

Strategic Planning Process: Summary

Prepared by the Strategic Planning Committee Co-Chairs: Brian Burton and Pacqui Paredes Mendez

The WWU University Planning and Resources Council (UPRC), at its October 19th meeting, voted unanimously to create an ad hoc committee charged with writing a new strategic plan for WWU. The committee was to be composed of five faculty, one professional staff, one classified staff, two students, two members of the executive administration, one community member who is a WWU alumnus, and one member of the WWU Board of Trustees. In addition, Brent Carbajal (Provost) and John Bower (UPRC chair) were chosen to be “advisory members” of the committee.

UPRC also voted to build this committee through nominations from the following bodies:

- Faculty – WWU Faculty Senate and UFWW
- Professional Staff – Professional Staff Organization
- Classified Staff – Washington Federation of State Employees, Public School Employees
- Students – Associated Students
- Community Member/Alumnus – President Randhawa
- WWU Board of Trustees – President Randhawa

All nominees were confirmed by UPRC at its November 30th meeting. The committee is constituted as follows:

- Eric Alexander – Professional Staff Organization
- Megan Spiegel – Public School Employees of Washington
- Sabrina Chou – Associated Students of WWU
- Lauren Vásquez – Associated Students of WWU
- Vicki Hsueh – Faculty Senate
- Nabil Kamel – Faculty Senate
- Paqui Paredes – Faculty Senate (Co-chair)
- David Leaf – Faculty Senate
- Kristin Mahoney – United Faculty of Western Washington
- Brian Burton – Administration (Co-chair)
- Kathy Kitto – Administration
- Tony George – Community/Alumni

In its first meeting on Friday January 13th, the committee was charged by President Randhawa with developing a transparent and inclusive process that will culminate in the drafting of a new strategic plan for Western Washington University that will set priorities and will inform decisions regarding resource allocation from AY 2017-18 through AY 2023-24. President Randhawa also charged the committee with the development of a list of aspirational peer institutions.

The committee's first task was to hear from people both inside and outside the University community. We took two approaches to getting feedback. First, we conducted nearly 30 focus group sessions and open forums on and off campus. Second, we conducted two surveys, one of students, staff, and faculty, and one of alumni. We received more than 1,000 usable responses to the first survey (about 500 from students, 200 from faculty, and more than 150 from staff, and more than 100 from people who have multiple roles at Western), and about 500 usable responses to the alumni survey.

Once the survey and focus group results were in, by early spring, we worked to identify common themes from the surveys and focus groups. From the themes, we worked on goals that would push us in areas in need of improvement, as well as in areas Western was seen as already strong. The next step we took was to set objectives related to each goal. At that point, near the end of spring quarter and after weekly meetings throughout the quarter, we sent the goals and objectives to campus for feedback. We received feedback directly through e-mail, through the anonymous Qualtrics survey link, and at various meetings, including that of UPRC. Through the process of receiving that feedback, it became clear to us that further conversation was needed, not just about the goals and objectives, but also about the mission, vision and values of the university, since these are framing elements that help elucidate the goals and objectives. We also realized that having the metrics in the document would help flesh out the goals into more tangible elements.

With all of this in mind, the committee worked during the summer on revising the University's mission and vision statements, as well as adding framing narratives to the goals and objectives. At some point in early Fall, we will be sharing a revised and expanded document with the campus community, one that will include mission, vision, values and metrics. We will again hold focus groups on and off campus to gather final input on the document and its contents. Once that feedback is received, we plan to revise the document and submit it to President Randhawa, from whom it will come to the Board for final approval.

**STRATEGIC PLAN:
TOWARDS AN ASPIRATIONAL VISION
Prepared by the University Leadership Team**

External Drivers

Changing student demographics
Greater competition for students
Current, projected workforce needs & job markets
Stagnant graduation rates, growing achievement gaps
Globalization & role of technology
Increasing global demand for education
Current political/social environment

Institutional Mission and Values

Strategic Goals and Objectives

- G1. Transformative Education
 - A: Liberal arts and science core
 - B: General education/graduation requirements
 - Etc.
- G2. Richness/Plurality of Place
- G3. Caring Community
- G4. Justice and Equity

Internal Environment

State and federal funding trends
Need to increase faculty, support staff
Need to upgrade, expand infrastructure
Growth in demand in STEM, health disciplines
Perceived threat to the Liberal Arts
Need to increase diversity, inclusivity

Vision Framework

Western...higher education
leader in student
preparation & success

Western's opportunity for
distinction guided by

- Inclusive Excellence
- Global Diversity
- Washington Impact

SIGNATURE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Please see the attached document.

