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# Mission and Core Theme Fulfillment Status Report

October, 2015

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Western is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges & Universities (NWCCU), an independent, non-profit membership organization recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as the regional authority on educational quality and institutional effectiveness of higher education institutions in the seven-state Northwest region.

The 7-year accreditation model established by the NWCCU in 2010 required all institutions to establish core themes—defined as manifestations of fundamental aspects of an institution’s mission. Furthermore, each institution is required to demonstrate that they have fulfilled both their mission and core themes via indicators of achievement.

Western’s indicators of mission fulfillment were developed by the University Planning and Resource Council (UPRC). Its indicators of core theme achievement were proposed by the Accreditation and Assessment Advisory Committee (AAAC), and revised and approved by the UPRC. These indicators will comprise a significant portion of the accreditation self-study required for the on-site, comprehensive end-of-cycle evaluation in spring, 2017.

This report presents mission and core theme fulfillment data to date. Each core theme objective includes a narrative performance summary.

## Note on Mission Fulfillment

Following advice of the Faculty Senate, Western divided its indicators of Mission Fulfillment into two categories: “Sustaining Indicators of Mission Fulfillment,” and “Aspirational Indicators of Mission Fulfillment.” This division was recommended because at that time it was not known if there would be a return to pre-economic downturn levels of state support.

## Western’s Core Themes

Core Theme 1: Serve the State of Washington by Expanding Student Access

Core Theme 2: Foster Student Success

Core Theme 3: Strengthen Communities Beyond the Campus

## Mission and Core Theme Fulfillment Relationship

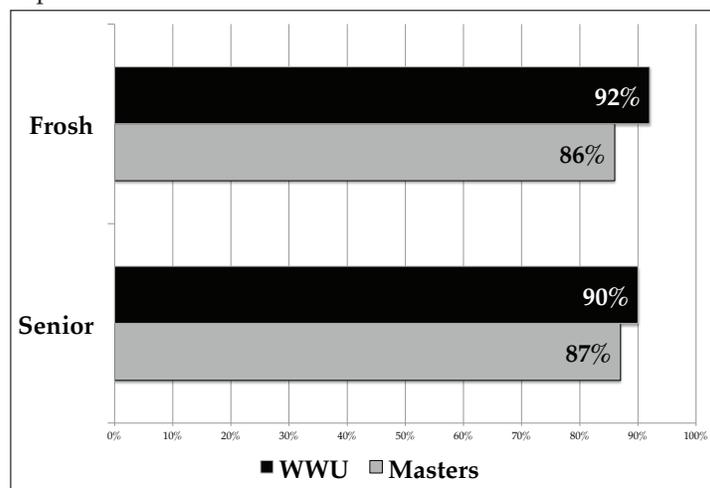
Western’s core themes comprise the means by which Western’s mission is fulfilled. Consequently, indicators of mission fulfillment are not repeated in the core themes. Instead, the core theme indicators of achievement address the steps necessary to achieve mission fulfillment. For instance, increasing the percentage of low-income students returning for the second year is a step to take in order to raise the graduation rate for low-income students.

Please note that at the conclusion of the current 7-year accreditation cycle, Western will have the opportunity to establish new core themes, as well as new definitions of mission and core theme fulfillment, for the ensuing 7-year accreditation cycle that will begin in the fall, 2017.

## SUSTAINING INDICATORS OF MISSION FULFILLMENT

1. 85-90% of seniors continue to rate their entire educational experience as good or excellent (NSSE).

Percentage of NSSE participants rating their overall experience as "Excellent" or "Good"



2. More than 50% of graduating seniors continue to report that they collaborated with a professor on a research or creative activity outside of course or program requirements (OSR Senior Exit Survey).

2011	2012	2013
58%	59%	56%

3. 6-year graduation rates for students of color remain at least 10% better than the mean rate of our IPEDS comparison group.

	2011	2012	2013
WWU	67.2%	58.0%	60.4%
IPEDS comparison group	37.8%	38.8%	40.5%

4. The four-year graduation rate is 40% or better.

4-Yr graduation rates

Cohort Year	Grad Rate
2008	39.4%
2009	39.5%
2010	39.3%

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## ASPIRATIONAL INDICATORS OF MISSION FULFILLMENT

### 1. Document 1,000,000 annual hours of community service and engagement among faculty, students and staff.

In 2012, Western was able to roughly estimate the number of community service and volunteer hours contributed by its faculty, students and staff by analyzing three data sources: figures provided by the Center for Service-Learning, a staff survey conducted by Human Resources, and annual Woodring College of Education reports. Extrapolating from these sources, it was very conservatively estimated that Western was contributing about 750,000 hours to the local community annually. Researchers are currently working on a methodology to more accurately estimate this figure, which is reasoned to reach the million hours figure.

