THURSDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2012
Location: OM 340
Time: 3:00 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER
   3:00 – 3:05

2. SPECIAL REPORT
   A. PREPARING STUDENTS TO SUCCEED IN A CHANGING WORLD: INPUTS AND OUTCOMES
      3:05 – 4:15
      a. Senior Exit Survey
         Presentation: Catherine Riordan, Provost & VP for Academic Affairs
                       John Krieg, Associate Professor, Survey Research
         Discussion
      b. GUR Strands
         Presentation:
         Catherine Riordan Provost & VP for Academic Affairs
         Steve Vanderstaay, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education
         Emily Borda, Chemistry
         Johann Neem, History
         Discussion

3. EXECUTIVE SESSION MAY BE HELD TO DISCUSS PERSONNEL, REAL ESTATE AND
   LEGAL ISSUES AS AUTHORIZED IN RCW 42.30.110.
   4:15 – 5:15
1. CALL TO ORDER
WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
ITEM SUBMITTED TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

TO: Members of the Board of Trustees
FROM: President Bruce Shepard by Provost Catherine Riordan
DATE: October 11, 2012
SUBJECT: PREPARING STUDENTS TO SUCCEED IN A CHANGING WORLD: INPUTS AND OUTCOMES
a. Senior Exit Survey
b. GUR Strands
PURPOSE: Presentation/Discussion

Purpose of Submittal:

At Western Washington University data collection begins before students arrive and continues after they graduate. In this way, we seek to continuously improve, strengthening curricula and adjusting course scheduling to match student interest and demand. In this presentation we provide examples of this data collection and of the close connection between our assessments and program improvements.

John Krieg, Professor of Economics and faculty director of the Office of Survey Research, will describe Western’s Educational Longitudinal Studies (WELS) and recent findings from our Senior Exit Survey.

Steve VanderStaay, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, will demonstrate how the WELS surveys have been used to inform improvements within Western's liberal arts and sciences core or General University Requirements (GUR). Vice Provost VanderStaay will introduce one improvement pilot, GUR Strands. Professors Emily Borda and Johann Neem, two faculty members who teach a strand, will explain how they have combined their courses in a strand.

Vice Provost VanderStaay will close the session by describing the university’s use of student interest data.

Supporting Documentation:
- Western Educational Longitudinal Study – Design
- Summary of Undergraduate Student Survey
- What are GUR Strands? brochure
## Western Educational Longitudinal Study - Design

### Freshmen

- All confirmed freshmen
- • College application and acceptances
- • Academic competencies
- • Challenges and difficulties
- • Major choice
- • Education goals and expectations
- • Preparation for Western
- • HS engagement
- • Academic self-perceptions
- • Expectations for Western

### Transfers

- All confirmed transfers
- • College application and acceptances
- • Academic competencies
- • Challenges and difficulties
- • Major choice
- • Education goals and expectations
- • Previous education
- • Previous college engagement
- • Employment status and living arrangements

### End of Second Year

- Cohort who entered as freshmen two years earlier
- • Academic competencies
- • Challenges and difficulties
- • Major choice and declaration
- • General education experience
- • Academic advising
- • Employment status
- • Registration, scheduling and course access

### Undergraduate

- Graduating Seniors
- • Academic competencies
- • Satisfaction with major
- • Post-graduation employment and education plans
- • Job search
- • Engagement
- • Academic advising
- • Employment status
- • Time to degree
- • Educational debt
- • Overall Western experience

### Exit

- Graduating Grad Students
- • Academic competencies
- • Satisfaction with program
- • Post-graduation employment and education plans
- • Job search
- • Participation in professional development
- • Time to degree
- • Educational debt
- • Overall Western experience

### Graduate

- Alumni who graduated one to two years earlier
- • Skills important in current job
- • How well did Western prepare you for your job/education?
- • Employment, education, military, or volunteer status
- • Job search
- • Employer/school information
- • Living situation and family status
- • Financial status and well-being
- • Satisfaction with Western

### Alumni

- • Other topics as requested by constituents

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![Survey Diagram](https://www.wvu.edu/osr/)
Summary of Undergraduate Student Survey

Western’s Office of Survey Research is responsible for conducting the Western Educational Longitudinal Study (WELS) which surveys incoming students prior to their first quarter on campus, at the end of their second year at Western, the month prior to graduation and two years after graduation. This structure provides longitudinal data for each student which can be used for internal improvement, assessment and accreditation purposes.

The WELS undergraduate exit surveys typically contain about 50 questions. Here we highlight five questions of potential interest. Full reports of all WELS surveys conducted by OSR can be viewed at http://www.wwu.edu/osr/.

The first question we highlight, “Compared to what you expected when you first enrolled in Western, how long did it take you to graduate?” shows that almost 70% of students take about as long to graduate as they originally expected. Additionally, almost 10% of students graduate in less time than they first thought. These figures have remained stable for the four years OSR has conducted the exit survey.

The question, “How satisfied are you with your experience at Western?” is designed to gauge long-term changes in satisfaction with the Western Experience. In 2012, one-third of students said they were “very satisfied” and 54% claimed to be “satisfied” with Western. These numbers are in-line with those recorded by students graduating in the prior three years.

“How satisfied are you with the following aspects of your major,” asks students to provide approval information regarding specific academic program qualities. Students routinely express high levels of satisfaction with faculty expertise, instruction quality, and the challenge level of courses within their major. Indeed, over 90% of graduating students are either “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the expertise of their faculty. On the opposite end of the spectrum, two-thirds of students are “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with course availability and course variety. However, students are more satisfied with course availability and variety than they were four years ago perhaps a result of Western’s specific attempts to reduce course bottlenecks.

