WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
ITEM SUBMITTED TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

TO: Members of the Board of Trustees
FROM: President Sabah Randhawa on behalf of Melynda Huskey
DATE: August 21, 2020
SUBJECT: Enrollment Management Summary
PURPOSE: Information Item

I. Enrollment

Enrollment continues to be a critical focus as the pandemic brings more and more challenges to higher education. Fall quarter enrollment will be depressed, but we continue to make every effort to minimize the impact of the changed campus experience on enrollment.

Summer 2020 Enrollment
As we near the end of the summer term, student count (as of Tuesday, August 11th) is up from Summer 2019 by 11.6%, at a total of 4,404. FTE’s are up by 16.7% from one year ago. Because census day in the summer is not until the end of the term in late August, ongoing changes to enrollment will still impact final reporting.

Fall 2020 Enrollment Outlook
We anticipate that enrollment of continuing students will be down from last fall by less than 5%. However, overall enrollment will be more severely impacted by more dramatic drops in new student enrollment. We are continuing to monitor new student confirmations and enrollments, as there is still much volatility in our confirmations. We are encouraged by enrollments in graduate programs and at the other locations. There are positive signs in the enrollment of students of color, and nonresident numbers do not appear to have been so negatively impacted as we originally expected—primarily because of the dedicated campaign to recruit nonresidents that we launched last year. It is important to note, though, that a significantly smaller cohort entering in Fall 2020 will have long-term impacts as that class works its way through to graduation.

Continuing students had their first registration opportunity between June 17th and July 21st, and more than 10,000 students registered. As of August 5th, we had a total of 11,495 students registered for fall quarter. That number included those continuing students who registered earlier in the summer, new transfer students who registered during the Transitions program the last week of July, and the early A&O sessions where new first-year students who registered on August 3rd and 4th. Because the timing of our programs and registration periods are so different this year than they were in prior years, we have lost much of our ability to make comparisons across years, as the same circumstances simply do not hold true for the same time last year. That said, I will offer that total enrollment as of August 5th represents a 3.9% drop from the same time last year. It is important to
remember that those numbers do not yet include the segment of our student population that is going to be most severely impacted by the changes related to the pandemic—our new students.

The following charts represent application status as of August 5th, compared to the same time last year.

New Fall first-year students—Bellingham

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Applied (% change 2019 to 2020)</th>
<th>Admitted (% change 2019 to 2020)</th>
<th>Confirmed (% change 2019 to 2020)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>10,206 (-2.8%)</td>
<td>9,538 (.5%)</td>
<td>2,845 (-13.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>10,501</td>
<td>9,492</td>
<td>3,285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>11,112</td>
<td>9,738</td>
<td>3,300</td>
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New Fall transfer students—Bellingham

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Applied (% change 2019 to 2020)</th>
<th>Admitted (% change 2019 to 2020)</th>
<th>Confirmed (% change 2019 to 2020)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>2,030 (-1.9%)</td>
<td>1,659 (-2.4%)</td>
<td>1,038 (-8.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>2,069</td>
<td>1,699</td>
<td>1,137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>2,209</td>
<td>1,727</td>
<td>1,198</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

New Fall transfer students—other locations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Applied (% change 2019 to 2020)</th>
<th>Admitted (% change 2019 to 2020)</th>
<th>Confirmed (% change 2019 to 2020)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>250 (14.2%)</td>
<td>157 (-2.5%)</td>
<td>151 (-3.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We are keenly aware that our confirmations from first-year students this year are much less reliable than in years past. While we held confirmations from 2,845 first-year students as of August 5th, only 2,465 of those students had made a reservation for an A&O session. Note that reservations for seats in A&O will continue to be made through the month of August. As of this week, we have processed almost 150 deferral requests, whereas in recent years we have typically had 80-100 deferrals at the completion of the process (the start of fall term). Industry experts still anticipate enrollment will be down anywhere between 10 and 20 percent compared to last year. The key to the decision for many new college students is in whether or not they can get the on-campus experience that they want in Fall 2020.

In partnership with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, we surveyed our nearly 3,000 confirmed students and their parents on a number of topics associated with “top-of-mind” concerns and sentiments: housing plans, affordability/finances, access to technology, and enrollment commitment. Almost 400 students reported that they had experienced a significant change in their financial situations, with more than 150 reporting that either they or a parent has lost a job with the current economic disruption. Between 300-400 students report that they are very concerned or somewhat concerned about their access to
equipment, internet, or the technology that would allow them to complete coursework remotely. Our financial aid team is working to try to address some of those concerns. More difficult for us to address is the fact that many students (almost 200 of the respondents) reported that they would likely not enroll with us if the majority of our classes were offered remotely, and several hundred more said that they were unsure of their plans if the college experience offered by Western was not going to meet their expectations.