SIGNATURE THEMES

Western's opportunities for institutional distinction will be guided by three signature themes: **Inclusive Excellence, Global Diversity, and Washington Impact**. The themes are designed to provide Western with a competitive edge, a stronger institutional identity and increased opportunity to have a positive impact in Washington State, nationally and internationally.

Inclusive Excellence

Higher education has never been more important to the economic and social development of our communities and our global society. It is now a precondition for upward mobility. Workers with a bachelor's degree or higher have accounted for 73% (8.4 million) of the 11.6 million jobs gained in the recovery after the recession.

Yet, higher education is faced with pressures and challenges that we must address, intentionally and effectively. Only 53 percent of students who enrolled in 2009 in four-year college degree programs graduated in 2015. Between 1970 and 2010, bachelor's degree attainment rates for students from families with income in the top quartile nearly doubled from 40% to about 78%. In contrast, degree attainment for students from the bottom family income quartile has remained essentially constant at about 9%. We are going to see increasingly more students attending our universities from the bottom family income quartiles, which also are more ethnically and racially diverse.

Education is the most powerful social and economic equalizer. Our most important challenge then is to advance inclusive excellence, that is, increase the number of graduates and student success, while eliminating achievement gaps for students from diverse and under-represented socio-economic backgrounds.

Western has a great platform to advance access and completion, and we have an opportunity to be an exemplar in this area. Western's six-year graduation rate 70 percent is one of the best in the region. The faculty is committed to high quality of education and to the preparation of our graduates so they can be successful in a continuously changing work and social environment.

Global Diversity

We also need to make sure that Western more closely reflects the global diversity in which we live and which we seek to advance. Washington's, and our nation's, future population growth is projected to come from groups that historically have been less likely to participate in and complete postsecondary education. Diversity and inclusiveness means reaching and including more of the underrepresented students and first generation students in the state of Washington in our academic programs.

Globally, the demand for post-secondary education is going to increase significantly as the world population approaches 10 billion by 2050. Technology will continue to be a significant driver in bringing the world closer, increasing awareness and knowledge across cultures and countries. Global diversity also means that we cultivate global citizenship in our graduates so they have the perspectives to make well informed judgements, the curiosity to learn about others' values and cultures, and the wisdom to challenge their own mental models. Student learning must encompass the basic tenets of human thought, critical and creative thinking, quantitative and information literacy, and an understanding of major political, social and intellectual trends.

Excellence and diversity go hand in hand. Our community will be richer and stronger if members of our community—students, faculty, staff, administrators—are drawn from the widest possible range of socioeconomic and multicultural groups. We strive to expand and deepen our work to build a diverse, inclusive and equitable community and culture: in terms of access and success, curriculum, learning, shared experiences, embedded values and beliefs, and engagement opportunities for reflections to create enduring change.

At Western we strive to create an environment where teaching and learning are the most important activities, where we foster lifelong learning, and where there is respectful discourse in a safe environment. Western is a place where we take pride in our traditions and where we have hope for the future and a commitment to progress and positive change.

Washington Impact

The presence of an educated workforce is essential for producing positive social impact in all sectors of the economy. The Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce identifies Washington State as one of the top five states in the country for job openings requiring college credentials. It is estimated that in the next decade 67 percent of the jobs in Washington will require some form of post-secondary education. In order to keep up with population growth and workforce demands, about 360,000 more adults will need to complete high school and about 500,000 will need some form of college degree. Additionally, there are about 700,000 adults in Washington who have earned some college credit but haven't completed a degree; nationally this number is 35-40 million.

To meet this challenge, the 2013 Washington Student Achievement Council defined broad educational goals in its Roadmap document: By 2023 all adults in Washington, ages 25-44, will have a high school diploma or equivalent and at least 70 percent of Washington adults, ages 25-44, will have a postsecondary credential. Currently, these numbers are 90% and 51%, respectively.

To contribute to the future workforce needs in Washington and the region, Western will expand access to its programs, increase persistence and graduation rates, and partner to offer programs and credentials to place-bound and non-traditional students.

At the same time, we must prepare our students so they can be successful in a continuously changing work and social environment. Technology and automation have been driving employment trends. Today's graduates will change careers multiple times and many will have jobs that do not even exist today. Western's focus on developing the whole person and its strong core liberal arts education provides our graduates with a competitive advantage to be effective citizens of the nation and the world and to effectively navigate the workplace.

