

Western Washington University

Vision

Western Washington University will become the premier public comprehensive university in the country through **engaged excellence**.

Mission

The Western Experience

Western Washington University is committed to engaged excellence in fulfilling its tripartite mission of teaching, scholarship, and community service in a student-centered environment, with a liberal arts foundation and opportunities to develop professional skills. As a public institution of higher education, Western serves the needs of the citizens of the state of Washington by providing undergraduate and select graduate programs in Bellingham and at selected locations elsewhere in the state. Western provides students with a personalized teaching and learning environment of the highest quality. Through engaged excellence:

- Western instills in graduates a life-long passion for learning and fosters individual curiosity, intellectual rigor, critical thinking, and creativity.
- Western promotes scholarly and creative work of significance and applies that scholarship in regional, national, and global communities.
- Western creates opportunities for students to display leadership, civic engagement, social responsibility, and effective citizenship.
- Western brings together an increasingly diverse and talented student body, faculty, and staff to form a learning community that, along with community partners, involves its members in active learning, scholarly discourse, and reflection.
- Western provides a high quality environment that complements the learning community on a sustainable and attractive campus intentionally designed to support student learning and environmental stewardship.

These efforts create an integrated and distinctive *Western Experience*.

Western Values

Western's mission and strategic objectives are supported by the following core values:

Excellence: Western attains and recognizes excellence in all facets of operation.

Engagement: Western expects students to be actively involved in their own learning and all community members to be actively involved in collaborative scholarship, creative activities and in service to the broader community.

Diversity: Western appreciates the importance of diversity of thought and people and seeks to become more diverse. We honor the contributions of all members of the campus community. We are committed to listening to all sides of an issue and opposed to any form of discrimination.

Community Service: Western expects all members of the University to serve and enrich the intellectual vitality of the campus and the broader community. We expect individual members to be committed to improving the *Western Experience* for all.

Integrity: Western expects all members of the campus community to interact honestly and ethically. We value and expect open, fair, and straightforward behavior and take personal and collective responsibility for our words and our actions.

Innovation: Western encourages creativity, collaboration, and a willingness to experiment and be receptive to new ideas. We strive to bring these qualities to our work and our interactions with others.

Strategic Objectives

To demonstrate engaged excellence:

- In interactive learning and the active participation of students in scholarly and creative activities.
- In supporting teacher-scholars who integrate the highest quality teaching, scholarship, and creative activities.
- In civic engagement by developing leadership, effective citizenship, and social responsibility in all members of the campus community.
- As a diverse campus community where members appreciate, honor, and celebrate people with diverse perspectives and backgrounds.
- In environmental stewardship and sustainable practices through our programs, scholarship, and actions.

Strategic Actions

These actions are designed to enhance Western's institutional effectiveness in fulfilling its mission, meeting its strategic objectives, and providing an effective foundation for the *Western Experience*.

Recruit and retain high quality students. High quality and diverse students enhance the *Western Experience* for all. Western remains committed to continuing to recruit highly talented students, despite an increasingly competitive environment. Therefore:

- The University should enhance the financial resources available for student recruitment.
- The University should enhance recruitment efforts for targeted populations.
- The University should improve the student-faculty ratio and add staff, where warranted, to enhance students' academic experience. The University and its units should develop policies that improve access to courses and majors and make entry requirements for majors more predictable.
- The University should improve delivery of advising services, especially for undecided and transfer students.
- The University should improve international, cross-cultural, and interdisciplinary opportunities for students.
- The University and its units should incorporate assessment of student learning outcomes.
- The University should continue to promote the health and wellness of community members through educational and recreational and fitness opportunities.

Recruit and retain high quality faculty and staff. High quality faculty and staff are crucial for providing students an integrated *Western Experience*. The University faces an increasingly competitive national marketplace for the services of faculty and staff. Therefore:

- The University needs to maintain ongoing emphasis on achieving competitive salaries and broad-based benefits for faculty and staff.
- The University needs to strengthen its system of recognizing and rewarding excellence in teaching, scholarship, and creative activities for faculty and staff.
- The University needs to devote more resources to support innovative teaching, high quality scholarly and creative activities, and collaborative and interdisciplinary activities.
- The University needs to enhance its emphasis on increasing the diversity of its faculty and staff through recruitment, retention, and exchange opportunities.
- Internally, units need to support faculty and staff by clarifying expectations and rewards for professional development in teaching, scholarship, creative activities, and service and by facilitating employee efforts to balance those expectations.
- Units need to identify ways to facilitate and recognize staff efforts to serve the needs of the campus community.
- The University should devote attention to how it might respond to the high cost of housing for faculty and staff.

