

Western Washington University

Strategic Plan 2018 – 2024

Draft, January 2018

## **Mission**

Western Washington University is a public comprehensive institution that brings positive impact to the state of Washington and beyond through a focus on academic excellence and inclusive achievement by its students, staff, and faculty.

## **Vision**

Western Washington University prepares and inspires individuals to explore widely, think critically, communicate clearly, and connect ideas creatively to address our most challenging needs, problems, and questions.

## **Values**

Academic freedom

Critical thought

Engagement

Equity and justice

Excellence

Integrity

Responsibility

Student success

Sustainability

Western Washington University has a clear mission. As a public comprehensive master's granting university, we positively impact the state of Washington by offering a broad range of programs that lead to professional and academic careers. Western grounds every program in the liberal arts and sciences, enhancing student knowledge, skills, and creativity, and developing engaged citizens who can solve the challenges facing the state, the nation, and the world. Western emphasizes student engagement with faculty, staff, campus programs, and surrounding communities.

Western prides itself on providing quality education. A major strength of Western is our liberal arts and sciences foundation. Another strength is the emphasis upon faculty/student interactions in research, scholarly and creative activities, classes, and community engagement. These strengths help foster informed, engaged, and creative graduates. Western is committed to enabling all students to have high-impact experiences and finding resources to allow all this to occur. We recognize that more can be done to prepare our graduates for success and are committed to continually improve our programs.

Western's location, on the Salish Sea, near an international border, among sovereign Native nations, positions us to better engage with the environment, communities, and cultures, both local and global. To do this, we must respect the varied cultures and histories of the Pacific Northwest and the world at large in our teaching, research, and service.

Western aspires to be a caring community. Our greatest strength is our people—our students, staff, faculty, and alumni. Our community cannot be taken for granted, and much work needs to be done to ensure that every individual at Western can thrive professionally and personally. We must aim at student success, at a workplace where all employees have a voice that is heard and the opportunity to grow. It also means we must connect students, staff, faculty, and alumni to support and sustain each other.

Western is committed to justice and equity. We must open our doors wider to welcome a more diverse student body, but we must also ensure that we provide the environment and resources all students need to be successful. We also need to improve our commitment to provide a safe, just, and equitable University for all students and employees.

Western is committed to inclusive achievement and academic excellence. Below, we list goals and objectives to guide us towards creating a University that provides high quality academic and professional education to serve the State of Washington, the nation, and the world.

## Goals and Objectives

**Goal #1:** Western will provide a transformational education grounded in the liberal arts and sciences and based on innovative scholarship, research, and creative activity.

*Western's educational experience will continue to be rooted in an active teaching and learning environment with a liberal arts and sciences foundation and robust co-curricular, internship, research, creative, and community engagement opportunities. Western will prepare students to be successful and engaged members of society, and will provide the tools to work in and across disciplines to identify and creatively solve key societal problems, both local and global. Western will recruit the best faculty and staff to support the growth and sustained flourishing of programs, departments, and centers that do this vital work.*

- A. Strengthen the liberal arts and sciences foundation to ensure and expand student access to the breadth of our undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs.
- B. Provide tools and experiences for all students to follow their intellectual curiosity, to work across disciplines, and to develop the skills, knowledge, and habits of mind that will enable them to effectively contribute to evolving societal needs.
- C. Increase support and infrastructure for all types of scholarship, research, and creative activity.
- D. Ensure that all students have access to high quality educational experiences beyond the classroom.
- E. Review and improve general education requirements and programs of study at the undergraduate and graduate levels to ensure they foster the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind required in a dynamic world.
- F. Through shared governance, align budgeting, capital planning and development to allow for agility in response to changes in student interests, state needs, and knowledge production and dissemination.
- G. Provide technological and other academic infrastructure to support curricular innovation, research, scholarship, and creative activity, civic engagement and social justice.