Making progress on critical issues (environmental sustainability, climate, human health, access to safe food and clean water and air, economic vitality, cultural diversity, quality of life) in Washington and beyond require nurturing a faculty culture of innovation that cuts across disciplines and integrates knowledge and exploration in its undergraduate and graduate programs. Western is well positioned to increase its contributions to the state of Washington and to be a catalyst in regional economic and social development.

Mapping Themes and Goals/Objectives

GOALS	THEMES		
	Inclusive Excellence	Global Diversity	Washington Impact
Goal 1: Transformative Education			
Strengthen liberal arts & science core	X	X	X
Review/update general education and major graduation requirements		X	X
Expand access to undergraduate & graduate fields of study	X	X	X
Increase affordability	X		X
Access to high-impact educational experiences	X		X
Support innovation	X	X	X
Increase scholarship to address societal problems		X	X
Support student engagement in faculty research, creative activity	X		X
Enable/incent work across disciplines	X		X
Align curricular revisions, budgeting, capital planning to respond to changes			X
Provide IT and academic infrastructure	X	X	X
Expand programs in under-served areas outside Bellingham	X		X
Goal 2: Richness/Plurality of Place			
Support experiences that develop understanding of the region, communities	X	X	X
Honor, respect rich cultures		X	X
Expand engagement with communities		X	X
Weave sustainability, equity in curriculum, practices	X	X	X
Provide international experiences	X	X	X
Goal 3: Caring Community			
Enhance shared governance & transparency	X		
Implement strategic enrollment plan	X	X	X
Ensure support services serve all students and help ensure their success	X	X	
Improve working conditions for faculty, staff, students	X		
Provide competitive compensation & ensure well-being of faculty, staff, students	X		
Expand networks with alumni, partners		X	X
Goal 4: Justice and Equity			
Foster welcoming environment	X	X	X
Recruit retain diverse faculty, staff, students		X	X
Expand, deliver curricula that engage issues of equity, power, privilege	X	X	X
Expand professional development opportunities for staff, faculty	X		
Recognize/support community partnerships to advance equity and justice	X		X
Demonstrate full commitment to preventing sexual and other types of violence	X	X	X

Mission Statement and Strategic Plan - DRAFT

Prepared by the Strategic Planning Committee

Mission

WWU provides the finest public comprehensive education through rigorous student-centered focus on the liberal arts and sciences, affordable tuition, commitment to fairness and equity, deep engagement in community and global life, and focus on the skills and capacities to explore widely and deeply, think critically, reason empirically, communicate clearly, and connect ideas creatively.

Vision

Western Washington University prepares and inspires individuals to achieve their aspirations and address the world's most challenging questions.

Values

Academic Quality
Intellectual Inquiry
Student Success
Career Preparation
Liberal Arts and Sciences
Civil and Open Discourse
Student Engagement
Equity and Justice
Stewardship
Community Engagement
Place
Caring

Goals and Objectives

Western provides a transformational education founded on the liberal arts and sciences and based on innovative scholarship, research, and creative activity to foster the development of engaged members of 21st-century global society

Western's educational experience is grounded in an active teaching and learning environment with a liberal arts and sciences foundation and robust co-curricular, internship, research, creative, and service learning opportunities. Western prepares students to be successful and engaged members of society, providing the tools to work across disciplines to identify and creatively solve key societal problems, both local and global. Western supports the growth and sustained flourishing of programs, departments, and centers that do this work.

- A. Strengthen the delivery of the liberal arts and sciences core to ensure student access to the broad exploration of knowledge of our undergraduate education
- B. Review and update general education, major graduation requirements, and graduate programs to ensure they foster the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind required of a fast-changing world in the 21st century.
- C. Expand student access to and increase student success in rigorous baccalaureate and graduate major fields of study
- D. Increase affordability of both undergraduate and graduate education at all Western's locations
- E. Ensure that all students have access to high-impact educational experiences inside and outside the classroom
- F. Support innovation in curricula, scholarship, research, and creative activity
- G. Conduct scholarship, research, and creative activity that furthers efforts to answer important questions and solve societal problems.
- H. Support undergraduate and graduate student engagement with faculty in scholarship, research, and creative activity.
- I. Provide tools and experiences by which students, staff, and faculty can work across disciplines to identify and creatively solve key global, environmental, and societal challenges
- J. Align curricular revision, budgeting, capital planning and development to allow for agility in programs and course offerings to respond to changes in student interests, state needs, and knowledge production
- K. Provide technological and other academic infrastructure to support curricular innovation, research, scholarship, and creative activity, civic engagement and social justice
- L. Enhance and augment affordable programs in areas underserved by four-year higher education outside Bellingham