**Fall 2020 New Student Recruitment and the Admissions Cycle**

Instead of the reactive nature of the March-June period, we are now shifting to more proactive engagement with students and families focusing on what is next—a message that should resonate with new students entering this fall, as well as rising high school seniors who are increasingly engaging with our staff and in a number of virtual and electronic spaces and experiences.

Of particular note are melt-prevention strategies that have been and are being deployed. These usually blend communications that drive action, nurture engagement, and provide a bit of “behind the scenes” information that helps in the building of trust, and in affirming that students have made the right decision by choosing WWU.

- Hand-written postcards to “check in” with out-of-state residents, as well as in-state first-generation, students of color, and those who indicated interest in LGBTQ+ information
- Text message campaigns with specific calls-to-action (e.g. orientation program; math assessment)
- Outreach to students and parents unsure of fall enrollment plans
- Themed virtual information sessions with students and staff (e.g. athletics; clubs and organizations)
- One-on-one chats with current Western students
- Panels with current students featuring specific topics (e.g. academics at Western; living in Bellingham)
- Video series, titled *Tiny Talks*, featuring Western faculty (e.g. Engineering, Psychology, Theatre)
- “Selfie” tours by Admissions tour guides
- Contests for giveaways on social media posts (Instagram)
- Music playlists on Spotify and Soundcloud
- Fun videos on Tik Tok
- Game night on virtual platform (Quiplash)

While the recruitment process for Fall 2020 is still very much live, the Admissions team is also looking ahead to the recruitment of the fall class of 2021. Typically, this time of year, juniors would be visiting campus, and programming for in-person events geared toward 2021 would be ramping up. We are re-envisioning those processes now. Of particular importance is to engage students and families through virtual visit experiences and events. Our teams are collaborating with faculty in select academic departments, and representatives from units across campus to feature pre-recorded as well as live chat sessions that will convey aspects of our academic excellence, engaging campus life, and sense of community inclusivity. Additionally, we are further integrating test-optional policies into our Admissions practices. These policies will be key in navigating the uncertainties of the upcoming recruitment cycle, while school districts, students, and families may be less focused on test prep or college advising, but instead focused on addressing immediate concerns of mitigating the effects of the pandemic in their respective communities.
II. Registrar

The Registrar’s Office remains focused on student service, creating and implementing new systems and processes, as we continue to work remotely due to the global pandemic.

- **Western’s First Virtual Commencement Ceremonies** – On Saturday, June 13, 2020, the Registrar’s Office, in collaboration with the Office of University Communications, delivered Western’s first-ever virtual commencement ceremonies for Winter and Spring 2020 graduates. Western conferred 665 winter degrees and 1,965 spring degrees. A virtual commencement ceremony will be held in December for summer and fall graduates.
- **Summer Calculated Drop Implementation** – Due to the varying length of summer courses, calculating tuition and tuition refunds based on drop date and course length is complex. The Registrar’s Office implemented an automated process to ensure accuracy in those calculations and to add greater efficiency in that work.
- **Official School Withdrawal Form** – The Registrar’s Office has continued to address the need to move traditional paper-based and in-person processes to online forms and automated processes. Coordinating with the Student Business Office and the Financial Aid Office to create a web-based process for students seeking to withdraw is an important step forward in our current remote work environment.
- **Fall Course Scheduling** – The fall course schedule has now been redrawn a second time. In late May and early June, Western adopted a hybrid structure for fall and reduced the number of face-to-face course offerings to approximately 20%. The Registrar’s Office rebuilt the schedule in collaboration with academic departments and other stakeholders. With President Randhawa’s recent message announcing that we would further scale back face-to-face course offerings for the health and safety of our campus community, the Registrar’s Office is once again working in collaboration with academic departments and the Provost’s Office to revise fall courses, moving the majority to remote instruction. This move reduces face-to-face offerings to approximately 6% of all fall classes. To ensure all remaining face-to-face courses are scheduled in classrooms with sufficient capacity for appropriate social distancing and to ensure that we utilize spaces with the most effective HVAC systems for those face-to-face offerings, a comprehensive review is currently underway.
- **Classfinder** – Significant upgrades to Classfinder have been implemented to ensure that students can search more effectively and find the details of each course. With our new remote teaching and learning environment, the variety of ways in which courses are structured has multiplied and requires much more nuanced labeling and identification of course modality. The newly adopted instructional methods have been defined and placed on each course to identify how courses will be offered (Face-to-Face, Hybrid, Remote Synchronous, Remote Asynchronous, Remote Blended), and additional search features and definitions further aid students in their use of Classfinder.
- **Fall Registration** – Fall registration was delayed by the restructuring of the fall schedule to create a hybrid model. Phase I Fall Registration opened a month later than usual on June 17th and closed on July 21st. The Registrar’s Office is managing a new process for registration appointments as a part of the new student advising and registration programs hosted by New Student Services/Family Outreach and Academic Advising. A newly developed, automated process to reserve and release course seats was implemented to ensure that new students have sufficient access to courses. Having a new program to calculate distribution of those classes across registration sessions will allow much greater efficiency for our work in future years. With the latest change in the fall schedule, it was important to give students who had already registered for fall a chance to make adjustments to their schedules. To that end, a Special 3-day Registration Session was opened in
between two weeks of new student registration. We also messaged students who have not yet registered, encouraging them to take advantage of this registration opportunity.