**Goal #2:** Western will advance a deeper understanding of and engagement with place.

*At Western, we seek to engage place in all of its complexity. Place calls us to recognize debts and obligations to indigenous and Native nations, to the environment and sustainability, and to diverse and rich cultures within and across borders. Place inspires us to study with rigor and precision the complexity, vibrancy, and beauty of land and sea in Washington State and in the Pacific Northwest. Place moves us to think and act thoughtfully and creatively about where we are and how we connect with the wider world. Place beckons us to look at the past with care and to envision the future with curiosity, innovation, and creativity.*

- A. Take steps to acknowledge and honor the richness and multiple meanings of place, from local to state, national, and global.
- B. Support teaching, learning, research, scholarship, creative activity, and programming that engages with place in a respectful way.
- C. Support experiences inside and beyond the classroom that help develop an understanding of the region and its communities in all their natural and cultural richness and complexity.
- D. Better recognize, honor, and respect the cultures, traditions, languages, rights, and knowledge of the indigenous and Native nations in the region.
- E. Weave the ecological, social, and economic dimensions of sustainability into and through the University's practices.
- F. Give all students educational experiences both in and beyond the classroom that help them develop the knowledge, skills, and abilities to nurture and create the conditions for people and planet to thrive.
- G. Increase engagement between Western and local communities.
- H. Increase the experiences through which students, staff, and faculty can engage with communities and environments in multiple regions in the world, both inside and beyond the classroom.

**Goal #3:** Western will foster a caring and supportive environment where all members are respected and treated fairly.

*Western's greatest strength is the outstanding students, faculty, staff, and alumni/ae who make up its community. Western supports an inclusive governance structure for all and provides a learning and working environment in which everyone can thrive.*

- A. Improve shared governance to ensure that students, staff, and faculty are meaningfully empowered in the university's policies, decisions, and direction.
- B. Support student, staff, and faculty wellbeing, including physical health and wellness, mental health, and disability resources based on universal design.
- C. Enhance student services and co-curricular opportunities to foster students' intellectual, personal, and professional development and success.
- D. Improve climate and working conditions for student employees, staff, and faculty at all locations.
- E. Provide competitive compensation and professional development for student employees, staff, and faculty.
- F. Expand networks between students, staff, faculty, and alumni/ae.

**Goal #4:** Western will pursue justice and equity in its policies, practices, and impacts.

*Western sees equity, justice, inclusion, and diversity as fundamental principles calling for authentic engagement. Western acknowledges that, as an institution, it has failed to meet the needs of people of many races, ethnicities, creeds, socioeconomic classes, gender identities, sexual orientations, and disability statuses. WWU will contribute to redressing these inequities by transforming policies, structures, and practices to ensure meaningful inclusion.*

- A. Foster a positive and collaborative campus climate, including the physical environment, that welcomes and affirms the diversity of individuals, groups, cultures, and ideas.
- B. Establish, fund and sustain practices of self-examination and continuous improvement to identify, understand, and remediate structural injustices and inequities at Western.
- C. Enroll, retain, and support more underrepresented and first-generation students at the undergraduate and graduate levels.
- D. Implement model practices to improve our recruitment and retention of a diverse staff, faculty, and administration.
- E. Increase affordability of and access to high quality undergraduate and graduate education at all Western's locations.
- F. Support and strengthen curricula and other programming that engage issues of access, equity, power, and privilege in and across disciplines.
- G. Expand professional development opportunities for all staff and faculty to provide for additional leadership capacity in the effort toward equity and justice.
- H. Expand and support respectful collaborative relationships with community partners and underrepresented groups to advance equity and social justice.
- I. Pursue just action by taking all appropriate steps to protect survivors and to prevent sexual and other types of violence, discrimination, harassment, and bullying.

## Metrics

Metrics are vital ways of measuring progress toward achieving our goals and objectives, and thus toward fulfilling our mission and vision. Those listed below point directly to the strategic plan's four goals, as well as measuring resources we devote to Western's collective effort. The metrics as listed do not have numeric targets attached; we believe those targets are for the Western community to set.

It should be noted that this list is not exhaustive; other measures of Western's performance can and will be identified by units and over time. Second, we understand that not all objectives have a metric that neatly describes whether it is fulfilled; indeed, some objectives are either met or not. Also, we believe strongly that quantitative measures provide only part of the picture of whether Western is succeeding, and we recommend Western implement programs that will allow a more complete picture of its performance to proceed. For example, in addition to regular climate surveys to learn about student, staff, and faculty satisfaction, focus groups similar to those conducted as part of the strategic planning process should be held on a regular basis to better understand the university's climate and areas that need improvement.

The below table lists categories of metrics, not necessarily specific metrics. Where we believe necessary, further explanation is given in notes. The "X" marks in boxes show the primary goal area related to each metric; we understand that metrics can be tied to multiple goal areas.