Upon graduating, 74% of 2012 graduates indicate that their immediate plans are to join the labor force. This is nearly 10% higher than the class of 2009, possibly a result of the economic downturn. As our students are more likely to join the labor force in 2012 relative to 2009, they are less likely to attend full-time graduate school or to pursue a volunteer activity like the Peace Corp or Teach for America. Approximately 14% of 2012 graduates planned to attend a graduate program the year after leaving Western.

The final question we highlight asks “When you graduate, how much will be owed for your education?” Because students can borrow for their education via credit cards and private loans, responses on surveys typically produce different levels of debt than those estimated using official financial aid information.

Here we present two measures: the average debt of all graduating students and the average debt of students who incurred educational debt. These averages differ considerably because roughly two-in-five respondents claim to have no educational debt. The average debt reported by the class of 2012 is $13,575, an increase of $584 from the prior year and an increase of about 13% over the past four years. However, among students who borrowed for their education, the 2012 average amount owed is $26,555, an increase of $2,652 from the prior year and 28.6% higher than the class of 2009.
How do I register for a GUR Strand?

Registering for a GUR Strand is just like registering for any other class. You access your Web4U through your MyWestern account, add/drop classes, and enter in the CRN number. Below are the various CRNs for each GUR Strand.

All you have to do during Summerstart registration is enter the Fall course CRN for the Strand you wish to take (the ones in bold below).

The First Year Programs office will register you for your Winter and Spring Strand courses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GUR Strand CRNs</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Winter</th>
<th>Spring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strand 1</td>
<td>43965</td>
<td>13627</td>
<td>23201</td>
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<td>Strand 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strand 4</td>
<td>43859</td>
<td>13558</td>
<td>22824</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What are GUR Strands?

GUR Strands consist of 3 GUR classes that are taken in successive quarters (Fall, Winter, Spring). GUR Strands enhance the first year experience by providing a year-long “learning community” of peers and a “strand” of three courses connected by a theme or question.
**Strand One: “Science and Religion”**

**Course Sequence**

- Fall: **LBRL 231**, Introduction to the Study of Religion, Rob Stoops (5 cr, ACGM)
- Winter: **FAIR 297J**, Evolutionary Biology, John Bower (5 cr, SCI)
- Spring: **LBRL 297**, Science and Religion, Holly Folk (5 cr, HUM)

Science and Religion are two different “ways of knowing” that historically encompassed much (or most) of the knowledge of world civilization. In the West, however, over the past 200 years these categories have been framed increasingly in opposition. The natural explanations of science appear to be in conflict with the claims of religious belief. As a result, today the “science-religion divide” runs sharply through American politics and culture. It tests our legal and educational systems, and extends into many other realms of life. This Strand has the “Big Question” goal of helping students understand the different perspectives that inform this highly charged discursive arena.

**Strand Three: “Understanding Human-Environment Interactions”**

**Course Sequence**

- Fall: **ENVS 202**, Intro to Environmental Studies & Sustainability, Grace Wang (3 cr, SSC)
- Winter: **ENVS 203**, Physical Geography, Andrew Bach (4 cr, LSCI)
- Spring: **ENVS 204**, Human Geography, David Rossiter (4 cr, SSC)

This Strand will provide a year-long and cohesive sequence that develops the foundations of an epistemologically and methodologically diverse understanding of human-environment interactions. To start, ENVS 202 will introduce students to both the range of challenges we face in achieving a sustainable human-environment and the nature of the interdisciplinary inquiry and action required for effective environmental problem solving. Next, ENVS 203 will develop students’ understanding of the Earth’s natural processes, particularly as they relate to human experience of the environment. Finally, building upon the content of the previous two courses, ENVS 204 will situate population distribution, diverse cultural identities, and the uneven development of political and economic systems within the context of changing human-environment interaction over time. Taken together, this sequence of courses will offer an excellent introduction to the study of human-environment interactions and should prove to be an attractive way for students to complete some of the general education requirements.

**Strand Two: “How do you know? Evidence and Argument”**

**Course Sequence**

- Fall: **PHIL 114**, Knowledge and Reality, Dennis Whitcomb (3 cr, HUM)
- Winter: **CHEM 101**, Chemical Concepts, Emily Borda (4 cr, LSCI)
- Spring: **HIST 103**, US History to 1865, Johann Neem (5 cr, HUM)

The main focus of this strand is on developing students’ personal epistemologies, or views about what counts as knowledge and how knowledge is developed. We believe the idea of evidence and the skill of constructing reasonable arguments based on evidence is central to students’ progression toward this more sophisticated epistemological standpoint. It is our hope that this strand will give students the tools to intelligently analyze knowledge claims in each course they encounter throughout their college career, as well as in their future professional and personal lives.

**Strand Four: Global Citizenship**

**Course Sequence**

- Fall: **SOC 221**, Introduction to Population Issues, Liz Mogford (5 cr, SSC)
- Winter: **INTL 201**, Intro to Global Studies, Barbara Rofkar (5 cr, ACGM)
- Spring: **ENG 283**, Introduction to Global Literatures, Christopher Wise (5 cr, HUM)

What are the implications of buying an iPhone made in China? Do we have any responsibility for the fate of displaced peoples in various parts of the world? How might we live responsibly in a world with dwindling resources? Students in the “Global Citizenship” Strand will ask these, and other questions, through three interconnected GUR courses as they explore the larger question of what we can do and what we must know in order to live responsibly in a globally-just world.
4. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Executive Session may be held to discuss personnel, real estate, and legal issues as authorized in RCW 42.30.110.