATEF teaching requirements
3. We will make sure the new faculty is aware of the WSU Syllabus policy and the WSU policy and procedures
4. We will give a tour of the facilities, tools available, vehicles available, equipment available, and make sure they know what is expected of them regarding personal and student safety.
5. We will help them acquire the proper class preparation materials, books, and a dedicated classroom where they will teach.

Additionally, WSU has a new faculty retreat each year where WSU policies, procedures, etc. are presented. We strongly encourage our new faculty to attend the retreat.