	Education	Place	WWU Community	Justice/Equity
<b>Goal-specific Metrics</b>				
Graduation rate <sup>1</sup>	X			
Retention rate <sup>2</sup>	X			
Time-to-degree	X			
Student learning outcome achievement	X			
Student-faculty ratio	X			
Student-staff ratio	X			
NTT/TT ratio	X			
Post-graduation placement <sup>3</sup>	X			
Percent of students with high-impact, co-curricular, and extra-curricular experiences <sup>4</sup>	X			
Internal research and creative activity support	X			
Grant dollars received	X			
Overall research and creative activity	X			
Overall graduate and undergraduate student research and creative activity				
Number of interdisciplinary curricular and co-curricular offerings	X			
Assignable classroom square footage per FTE student <sup>5</sup>	X			
Assignable lab square footage per FTE faculty <sup>6</sup>	X			
Number of curricular and co-curricular offerings addressing regional/indigenous issues		X		
Number of curricular and co-curricular offerings addressing global issues		X		
Community engagement opportunities		X		

<sup>1</sup> Standard practice is to measure the six-year graduation rate for undergraduates and three-year graduation rate for graduate students; we suggest also using four- and five-year rates for undergraduates and two-year rate for graduate students as metrics. Graduation rates should be measured overall and for specific types of student (e.g., students of color, non-traditional students).

<sup>2</sup> We suggest we look at each level of retention: freshman-sophomore, but also sophomore-junior, junior-senior, and first-second year at the graduate level.

<sup>3</sup> This includes employment, graduate school, and other activities such as Peace Corps service.

<sup>4</sup> Such experiences include high-impact practices as defined by AAC&U's LEAP initiative (first-year seminars and experiences, common intellectual experiences, learning communities, writing-intensive sources, collaborative assignments, undergraduate research and creative activity [including performances and exhibitions], global learning, serving learning, internships, and capstone experiences), scholarship and creative activity with faculty, study abroad, and nationally competitive scholarships and fellowships.

<sup>5</sup> Includes all space primarily used for group instruction.

<sup>6</sup> Includes, e.g., research lab, studio, and recital space.

Community engagement hours		X		
Impact of community engagement hours		X		
Percent international students		X		
Percent students studying abroad		X		
STARS rating <sup>7</sup>		X		
Net cost of attendance			X	
Scholarship dollars awarded			X	
Employee satisfaction <sup>8</sup>			X	
Employee retention			X	
Student satisfaction <sup>9</sup>			X	
Economic mobility and satisfaction <sup>10</sup>			X	
Average student debt at graduation <sup>11</sup>			X	
Salary equity across demographic groups			X	
Administrative square footage per FTE staff <sup>12</sup>			X	
Percent of students, staff, and faculty of color <sup>13</sup>				X
Percent of women students, staff, and faculty				X
Percent of LGBTQ+ students, staff, and faculty				X
Percent of first-generation students				X
Percent of PELL –eligible and State Need Grant eligible students				X
Number of curricular and co-curricular offerings addressing issues of diversity, justice, and equity				X

<sup>7</sup> STARS: Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Reporting System, from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE).

<sup>8</sup> This is a broad category intended to include measures of all aspects of the employee experience at Western, including support and professional development, and broken down by type of employee and demographic characteristic (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, etc.).

<sup>9</sup> This is a broad category intended to include measures of all aspects of the student experience at Western, including support such as advising, and broken down by type of student (undergraduate/graduate), major, and demographic characteristic (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, first-generation, etc.).

<sup>10</sup> This measures the extent to which Western helps students move from lower to higher levels of economic mobility as well as the extent to which Western helps students find careers with which they are satisfied.

<sup>11</sup> This will include both the percentage of students graduating with debt and, for that percentage, the average debt at graduation, for both undergraduate and graduate students.

<sup>12</sup> Includes staff office, general, and support space.

<sup>13</sup> Percentages for this and the following two metrics will include, for students: undergraduate and graduate; for staff: classified, professional, and executive; for faculty: instructor, senior instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, and professor.

Effectiveness of policies and practices addressing diversity, justice, and equity				X
Workload differentials <sup>14</sup>				X
Assignable square footage per FTE maintenance staff				
<b>Overall Resource Metrics</b>				
Operating and capital State support	X	X	X	X
Endowment assets	X	X	X	X

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<sup>14</sup> This is a measure of the extent to which members of groups are called upon differentially for committee service, student advising, and other activities.

**Peer institutions**

Appalachian State University	VA
Cal Poly San Luis Obispo	CA
California State University-Chico	CA
James Madison University	VA
Towson University	MD
University of North Carolina Wilmington	NC
The College of New Jersey	NJ

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