### 2. Increase state-defined “high-demand” graduates to 830 a year.

Total number of high demand degrees awarded

2010	732
2011	792
2012	827
2013	961
2014	1018

### 3. Increase the six-year graduation rate overall to 71%.

### 4. Increase the six-year graduation rate for low-income (Pell Grant eligible) students to 65%.

### 5. Increase the six-year graduation rate for students of color to 66%.

6-Year graduation rates

Cohort Year	Overall	Pell Grant Eligible	Students of Color
2006	67.1%	59.4%	58.3%
2007	69.2%	64.9%	60.1%
2008	71.2%	64.2%	63.7%

### 6. Increase total baccalaureate degrees to 3,245 per year.

Total number of degrees awarded

2010	3,063
2011	2,997
2012	3,199
2013	3,330
2014	3,170

— **Core Theme 1: Serve the State of Washington by Expanding Student Access** —

**Objective 1a:** Sustain total enrollment at 2010 levels, while also sustaining total enrollment of academically-talented students, and expanding the percentage of students from underrepresented groups.

**Performance Summary: Objective 1a**

We are proud to have sustained enrollment and to have successfully diversified our campus during a period in which the total number of high school graduates in our state has dropped. While the decline in the academic preparation of entering students is a state-wide phenomenon, we wish to redouble our efforts to attract and enroll academically talented new students.

Indicators of Achievement

**1. Undergraduate headcount (fall quarters).**

2010 = 14,979

2014 = 15,060

**2. Academically-talented students as a percentage of enrollment. (HS GPA of 3.75 >)**

21.9% in 2010

20.3% in 2014

**3. Headcount of for-credit students served through Extended Education. (Undergrad & grad combined.)**

7,167 in 2010

9,207 in 2013-14

**4. Students of color (SOC) as a percent of total enrollment.**

20.3% in 2010

24.2% in 2014 (highest percent to date).

**5. Pell Grant recipients as a percent of total enrollment.**

Enrollment has remained stable at around 23%.

**6. Average HS GPA of entering freshmen cohorts.**

Fell slightly in 2012, from 3.5 to 3.4, but has remained stable since.

**Objective 1b:** Students successfully negotiate the academic and personal opportunities and challenges of their first year.

**Performance Summary: Objective 1b**

The drop in freshmen retention warrants continued university-wide improvement efforts—particularly for our low-income students.

Indicators of Achievement

**1. Percentage of freshmen retained to 2nd year.**

Over the last five years, Western's retention rates have fallen slightly, from 85.1% to 82.3%. Yet both statewide and nationally Western's rates have and continue to surpass those of our peers. (Western 82.4% v. peers 78.4% • 2012 cohort, CSRDE "Selective" institutions).

## — Core Theme 1: Serve the State of Washington by Expanding Student Access —

Indicators of Achievement (Objective 1b continued)

**2. Percentage of students of color (SOC) retained to 2nd year.**

SOC retention rates have also fallen, from 84.2% in 2011 to 80.5% in 2013, yet continue to surpass those of our peers. (Western 81.2% v. peers 76.6% • 2012 cohort).

**3. Percentage of Pell Grant recipients retained to 2nd year.**

From 2010 to 2012, retention rates for PELL Grant recipients averaged 81.5%. They fell to 76.6% for the 2013 cohort. (No peer data.)

**Objective 1c:** Students progress toward graduation in a timely manner.

### PERFORMANCE SUMMARY: OBJECTIVE 1c

Western's professional training schools include programs in education, accounting, and other fields, which require five years of instruction. These lengthen our average time to degree in ways that are not true for universities in which programs, such as teacher certification, are only offered at the post-bac level. However, intentional efforts in many departments have recently lowered time-to-degree for transfers and native freshmen; the practices which have led to these improvements should be shared so that continued improvement can be achieved, relative to these indicators.

Indicators of Achievement

**1. Average, cumulative time-to-degree for "native" (first-time freshmen) students. (Measured in years, with 3 quarters = 1 year.)**

4.4 years (just over an extra quarter).

**2. Average, cumulative time-to-degree for transfers students.**

2.9 years (just under an extra year).

**3. Four-year graduation rate. (Averaged over the last 5 years)**

38.2% (31.2% for peers).

**4. Six-year graduation rate.**

69.8% (55.4% for peers).

**5. Students of color (SOC) 4- & 6-year graduation rate.**

4-Year = 30.1% (23.9% for peers).

6-Year = 60.3% (48.1% for peers).