Maintain growth trajectory and improve enrollment management. Western's Bellingham campus is nearing ultimate capacity, but expansion in some areas has not kept pace with overall enrollment growth. Therefore:

- The University should maintain its existing policy of moderate annual growth (approximately 1% or 120 students per year) to the currently-planned capacity of 12,500 FTE by 2013. If the University desires additional growth, it should consider such options as developing additional capacity on the waterfront or expanding Extended Programs.
- The University should improve the student-faculty ratio and add staff, where warranted, to enhance the academic experience of students.
- Units should develop a clear plan for enrollment capacity at the unit level, and this should be linked to distribution of resources across units.
- The University should undertake a study of the role of graduate education and its relative scope and scale, then design a plan for its future development.

Build collaborative relationships with off-campus communities. Western places a high value on connections with the broader community, its role in serving the needs of the broader community, and the ‘real-life’ laboratory that the broader community provides. Therefore:

- The University should provide improved structure to facilitate civic engagement, leadership development, effective citizenship, and social responsibility in its members.
- Units should seek to increase the scope of existing outreach and collaborative programs, where feasible, and should consider building broader connections to regional, national, and global communities through such activities as internships, applied scholarship, service learning, and community service.
- The University should increase involvement of alumni and other volunteers with students in academic departments.
- The University should engage students and alumni in ways that ensure their lifelong connection to Western.
- The University should engage friends and other constituents in ways that develop enduring relationships with Western.
- The University should seek new relationships and strengthen existing ones with other organizations interested in developing and implementing sustainable practices.
- The University should continue collaborating with the local community in developing and implementing sustainable practices and increasingly serve as a resource for sustainable development.

Become more diverse and enhance opportunities for students to understand and participate in different cultures and diverse societies. Diversity remains one of the central values of the *Western Experience*. Therefore:

- The University should strive to become more diverse through recruitment, hiring, and exchange efforts. The University should develop more avenues for campus community members to experience different communities – locally, nationally, and internationally.
- Units should integrate the study of different cultures and diverse societies more fully across the curriculum.

Develop and maintain campus infrastructure. Since an aesthetically beautiful and wellmaintained campus continues to be one of Western’s strongest assets, the University has a responsibility to maintain the beauty and functionality of its campus. Therefore:

- The University should enhance information resources, especially the library, and maintain technological currency to strengthen support for educational and scholarly activity.
- The University should develop or redevelop current and future spaces to be flexible, efficient, and sustainable.
- The University should continue efforts to ensure that the campus environment remains healthy, safe, and secure.
- The University should ensure that maintenance programs sustain the beauty of the campus and the functionality of the existing facilities.

Improve communication throughout the University. As Western has grown in size, scope and complexity, effective communication among its units and members has emerged as an important challenge. Therefore:

- The University should increase opportunities for formal and informal interaction among members of the campus community.
- The University should expand efforts to ensure that decisions are made openly, pathways toward decisions are clear and understood, and effective mechanisms for sharing information are maintained.
- The University should encourage interdisciplinary initiatives and eliminate communication and other barriers to such initiatives.

Promote the effective management of resources. Western is committed to demonstrating accountability and the effective stewardship of resources. Therefore:

- The University should promote effective management of its resources and demonstrate consistent accountability to all of its stakeholders.
- The University should continue to take a leading role in developing and implementing sustainable practices in consumption, transportation, and facilities.

Increase and diversify funding. Since Western can no longer rely exclusively on the traditional mix of funding sources from state support and tuition, additional resources will be needed to pursue new initiatives. Therefore:

- The University should continue to provide proposals to the Executive and Legislative branches of the government for increased investment in public higher education.
- All units should be encouraged to seek alternative funding sources, including enhanced support from external grants and contracts, participation in federal initiatives, private philanthropic support through the WWU Foundation, and possibly broadened recruitment efforts or expansion of self-sustaining programs.
- University Advancement will actively pursue strategies to encourage increased alumni, parent, corporate, foundation, and community support.

Self-Assess and Develop Outcomes. To achieve the strategic objectives, Western and its units need to focus energy and resources to support the 2006 Strategic Plan. Therefore:

- The University and its units should assess how well programs are aligned with Western's strategic objectives and, if need be, reallocate resources to better support those objectives.
- Units should develop expected outcomes with measurable indicators that will allow them to assess their progress in achieving the University's strategic objectives.
- The University should clarify and strengthen the processes that make use of this plan so that decisions based on this plan are transparent and the plan remains a living document adapted to Western's changing needs, opportunities, and challenges.
- The 2006 Strategic Plan should be reviewed every two years as part of the University's biennial budget development process and revised at least every three biennia.

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