TO: Members of the Board of Trustees
FROM: President Sabah Randhawa on behalf of Melynda Huskey
DATE: June 11, 2021
SUBJECT: Enrollment Management Summary
PURPOSE: Information Item

I. Enrollment

No one could have predicted the year we have had. There is still much work to do as we emerge from the pandemic. Our enrollments have suffered; the demographics of the high school population have changed; and the higher education landscape is being recalibrated. We will be back in person for Fall 2021, and there is excitement about all that will bring.

Spring 2021 Enrollment
The table below shows several details about total enrollment for spring quarters across recent years. As of census day for Spring 2021, we had a total student count of 13,296. For yet another quarter, we have had a slightly larger decline in enrollment than we would have expected outside of the pandemic.

Of note, we have achieved a record high in the representation of students of color in our total enrolled population every quarter this academic year, with Spring 2021 at an all-time high of 28.4%. Unfortunately, as we saw in Fall 2020 and in Winter 2021, the pandemic continued to depress the enrollment of nonresidents, first generation, and Pell eligible students. Generally, we have seen a drop of about one percentage point among each of those groups since before the pandemic.

(See graph next page)
Summer 2021 Enrollment Outlook

Three weeks out from the start of summer session, we have 3,345 students enrolled in summer classes. Among higher education circles of folks who do summer session planning, there is an expectation of a 10% decline in summer enrollment this year. At present, our student count for summer is down 12.7% from this time last year and down 3.5% from 2019. Importantly, however, our current FTE levels for summer are tracking comparably to—even higher than—2018 and 2019 (though down significantly from 2020).

Fall 2021 Applications and Recruitment

While comparisons to the prior year are the natural starting point for analysis, clearly Fall 2020 was an anomaly. Thus, we are closely watching both the comparisons to Fall 2020 and to Fall 2019. Application numbers from new first-year students are comparable to Fall 2019. We have taken a more aggressive approach to admitting students, so our offer numbers are significantly up. Confirmations are down by 5.8% from Fall 2019, but up by a sizable margin from last year.

Our overall yield is down, as we transition out of the pandemic, and some of the effects of the pandemic are continuing to be felt and will be for some time. For example, first generation numbers (applications, offers, and confirmations) continue to lag.

Totals as of May 26, 2021

### New first-year students—Bellingham

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Applied</th>
<th>Admitted</th>
<th>Confirmed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2021</strong></td>
<td>10,479 (↑3.2%)</td>
<td>10,071 (↑6.4%)</td>
<td>3,119 (↑17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2020</strong></td>
<td>10,150</td>
<td>9,465</td>
<td>2,666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2019</strong></td>
<td>10,481</td>
<td>9,450</td>
<td>3,311</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity - Percent Distribution

#### All Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Spr 2016</th>
<th>Spr 2017</th>
<th>Spr 2018</th>
<th>Spr 2019</th>
<th>Spr 2020</th>
<th>Spr 2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Isl</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>72.9%</td>
<td>72.3%</td>
<td>71.6%</td>
<td>70.7%</td>
<td>69.9%</td>
<td>68.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more races: Other</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race and ethnicity unknown</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>14,145</td>
<td>14,125</td>
<td>14,460</td>
<td>14,558</td>
<td>14,235</td>
<td>13,296</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Percent Student of Color**

- 2016: 24.9%
- 2017: 25.4%
- 2018: 25.7%
- 2019: 26.3%
- 2020: 27.0%
- 2021: 28.4%

**Percent Non-Resident**

- 2016: 10.6%
- 2017: 11.3%
- 2018: 11.8%
- 2019: 12.4%
- 2020: 11.4%
- 2021: 11.3%

**Percent First Generation**

- 2016: 32.7%
- 2017: 32.4%
- 2018: 32.2%
- 2019: 31.4%
- 2020: 30.8%
- 2021: 29.6%

**Percent PELL-Eligible**

- 2016: 25.8%
- 2017: 24.9%
- 2018: 25.6%
- 2019: 24.4%
- 2020: 23.0%
- 2021: 22.0%
New transfers—Bellingham

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Applied</th>
<th>Admitted</th>
<th>Confirmed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>1,767 (↓5.6%)</td>
<td>1,439 (↓2.4%)</td>
<td>980 (↑31%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>1,872</td>
<td>1,474</td>
<td>748</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>1,980</td>
<td>1,625</td>
<td>1,097</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

New transfers—other locations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Applied</th>
<th>Admitted</th>
<th>Confirmed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>203 (↓6%)</td>
<td>104 (↑22.4%)</td>
<td>101 (↑21.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Despite the pandemic, first-year nonresident applications, offers, and confirmations are all up. We are building greater brand awareness in out-of-state markets, since the launch of our nonresident digital marketing efforts in October of 2019. This is our first year with digital marketing campaigns running during the entire cycle, serving as an important aid to the work of our admissions team. These efforts are producing results; we have 22% more nonresident first-year students confirmed now than we did at this time for Fall 2019.