- **Temporary Grading Policy Implementation** – As we continue to adjust to remote instruction, Western still recognizes a need to accommodate students in these unusual circumstances. To that end, temporary grading policies for undergraduate and for graduate have been adopted for fall. These differ from the temporary grading policies in place for spring and summer. To effectuate these new temporary policies, additional systems work within the Registrar’s Office will be required.

- **Academic Dismissals** – As in spring and in keeping with the intent of the extension of the temporary grading policies from spring quarter, the policy on low scholarship mandating academic dismissal has been temporarily suspended for Summer 2020. No student will be dismissed for low scholarship this term.

### III. Student Aid

The Financial Aid department is on track with 2020-21 awarding and is successfully supporting three high-traffic student lobbies remotely: Financial Aid Services Center, Scholarship Center and Student Employment Center. In addition, financial aid outreach that would normally be performed in person has been moved online, as has financial aid programming for Orientation in collaboration with New Student Services/Family Outreach.

**Recalculating Aid Offers Based on Administrative Requirements**

Many students who planned to live on their own within University Residences or off campus are deciding to live with their parents, instead, due to the remote learning environment. Financial Aid is required by the U.S. Department of Education and Washington Student Achievement Council to award students differently based on student living arrangements, based on the rationale that room and board costs for students who live on their own tend to be much higher than those associated with living with parents.

The majority of Western students have already been awarded financial aid based on the living arrangement data reported on their aid applications. For this fall, the U.S. Department of Education has not waived the requirement that aid be adjusted for changes in living arrangements when caused by campus disruption due to COVID-19. As a result, Financial Aid anticipates the need to take steps to collect student housing information and recalculate hundreds, perhaps thousands, of student aid offers. When warranted, Financial Aid will increase living allowances associated with living with parents on an individual basis to reflect additional costs. Such adjustments will need to be performed on an individual basis and include case-by-case documentation. Although Financial Aid will strive to avoid billing students for overawards for housing status changes as well as fees reductions, there is a likelihood that some students will be billed. Enrollment Management will work with Financial Aid and the Student Business Office to develop an approach that will minimize the impact.

**Increased Washington College Grant Monitoring and Recalculation Requirements**

Effective 2020-21, the Washington Student Achievement Council is requiring schools to identify students who “fail to commence attendance” in all classes on which their Washington College Grant is based and recalculate their eligibilities to reflect their enrollment levels only for those classes they attended. This will require increased monitoring and coordination between Financial Aid and the rest of the campus to confirm whether students began attending all of their classes before they withdrew, reduced their
enrollment, or received a failing or unsatisfactory grade. Western does not have a policy requiring the taking of attendance, and with asynchronous course offerings, the question of attendance takes a different form.

**Accreditation to Provide Instruction Predominantly Via Distance Education**
The U.S. Department of Education extended broad approval for the use of distance education to schools participating in Federal student aid programs until December 31, 2020. Coordination is being conducted between the EM unit and the Provost's Office to determine whether Western will seek accreditation as an institution that provides 50% or more of program offerings via distance education. If Western continues to provide 50% or more of program offerings remotely beyond December 31, 2020, either another extension from the U.S. Department of Education will be needed, or distance education accreditation will be required to allow Western to provide financial aid to students beyond December 31, 2020. This would be a significant event in higher education, impacting schools across the country.