Western acknowledges and honors the richness and plurality of place, promotes knowledge and engagement grounded in an understanding of the region and its communities, and sets them in a global context

At Western, we engage place in all of its complexity. Place calls us to recognize debts and obligations to indigenous 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 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. Support curricular and extra-curricular experiences that help develop an understanding of the region and its communities in all their natural and cultural richness and complexity
- B. Honor and respect the diverse and rich cultures, traditions, and knowledge of the Native nations in the region
- C. Expand Western's engagement with local, state, national, and international communities
- D. Weave ecological sustainability and social and economic equity into and through our practices and curriculum
- E. Provide experiences by which students can learn about communities and the environment in other regions in the world

Western is a caring community where all members are supported, where everyone has a voice and the ability to be heard, and where the definition of community is broad and inclusive

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

- A. Improve shared governance structures and transparency to ensure that students, staff, and faculty all feel included and empowered in the university's decisions and direction
- B. Develop and implement a strategic enrollment and recruiting plan addressing resident, non-resident domestic, graduate, and international students
- C. Ensure that student support offices effectively serve all students and graduates and help ensure their academic and personal success at Western
- D. Improve working conditions for students, staff, and faculty to make WWU a model in fair labor practice
- E. Provide competitive compensation for, and support the development and wellbeing of, students, staff, and faculty
- F. Expand networks between alumni, student, staff, and faculty

Western is committed to justice and equity

Western sees equity, justice, inclusion, and diversity as fundamental principles calling for authentic engagement. Western acknowledges that institutions of higher education have traditionally failed to meet the needs of people of all races, ethnicities, creeds, socioeconomic classes, gender identities, sexual orientations, and disability statuses. WWU is committed to transforming policies, structures, and practices to ensure meaningful inclusion.

- A. Foster a campus climate, including the physical environment, that welcomes and affirms the diversity of individuals, groups, and cultures, promoting positive relations across difference
- B. Implement model practices for the recruitment and retention of a diverse student body, a diverse staff, and diverse faculty
- C. Strengthen, develop, and deliver curricula and other programming that engage issues of access, equity, power, and privilege across disciplines
- D. Expand professional development opportunities for all staff and faculty that provide for additional leadership capacity in the effort toward equity and justice
- E. Recognize Western's indebtedness to Native nations, and expand and support respectful collaborative relationships with community partners and underrepresented groups to advance equity and justice
- F. Demonstrate full commitment to preventing sexual and other types of violence, ensuring the safety of all campus members



The Board's Role in Strategic Planning

Western Washington University

September 8, 2017

Dr. Cathy A. Trower

Successful Strategic Planning

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Nonprofits in General

1. A clear and comprehensive grasp of external opportunities and challenges
2. A realistic and comprehensive assessment of the organization's strengths and limitations
3. An inclusive approach
4. An empowered planning committee
5. Involvement of senior leadership
6. Sharing of responsibility by board and staff members
7. Learning from best practices
8. Clear priorities and an implementation plan
9. Patience
10. A commitment to change

tcc group – Briefing paper: “Ten Keys to Successful Strategic Planning for Nonprofit and Foundation Leaders.”

For Boards

1. Model a strong partnership with staff
2. Develop initial aims and scope
3. Call for strong, inclusive process design and effective facilitation
4. Clarify specific roles and expectations for board members
5. Make the commitment
6. Participate, exercise patience, be passionate
7. Learn, learn, learn
8. Expect the unexpected
9. Be visionary, make the tough choices, and allocate resources to the plan
10. Govern strategically

Stern, G.J. (2013). “Shaping the Future: The Board Member’s Role in Nonprofit Strategic Planning.”

STAGE I. Strategic Thinking / Sense-Making

Make sense of relevant trends, the organization, the environment, and the competition.

Senior Staff Role

- Initiate strategic thinking process.
- Actively participate with the board in discussions.
 - Present issues.
 - Inform and educate board.
 - Discuss context with board.
 - Make underlying assumptions explicit.
- Summarize output and implications.