Nonresident total as of mid-May

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>3,063 (↑24%)</td>
<td>2,951 (↑29%)</td>
<td>596 (↑22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>2,537</td>
<td>2,414</td>
<td>393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>2,464</td>
<td>2,280</td>
<td>489</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Though having such sizable gains in nonresident numbers at this point is cause for optimism, there is greater risk of losing nonresidents in the later months leading up to the start of the quarter. So, the admissions team will focus special effort on holding those nonresident confirmations during this yield season. Admission counselors and tour guides will deploy a postcard campaign to nonresidents in June. I note this print initiative because printed recruit pieces are in some ways a special add-on in our current recruitment culture. Additionally, we will soon broadcast the reopening of campus tours starting June 14th, with priority registration for those confirmed for the Fall 2021 class, particularly nonresidents.

The Honors Program has experienced a banner recruitment year. As noted in prior reports, elite and flagship universities have seen increases in applications this year, with the move by many institutions to test-optional admissions practices. Our Honors Program is benefitting in a way that is parallel to that, and some of the additional benefits of test-optional policies are also being realized. Applications and yield are up. Despite fewer offers, confirmations are higher than expected. Additionally, there are early signs that Honors will have stronger diversity in its cohort in Fall 2021.

Honors Program—Applications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Applied</th>
<th>Admitted</th>
<th>Confirmed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2021 (as of May 5th)</td>
<td>1,049</td>
<td>598</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2020 (as of census day)</td>
<td>904</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2019 (as of census day)</td>
<td>801</td>
<td>585</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Honors Program—Data on Confirmed Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Students of Color</th>
<th>First Generation</th>
<th>Nonresident</th>
<th>Gender (% male)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall 2021</strong></td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(as of May 5th)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall 2020</strong></td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(as of census day)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall 2019</strong></td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(as of census day)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graduate programs at Western are getting many more applications for admission than in recent years, and we continue to work with them on enrollment strategies. Across our Graduate College, the number of applications submitted is up by 33.3%, and confirmations are up by 22.6%. In Fall 2020, graduate enrollment was up more than 10%, and we are on track to have another significant increase this year.

**Fall 2021 Insights**
Western is very fortunate to be in a somewhat unique position among Washington’s six public baccalaureate institutions this year. Though we are not in the same position as the University of Washington, with large increases in application numbers and every expectation of enrolling the number of students targeted, we are also not struggling to the degree that several of the other Washington publics are. We have learned that several of the other 4-year institutions currently have fewer confirmations than they had at this time last year. While we have not recovered to 2019 levels, we are fortunate to be in a position to turn our attention to comparisons with Fall 2019 rather than reporting declines as compared to Fall 2020.

When compared with last year’s cohort of admitted students, we have 3.8% more new first-year students who have submitted a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Among those who have confirmed with us, there is a 12.1% increase in FAFSA submission. There are also increases among transfer students. Admitted transfer students show a 2.5% increase in FAFSA submission, and confirmed transfer students are submitting at a 16.7% increase. This is generally accepted as a measure of interest by student and family. We credit these increases to much work being done to influence FAFSA completion through education and outreach efforts.

There continues to be significant concern about FAFSA completion across the country. According to the FAFSA tracker on FormYourFuture.Org, through May 21st, there have been 7.7% fewer FAFSA submissions in Washington this year. (Nationally, FAFSA submissions are down 5.5%.) Of concern, 39.1% of Washington’s high school class of 2021 has submitted a FAFSA, compared with 50.2% nationwide. Lower FAFSA completion rates are a further indicator of disengagement.

Students and families have much to consider in making their decisions about whether or not to attend college (often a financial decision) and about which college to attend. The latter often hinges on expectations related to—again—finances, as well as academics, location/setting, and the overall community or college experience. The loss of the in-person experience during the pandemic was devastating to our efforts to recruit last year (and for higher education generally). This year we are closely watching how news of our in-person plans is impacting the decision process for students and families.