**Recertification of Western's Federal Program Participation Agreement**
Comprehensive recertification updates were recently filed with the U.S. Department of Education to seek continued authorization to provide Federal student aid to Western students beyond September 30, 2020. Recertification occurs once every six years. Updates pertain specifically to the Federal Program Participation Agreement between the U.S. Department of Education and Western, for purposes of continued participation in Federal student aid programs.

**Federal CARES Grant Emergency Funds**
As of early August, $4,668,049 in Federal CARES grant funds have been disbursed to 3,273 Western students to assist with expenses related to disruption of campus operations from coronavirus. We have disbursed 80.2% of the total $5,820,847 allocation that was received in late April 2020, leaving $1,152,798 to award for fall and winter quarters of the upcoming academic year.

Methods used by Financial Aid to identify CARES grant-eligible recipients include a formal web-based application process, paired with collaborations between Financial Aid and other areas on campus to identify students who incurred expenses due to disruption of campus operations from coronavirus. The other areas include but are not limited to University Residences, Academic Departments, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Office of Student Life, Student Disability Access Center, Graduate School, Veterans Services, Academic Technology and User Services, LGBTQ Resources, Western Success Scholarship and Western's Associated Students Child Development Center.

In addition, the Western Foundation received a gift of three new MacBook Air computers from Symetra Corporation to provide to needy Western students. The Scholarship Center is in the process of selecting student recipients and gifting them with the much-needed laptops.

**Western Foundation Student Emergency Funds and Western Grant Awards**
So far, the Financial Aid Scholarship Center has awarded 121 Western students a total of $72,623 in Foundation emergency funds. Student requests for emergency funding have far outstripped available Foundation funds. Whenever practicable, Financial Aid awards funds from other sources to students in financial crisis to stretch Foundation emergency funds
further. As of early August, Financial Aid has redirected $34,847 in institutional grant aid to 42 students, primarily for COVID-related financial emergencies in situations where students did not qualify for CARES funding. There is approximately $40,000 remaining in Foundation emergency accounts to award to students this summer and fall.

Washington College Grant Deobligated by Other Schools
Financial Aid accepted and awarded $158,361 in Washington College Grant funding in mid-July 2020, to an estimated 88 financially needy Western students enrolled this summer. The source of the additional funding was from colleges in Washington that deobligated Washington College Grant funds, typically because they did not have enough students who qualified or could not award the funds within required state deadlines. Accepting last-minute deobligations helps needy Western students as well as the Washington Student Achievement Council to effectively manage Washington College Grant funds.

Student Employees and Recharacterization of State Work Study to State Grants
The Financial Aid Student Employment Center worked with supervisors of student employees to support continued employment of students in a remote environment. Survey results from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness showed that approximately 80% of our work study students were able to continue working some or all of their scheduled hours.

The Washington Student Achievement Council gave schools authorization to recharacterize unspent State Work Study from 2019-20 and award it as state grants, instead, to students who were prevented from working their scheduled hours due to campus disruption from COVID-19. Financial Aid funded 49 financially needy Western students with $82,502 in state grants to help them pay balances remaining on their student accounts and reduce their educational indebtedness.

Forgiving and Documenting Aid Repayments Associated with COVID-19 Hardship
Financial Aid is coordinating with the Office of Student Life to identify students who withdrew from school due to hardship brought about by COVID-19 and forgive repayments of aid (federal, state, and institutional) the students would otherwise be required to make. The U.S. Department of Education will require schools to report forgiveness of repayments, so each case is being carefully documented for potential Federal review.

Coordination with Admissions to Award Fall 2020 Tuition Set-Aside
Financial Aid is coordinating with Admissions to award an estimated $250,000 in tuition set aside from fall tuition proceeds to reduce college costs for needy students.

Helping Students and Families through Financial Hardship
Financial Aid Counselors are recalculating aid offers based on reductions to student and family incomes. It is anticipated that Financial Aid will perform thousands of such individualized recalculations over the next academic year to provide needed support to students and keep them in school.

IV. New Student Services/Family Outreach

Launching Virtual Orientation, Advising, and Registration Programs
The New Student Services/Family Outreach team is in the midst of peak activity with the launch of orientation, academic advising, and course registration activities for incoming new Fall Quarter students. The Transitions program for new transfer and post-baccalaureate students was completed in late July. Students attended one of four sessions to complete their academic advising and course registration process. They participated in a small group advising experience led by faculty, staff, and student advisors in the morning of their session, and then registered for classes in the afternoon during an individual appointment with an advisor. All advising sessions were delivered virtually via the Zoom platform, and 840 students completed the program.