Board Role

- Actively participate with the staff in discussions.
 - Bring outside perspective and insight.
 - Tap collective wisdom.
 - Test consistency of senior staff's thinking.
 - Pose thoughtful questions.
 - Collaborate with senior staff.

Adapted* from Nadler, D.A., Behan, B.A., and Nadler, M.B. (2006).
Building Better Boards: A Blueprint for Effective Governance. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, p. 135.

* What you see here differs somewhat from Nadler et al based on my own thinking and experience.

STAGE II. Strategy Development and Decision-Making

Develop substance for the plan and make fundamental choices about strategic initiatives; place strategic bets.

Senior Staff Role

- Develop proposals for critical decisions on direction and major resource allocations.
- Review with board.
- Make critical decisions.

Board Role

- Offer input for senior staff's consideration.
- Conduct ultimate review and approve major decisions.

Adapted* from Nadler, D.A., Behan, B.A., and Nadler, M.B. (2006).
Building Better Boards: A Blueprint for Effective Governance. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, p. 135.

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STAGE III. Strategic Planning

Translate critical decisions into priorities, objectives, and resource allocations to execute strategy.

Senior Staff Role

- Develop and own the plans.
- Explore & explain options.
- Ensure plan supports objectives and strategy, and is consistent with mission.
- Present plans to board for review.

Board Role

- Critically review strategic plan.
- Ensure trustees understand plan including:
 - Resource allocations
 - Intended outcomes
 - Possible unintended consequences and risks
 - Timelines
 - Benchmarks
- Approve the plan.

Adapted* from Nadler, D.A., Behan, B.A., and Nadler, M.B. (2006).
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STAGE IV. Strategic Execution

Undertake initiatives consistent with the strategic plan; adjust over time to account for environmental changes and outcomes.

Senior Staff Role

- Ensure resources and leadership for effective execution are in place.
- Monitor progress of execution.
- Adjust execution or plan in response to circumstances and outcomes.

Board Role

- Review progress on key initiatives vis-à-vis explicit milestones & benchmarks.
- Discuss pace and adjustments required in response to circumstances and outcomes.

Adapted* from Nadler, D.A., Behan, B.A., and Nadler, M.B. (2006).
Building Better Boards: A Blueprint for Effective Governance. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, p. 135.

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Management does strategic plan with cursory review by the board [rote approval]

Two Extremes

Board leads strategic plan
[infringes on CEO's
legitimate responsibility]

VALUE-ADDED ENGAGEMENT

- Board participates in the strategic thinking and decision-making process, adding value without over-reaching.
- The CEO and senior team lead and develop the strategic plan with board member's input.
- Board members have ultimate responsibility for approving the strategy and the metrics to be used to assess its progress.

Nadler et al (2006), p. 136

Let's take this further into higher ed...

Shinn (2017)
*Strategic
Thinking &
Planning in
Higher
Education*
AGB.

- Too many university strategic plans represent “either a defense of an unsustainable status quo or a quest to model the institution after revered peers it cannot afford to emulate” (p. 5).
- Strategic thinking is a mode of reflection that blends appreciation for the institution’s past with a focus on its future through deep mining of relevant information with creative visioning [along with] respect for the particular while imagining the whole (p. 5).
- Have to have the capacity to end some existing legacy programs to provide necessary resources for important innovations (p. 14).
- The Board has a “fiduciary” responsibility for strategic planning (p. 17).

What is strategic thinking?

Strategic thinking is purposeful but not regimented, disciplined yet expansive, and rooted in a university's mission even as it develops a compelling and sustainable vision for an uncertain future (Shinn, p. 24).

Strategic thinking is “seeing” ...

- Ahead and behind: A good vision of the future is rooted in an understanding of the past.
- Above and below: Holistic, big-picture thinking is supported by inductive and informed “deep digging.”
- Beside and beyond: “Lateral” or unconventional thinking should assist an institution in seeing beyond “constructing” a new future. Seeing it through – it is only strategic “if it gets done” (Mintzberg, from Shinn, p. 25).

Figure Out What Will Work Well for Western

- Most models you'll read about (including Nadler et al) are a bit formulaic.
- Many university strategic plans are simply unfunded wish-lists and not terribly strategic.
- In academe, process matters a lot (and many would say as much as anything else), so do not underestimate its importance.
- Discuss what makes the most sense with this President, this Board, this culture, at this place in time. Keep in mind:
 - Today is about sense-making (generative, strategic level) – not operations and tactics, so resist the urge. 😊