The decision to require vaccinations for all members of our community for fall opened opportunities for us to make plans for a more robust in-person experience. With the fall course schedule set, we were able to announce to new students that more than 80% of our 100-level classes will be face-to-face. Currently, about two-thirds of our classes overall and 85% of our 100-level classes will be offered face-to-face, as adjustments to the course schedule continue to drive those numbers up.
Further, though University Residences is restricting capacity by a limited amount as we transition out of the pandemic, we are able to stretch our capacity with the anticipated opening of the new Alma Clark Glass residence hall. On-campus living is an important part of the evaluation of the college experience as students make their college decisions. We will continue to work with students and families to help them see the many reasons to choose Western.

Moving forward, and with an eye to 2022 and beyond, we will try to capitalize on opportunities that presented themselves during the pandemic: virtual programs to regions and states where we cannot currently travel; increased collaborations with Community-Based Organizations seeking to engage with the students they serve; connecting with high school counselors who are assisting students and families disproportionately affected by the effects of COVID-19; launching the Guaranteed Transfer Admission program; and the piloting of new outreach and application review processes to underserved schools in Whatcom and Skagit counties.

II. Registrar

Fall 2021 Course Scheduling and Registration
Setting the course schedule for the 2021-22 academic year has been an adventure. The first round of schedule submission took place in April, with reduced room capacities for social distancing, extra time between classes, and expectations that face-to-face offerings would be somewhat limited by those COVID accommodations. That work was in process, when the statewide conversation about mandating vaccinations in higher education really took shape. Following the announcement from President Randhawa that COVID vaccinations for students, faculty, and staff would be required before returning to campus for fall, we quickly reset our scheduling process. With widespread vaccination, we are able to reconfigure the course schedule to allow more classes to be face-to-face. The Registrar’s Office then worked with academic departments and the Provost’s Office, asking faculty to revise their schedules for Fall 2021 courses. More than two-thirds of fall classes have now been scheduled for face-to-face instruction, with options for remote learning still available. Fall registration begins on Wednesday, June 2, 2021.

Commencement Ceremonies
On Saturday, June 12, 2021 the Registrar’s Office, in collaboration with the Office of University Communications, will hold virtual commencement ceremonies, celebrating Winter and Spring 2021 graduates. Summer 2021 graduates were invited to choose whether they wanted to participate in the ceremony in June or December, so a number of summer graduates are also celebrating in June with our winter and spring graduates. Future summer graduates will also be given a choice of commencement participation in June or December.

As in December, we are producing the ceremonies in-house and continuing several practices that have made our virtual ceremonies more personalized and well-received. Name readers have been hired again to read the names of every graduate who participates in the ceremony. Graduates were invited to submit a photo, and the ceremony will include a personalized slide with their name, degree information, and photo.

The Registrar’s Office looks forward to inviting graduates who experienced virtual commencement ceremonies back to campus when we resume in-person ceremonies. As early as December 2021, it may be possible to hold larger in-person events, allowing us to begin hosting graduates who have not had the opportunity to attend an in-person ceremony due to the pandemic.
III. Student Aid

Financial Aid Awarding—2020-21 Academic Year, Summer 2021, 2021-22 Academic Year
The Financial Aid department is in the process of closing out and reconciling the 2020-21 academic year and awarding students for Summer 2021. We are scheduled to award returning students for 2021-22 in June 2021 after tuition and fees have been approved by the Board of Trustees. At that time, we will also adjust all aid offers made to confirmed students for 2021-22 thus far, to incorporate finalized tuition and fees and room and board rates.

Financial Aid Counselors are reviewing a growing number of requests to recalculate expected family contributions based on financial hardship. This is because for many families, the 2019 calendar year (pre-COVID-19) income reported on the 2021-22 FAFSA does not serve as an accurate representation of the ability of students and parents to contribute toward educational costs. Financial Aid liberal applies the regulatory authority to use a different 12-month timeframe for calculating aid eligibility, based on hardship, documentation of income, and administrative professional judgment. Ongoing, the need for recalculation to support access and retention has vastly increased compared to prior years.

Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund – Student Portion
Western has been awarded three separate HEERF (Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund) allocations to help Western students pay for college costs, including living expenses, as well as emergency costs that arise due to COVID-19. Institutions are prohibited from conditioning receipt of HEERF grants on continued or future enrollment.

HEERF I: Western’s first $5.8 million allocation, which was received last spring, has been fully disbursed to Western students to assist them with expenses incurred from campus disruption due to coronavirus. A total of 3,956 Western students received $5,820,847 in HEERF I funds, with an average award of $1,471. Of the 3,956 students, 46% were Pell-eligible and among the highest need students who filed a FAFSA, and 83% had calculated financial need from the FAFSA.