On the heels of a successful Transitions program, the next round of programs is already in motion. The Fall Advising & Orientation (Fall A&O) program for new first-year/Running Start students kicked off on August 3rd, and will run Mondays - Thursdays until September 3rd, offering 20 sessions. Similar to previous years, the first four sessions are designated specifically for students with a high number of college credits (45+) and include opportunities for additional advising by academic departments. The Fall A&O program follows the same schedule structure as Transitions, with small group advising in the morning followed by individual advising appointments for registration in the afternoon. So far, 2,465 new first year students have reserved a seat in a Fall A&O program.

**New Student and Family Orientation Website**

Schools across the country have had to move orientation programs and events to virtual delivery, and similarly, NSSFO has dedicated significant efforts to re-imagining new student orientation. In partnership with University Communications, a newly created Orientation website was designed and launched that will serve as a perennial "dashboard" of orientation resources throughout the year. Campus partners responded splendidly to NSSFO's call for live webinars, live chats, and recorded presentations. A wide variety of academic departments, campus services, and student organizations submitted offerings, and the website features around 50 live events, over 40 informational videos, handy weblinks to help students prepare academically, socially, and personally, including opportunities to connect with current students. Having an established website will allow students and families more time to review campus resources and information at their own pace. The virtual delivery of orientation has allowed Western to offer programming that would not have been possible with the space and time constraints of our previous in-person events, and the opportunity to blend asynchronous programming with scheduled live events gives students and families many more choices and the flexibility to take in pieces of orientation on demand. It has been a steep learning curve for many on campus to translate what would have been offered in-person to virtual delivery. We are very pleased with the enthusiastic response of campus partners to create resources and events that spark creativity, inspire connection, and demonstrate a continued commitment to student success. To see more details about our programming, please visit the [Orientation website](#).

**Slate Platform Enhances Reservation Process**

NSSFO is utilizing a newly created online reservation system via the Slate platform, in partnership with the Office of Admissions. The customization and utilization of the Slate platform to process student and family reservations for our orientation, advising, and registration programs has had a very positive impact. Using Slate for reservations now gives us the option for year-round reservations for all programs and events, increased accuracy in data management and data sharing between systems (e.g. Slate and Banner), and
significant increases in staff efficiencies. Slate offers a higher degree of automation related
to email communications, the opening and closing of reservations, and data uploads. These
automated elements, along with a user's ability to go back into their reservation to make
changes, has already greatly reduced staff time (and overtime) spent on manual records
and communications management. Additionally, Slate has created a more user-friendly
experience with, and access to, our programs. Users can cancel/change a reservation,
receive communications in a more timely manner, and can see their reservation information
more clearly in the new portal. The format for the portal and for communications has a
contemporary look, is well-branded and "Western-identified", and has an overall cleaner
look. Our ability to more easily replicate events within the system, rather than always
"building from scratch", will continue to support additional efficiencies in future operations.
Considering the move to virtual delivery for programs and events, the Slate platform has
performed exceedingly well under the new demands.

**Fall Family Weekend 2020**
Looking to the future, NSSFO is moving the 2020 Fall Family Weekend (FFW) event to a
virtual delivery in light of the current circumstances of COVID-19. Fall Family Weekend will
be held October 16-18, 2020. As the Office of Admissions will be hosting their virtual Fall
Admitted Student Day over the same weekend, our offices are collaborating on how we may
overlap some of our offerings and invite prospective students and families to join select
FFW events. Planning for the event is in the early stages, and schedule development will
continue throughout August and September.

**V. Veteran Service**
Veteran Services has been engaging in recruitment and retention efforts. They have been
reaching out to both those new students who have confirmed intent to enroll at Western and
to continuing/returning students who are eligible to register for fall and have yet to do so.
Many students have questions about Western’s response to COVID-19 and the impact it will
have on their benefits.

### VSO Constituent Student Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2019-20</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Winter</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Summer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Veterans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dependents of</td>
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<td>232</td>
<td>42</td>
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<tr>
<td>Veterans</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Number of unique students served:**

- 2018-2019: **586**
- 2019-2020: **612**

**New School Certifying Official**
The administration of educational benefits for veterans and dependents of veterans requires
a strong and collaborative relationship between educational institutions, their School
Certifying Officials (SCOs), State Approving Agencies (SAAs), and Veteran Affairs (VA) to
ensure that benefits are delivered to students according to regulations and in a timely
manner. Western is adding an additional School Certifying Official to its staff, in order to
address a shortcoming in that area. The VA recommends one full-time SCO for every 200
GI Bill students at an institution; this hire will bring Western more in line with those standards.