Spring Quarter 2019

New student enrollment this spring will compare similarly to last year. We anticipate 15 new first-year and 181 new transfer students compared to 15 first-year and 190 transfer students last year.

Fall Quarter 2019

First-year Students

Although total admission applications received from first-year students for fall is the third-highest in Western’s history at 10,334, this remains a challenging recruitment year. We are pleased to report that academic indicators for this year’s admitted pool are comparable to last year, but have significant work ahead of us as we bolster the yield of admitted students.

We are seeing a decrease of 643 first-year applications, equivalent to 5.9% compared to the same time last year: 10,334 vs. 10,977. This is in part due to a 9.4% decrease in high school seniors in our state. Institutions are competing fiercely for the same resident students because there are fewer of them. In addition, we are feeling the impact of the new Seattle Promise scholarship program for students from Seattle public high schools. The Promise program will provide full coverage of community college tuition that remains after scholarships and financial aid have been applied. Therefore, students from participating public high schools in Seattle are being encouraged to stay at home and pursue postsecondary education at community colleges. Preliminary reporting shows that overall applications and applications from students of color from King County are down by nearly 10%.

Of course, Admissions is doing everything possible to admit qualified students in record time. We have 1,267 confirmations compared to 1,325 at the same time last year, representing a decrease of 58 students or 4.4%. Confirmations from students of color are down at 298 compared to 308 last year, a difference of 10 or 3.2%. In addition, Western was among the first of the public four-year institutions in our state to send financial aid notifications to prospective first-year and transfer students for Fall 2019.
We are planning a number of events to help us bring in the incoming class of 2019. These include:

- Western Preview, to be held Saturday, April 6. This is our premier visit program for admitted students and their families.
- The Multicultural Achievement Program (MAP) scholarship luncheon, to be held Saturday, April 13. MAP scholarships recognize students making significant contributions to advance equity, justice and change. We are holding this year’s event in Seattle instead of Bellingham to personally congratulate and reach out to more students and their families.
- Four Admitted Discovery Days events in March and April, where students and families are informed of next steps, visit academic departments, attend a faculty and student informational panel and, of course, take a campus tour.

We saw the decline in Washington high school seniors coming over a year ago. To mitigate the decline in applications and better position Western for Fall 2020 and 2021, we have implemented additional measures to encourage applications and enrollment via new and improved marketing and communications, systems and application processing and recruitment and outreach efforts.

**Marketing and Communications**
- Deployed new email messages through the new CRM (Constituent Relationship Management) software, Slate, to deliver more targeted content to admitted students
- Increased messaging to 30,000 additional SAT/PSAT test-takers (classes of 2019-21)
- Expanded our digital advertising plan
- Messaged to students who had submitted a FAFSA but had not applied for admission
- Hired a social media intern to engage with prospective students
- Developed additional video content
- Enhanced select web pages, including a new page for admitted students; assisted in the creation of a web page to help undocumented students navigate admissions processes
- Retained inquiry and lead generation services (Hobsons and Carnegie Dartlett)
- Boosted content in publications for families of admitted students, to aid in their decision making
- Delivered additional communications to Washington College Bound Scholars

**Systems and Applications Processing**
- Identified new markets by purchasing additional SAT/PSAT names from the College Board;
- Streamlined and expedited application processing for faster rendering of decisions
- Developed awarding guidelines to promote new scholarships for non-resident students

**Recruitment and Outreach Team**
- Doubled the number of High School visits in Whatcom and Skagit counties
- Increased number of application-completion workshops in the King and Pierce counties
- Scheduled additional yield events in select in-state and out-of-state markets, including new events in Bellevue, Yakima, Alaska, Montana, Idaho, and Colorado
- Supported additional “College Signing Days” throughout the state (where admissions counselors celebrate students’ commitment to Go On! and attend college)
- Communicated directly with parents and school counselors to assist in the application completion process
Streamlined application review and scholarship processes
- Partnered with College Success Foundation in Seattle, Tacoma, and Auburn to extend overnight programs for dozens of prospective students and their mentors
- Established new personal contact plan by Admission Counselors to prospective students, including the mailing of personal postcards to admitted students, with a focus on first generation students

Transfer Students

Washington community and technical colleges continue to experience a decline in enrollment, leading to a drop in applications we are receiving from transfer students.

We are seeing a decrease of 178 transfer applications, equivalent to 9.4%, at 1,725 compared to 1,903 last year. Applications from students of color are down at 514 compared to 535 last year at 21 or 3.9%. We have 147 total transfer confirmations compared to 183 at the same time last year. However, these numbers do not reflect a batch of last-minute applications received near the deadline that are under review.

To mitigate the decrease in community college enrollments and resultant transfer applications, Admissions has engaged in additional workshops with representatives from Whatcom Community College, Skagit Valley College, as well as community colleges in King and Pierce counties and the Olympic Peninsula. We have also redirected some of our scholarship funds toward transfer student enrollment to help sustain some of our enrollment goals.

The five-year slide in the community college sector’s enrollment—with no sign of improvement—is prompting us to revisit strategies and priorities associated with our partnerships with state community colleges as well as our support of transfer students engaged in the enrollment process.

Expanded Scholarship Outreach

Presentations in Residence Halls

Our Scholarship Center expanded outreach beyond annual scholarship search and application workshops held centrally on campus to a pilot outreach consisting of scholarship presentations within 5 residence halls: Higginson, Nash, Buchanan Towers, Birnam Wood and the Ridge. Turnout was terrific. We will continue to partner with University Residences to help our students receive scholarships, as we have found that meeting students where they live supports increased participation.

Passport to Scholarship Success Initiative

The Passport to Scholarship Success was created to develop the scholarship search and application skills of Western students and provide the opportunity to win a $500 scholarship. The Passport essentially consists of a scavenger hunt, with the goal of helping students prepare for prime scholarship application season (March through May). Students who complete six of nine tasks are eligible to submit their passport by April 12th and be entered into the drawing for the $500 scholarship.
Tasks include:

- Meeting with a peer advisor in the Career Services Center to update or create a resume
- Visiting the Scholarship Center to learn how to navigate the website and search for scholarships
- Submitting a scholarship essay draft or work in-person with a writing assistant at the Hacherl Research/Writing Studio
- Attending an annual all-campus scholarship workshop
- Attending a University Residences scholarship workshop
- Submitting a scholarship application for any 2019-2020 scholarship for which they qualify
- Articulating traits that add positively to a resume (work, volunteer, club participation, leadership, etc.)
- Researching academic department scholarship opportunities
- Visiting staff in the Education Abroad Office to discuss scholarship opportunities for studying abroad

**Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program Honors Western**

Western has been recognized by the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program as a Top Producing Institution for the 2017-2018 academic year. Specifically, we were honored as a top producer of students with disabilities who studied abroad on the Gilman Scholarship. This resulted from a partnership between the Financial Aid Department’s Scholarship Center and Education Abroad Office that began in 2017 to increase student awareness of the Gilman Scholarship and provide the opportunity for more of our students to study abroad.