Initial federal guidance excluded DACA, undocumented, and international students from eligibility, as well as students exclusively enrolled in pre-existing distance education programs. Institutions were informed that, effective May 14, 2021, DACA, undocumented students, refugees, and asylum seekers could receive leftover HEERF I funds. However, by this point in time, all HEERF I funds had been allocated. Western did not forget these students, though, as they were referred to the Western Foundation Student Emergency fund for emergency grant consideration while federal guidance kept us from considering them for HEERF funding.

HEERF II: Western was awarded a second $5,820,847 federal HEERF allocation for students in January 2021, referred to as HEERF II. This allocation was authorized by the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021. To date, $5,765,231 has been awarded to 4,483 Western students based on demonstrated “exceptional financial need”, as required by the U.S. Department of Education.

In accordance with national guidance, the initial selection priority for HEERF II went to Federal Pell Grant recipients. By definition, these students have the highest calculated financial need from the FAFSA. However, in recognition that many non-Pell Grant recipients have exceptional financial need as well, the Financial Aid department invited students to apply for HEERF II funding through an online institutional application and awarded funds on a case-by-case basis to students with exceptional financial need who were undergoing documented financial hardship. The remaining $55,616 will be awarded by the end of June 2021.
Unlike the requirements for HEERF I, students enrolled exclusively in pre-existing distance education programs were allowed to receive HEERF II. As was true for HEERF I, federal guidance initially excluded DACA, undocumented, and international students from eligibility. However, effective May 14, 2021, eligibility was expanded to allow leftover HEERF II funds to be awarded to DACA, undocumented students, refugees, and asylum seekers. These students were referred to the Foundation Student Emergency fund for emergency grant consideration at the beginning of the HEERF II awarding process. Additionally, DACA and undocumented students were referred to the state of Washington Emergency Relief Grant program for undocumented students that began in March 2021.

**HEERF III:** In May 2021, Western was awarded a third allocation of HEERF (referred to as “HEERF III”) in the amount of $16,100,922. This allocation was authorized by the American Rescue Plan of 2021. Western has one year from the date that the U.S. Department of Education processed the most recent obligation of funds for HEERF III to disburse all HEERF funds to eligible students, unless an extension is granted by the U.S. Department of Education (up to an additional 12 months may be allowed).

All students who are or were enrolled during the COVID-19 national emergency may qualify for HEERF III assistance: citizens, permanent residents, refugees, asylum seekers, DACA recipients, other DREAMers, and similar undocumented students. However, Federal guidance requires that awarding priority go to domestic students—especially to undergraduates—based on exceptional financial need.

**Washington Emergency Relief Grant for Undocumented Students**

In early March 2021, the Washington Student Achievement Council announced that $5 million would be provided statewide in Emergency Relief Grant funding to support undocumented students. Western’s Financial Aid department was notified that Western was awarded an allocation in the amount of $120,950 on March 17, 2021.

Student eligibility criteria included being classified as a Washington resident, undocumented student; demonstrating financial need; submitting the 2020-21 WASFA (Washington Application for State Financial Aid); being ineligible for federal student aid due to citizenship status; and having enrolled during the 2020-21 academic year.

Western’s allocation is administered by the Financial Aid department, through the Scholarship Center. The Scholarship Center created a simple electronic application for this new program and has been reaching out personally to eligible undocumented students via e-mail and phone to urge them to apply. As of the end of May 2021, $119,400 has been awarded from the $120,950 allocation to approximately 60 students. The remaining $1,550 will be awarded well before the June 30, 2021 deadline based on exceptional financial need.

**Western Foundation Emergency Funding**

As of the end of May 2021, the Financial Aid Scholarship Center has awarded $189,345 through the Student Emergency Fund established by the Western Foundation: $73,823 to 122 students in 2019-2020 and $115,522 to 158 students in 2020-2021. An additional $30,361 in emergency assistance has been awarded through other Foundation scholarships since the start of the pandemic.

We are grateful to the Western Foundation for raising emergency funds so that we can continue to serve students in crisis during these trying times. In addition, we look forward to seeing how much is raised in Student Emergency Fund contributions through WWU Give Day.
Student Employment Update
The Financial Aid Student Employment Center is continuing to help student employees and their supervisors resolve issues associated with the remote work of student employees. Supervisors are struggling to find students to apply for their positions, a nationwide phenomenon. The Student Employment Center staff have increased social media postings to drive students to the online job board. One positive outcome for students is the fact that they have many job opportunities to choose from.

Collectively, cumulative federal, state and institutional work study earnings are approximately 37% below pre-pandemic levels, but we will fully expend our federal and state work study allocations. Unlike most colleges and universities, Western offers an Institutional Work Study program for needy students. The Student Employment Center will be able to apply wages earned through the Institutional Work Study program to the Federal Work Study program instead, to fully expend our Federal Work Study allocation and carry forward unused Institutional Work Study for future student awarding purposes. We will fully expend our State Work Study allocation by recharacterizing and awarding remaining State Work Study as state emergency grants to needy, qualified students, in accordance with flexibility extended by the Washington Student Achievement Council.

The Student Employment Center has been receiving job referrals for part-time student employment from the Career Center due to their move to the Handshake software platform. Implementation of Handshake has resulted in increased collaborations between the two areas and is strengthening our understanding of each other’s respective roles. We are developing a shared landing page to direct employers and applicants to appropriate web locations in coordination with stakeholders from the Human Resources department, the Associated Students, and Web Communication Technologies.

Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship
The Financial Aid department partners with the Education Abroad office to increase student awareness of the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship program. The Gilman program provides financing for students to study abroad who might not otherwise do so, due to financial constraints.

In May 2021, the U.S. Department of State announced recipients from the 2021 application for the Gilman program. We are pleased to report that of eleven applicants from Western, ten were awarded Gilman scholarships: nine students were awarded $4,000, and one student was awarded $4,500. Countries of study include the United Arab Emirates, Spain, South Korea, Japan, and Ecuador.

IV. New Student Services/Family Outreach

Orientation, Advising, and Registration (OAR) Programs for New Students & Families
New Student Services/Family Outreach (NSSFO) will open the 2021-22 website for this year’s Orientation, Advising, and Registration programs on June 7th. NSSFO has worked with campus partners to update our webpage design to be more user friendly for both students and families. We’ve created a Welcome New Students! webpage and a Welcome Families! webpage which create clear front doors to the website where new students and families can be directed.

The Welcome New Students! page is the gateway for students to sign up for their Advising & Registration session. By selecting the quarter that they intend to enter Western, they are taken to pages with quarter-specific information, instruction, and session dates. Students can also access the New Student and Family Orientation website, which features video resources, live events, and FAQ’s to link students to specific academic departments and campus resource offices.
Recognizing that parents and families are highly influential in the success of our students, the Welcome Families! page has undergone significant upgrades as well. The new site includes opportunities to schedule one-on-one appointments with our Family Outreach Manager and robust access to Western communications, such as Western Alerts, the monthly Family Connection Newsletter, and Western Today.

This year’s Orientation, Advising, and Registration programs will be offered virtually—six Advising & Registration sessions for new transfer and post-baccalaureate students (July 21st – July 29th) and 17 sessions for first-year students (August 2nd – August 26th). A variety of live Orientation events will also run during June, July, and August for both students and families.

Western Welcome Week
Western Washington University wants new students to have the opportunity to embrace their college experience from their first days at Western, and the Division of Enrollment and Student Services (ESS) has asked NSSFO to take the lead in developing Welcome Week to be hosted during the first days of the fall quarter. NSSFO will develop a robust schedule of programming for Welcome Week to assist students in their transition to college life at Western, and we look forward to much of this programming taking place on campus and in-person.

While centering access, diversity, equity, and inclusion in the programming, NSSFO will guide and coordinate a program composed of a cohesive series of events that is designed to increase new students’ understanding of opportunities available at Western and to strengthen their sense of belonging. The idea is to reimagine the first week experience as part of the continuum from Recruitment, Orientation, Advising & Registration, and On-boarding to Student Life. NSSFO will bring together ESS leaders and campus partners to identify existing resources, discuss past programming, and brainstorm ideas to enhance the student experience, always ensuring that the values of the institution are carried through Welcome Week programming. The program will be designed to offer something for all segments of the new student population—new first-year students, new transfer students, continuing students who may not have had a campus experience because of the pandemic, and new graduate students. The expertise of University Communications will be important in helping to brand Welcome Week and assist with messaging to all new students.

NSSFO is partnering with colleagues in several different departments to create an event coordination team for the development of Welcome Week. The Welcome Week coordinating team will create goals and outcomes for departments as they develop events. Convocation, the Associated Students Information Fair, a multicultural welcome event, and many other events will be part of the larger programming. Some key welcoming activities for new and returning students have been hosted by individual groups on campus for many years. Many of those events that have been individually propped up and publicized by discreet groups on campus will become part of Welcome Week. The Welcome Week Team will begin meeting in mid-June to begin building a new Welcome Week structure.