**6. PELL Grant recipients 4- & 6-year graduation rate.**

4-Year = 33.2% (No peer data).

6-Year = 63.3% (No peer data).

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## Core Theme 2: Foster Student Success

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**Objective 2a:** Students are able to acquire, construct, and apply complex knowledge and theories.

### PERFORMANCE SUMMARY: OBJECTIVE 2a

The ability to acquire, construct and apply complex knowledge and theory is a hallmark of a liberal arts education that has long been central to our institutional improvement efforts. These indicators, as well as increased participation in Scholars Week, and in internships and other opportunities for engaged and applied higher order thinking, demonstrate steady improvement we wish to sustain and further improve on.

#### Indicators of Achievement

**1. NSSE: (WWU's) contribution to knowledge, skills, etc. (6 questions; seniors only.)**

Highest ranking: "Thinking critically and analytically" = 3.49 in 2011 (4 being highest).

Lowest ranking: "Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds" = 2.63 in 2011.

**2. WELS Senior Exit Survey: WWU's contribution to knowledge, skills, etc. (11 questions.)**

Highest ranking: "Critically evaluate information" = 87% "somewhat" or "very satisfied" (2014).

Lowest ranking: "Appreciation of the arts" = 49% "somewhat" or "very satisfied" (2012).

**3. Annual number of students who co-author published articles, book chapters, papers, or creative projects with faculty. (CHSS Annual Report.)**

Faculty-student collaborations = 176 in 2010-11; 238 in 2013-14.

**4. WELS Senior Exit Survey: satisfaction with upper division/major experiences.**

Highest ranking for satisfaction within the major: "Knowledge and expertise of faculty" = 91% "satisfied" or "very satisfied" (2010).

Lowest ranking for satisfaction within the major: "Department internships & service learning opportunities" = 42% "satisfied" or "very satisfied" (2010).

**Objective 2b:** Students are adequately prepared to succeed in their chosen fields.

### PERFORMANCE SUMMARY: OBJECTIVE 2b

Our professional school rates of job placement remain very high. Western grads are extremely well represented at Microsoft, Amazon, and other highly-select employers. Feedback about our graduates from public school employers, and others, remains extremely positive. Moreover, more departments now offer employment forums featuring recent graduates, and improvements have been made to our Career Services Center. Together with the indicators noted for this objective, these changes suggest continuous improvement in our performance, relative to this objective.

#### Indicators of Achievement

**1. WELS Alumni Survey: preparation for job market.**

59% "well" or "very well" prepared (2012).

**2. WELS Alumni Survey: preparation for continuing education.**

87% "well" or "very well" prepared (2012).

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## Core Theme 2: Foster Student Success

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### Indicators of Achievement (2b continued)

3. **NSSE: (WWU's) contribution to acquiring job/work-related knowledge and skills. (Seniors only. 4 being highest.)**  
3.09 in 2011  
2.95 in 2014
4. **WELS Exit Survey: graduate school application status.**  
58% in 2010  
36% in 2012  
42% in 2014
5. **Career Services employment survey. (BA, MA, and Teacher Certification.)**  
75% in 2010-11  
80% in 2011-12  
82% in 2012-13
6. **SED IPEDS peers comparison. (Western's ranking among approximately 560 Master's-granting U.S. institutions whose graduates have gone on to earn research Ph.D's.)**  
19th in 2009  
13th in 2011  
13th in 2012

**Objective 2c:** Students apply their classroom learning to co-curricular, employment, and residential experiences.

### PERFORMANCE SUMMARY: OBJECTIVE 2c

We are pleased to see that the percentage of our students who participate in practica, internships and other field experiences has increased sharply. This result speaks to the success of strategic initiatives across the university to sustain and strengthen our performance, relative to Core Theme 2.

### Indicators of Achievement

1. **NSSE: "Have done practicum/internship, community service or volunteer work." (Seniors only.)**  
43% responded yes in 2011.  
58% responded yes in 2014.
2. **A final indicator for Objective 2c will be a CampusLabs survey, which will be benchmarked in the winter, 2015**

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## Core Theme 3: Strengthen Communities Beyond the Campus

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**Objective 3a:** Students develop respect for and integrate diverse perspectives of others.

### PERFORMANCE SUMMARY: OBJECTIVE 3a

These indicators affirm on-going, campus-wide efforts by our faculty, students and staff to support students in developing respect for and integrating diverse perspectives of others. Importantly, this objective cannot be seen as a simple derivative of an increasingly diverse campus. Instead, the curriculum and experiences we provide our students need to be informed by practices and processes that encourage growth.

#### Indicators of Achievement

- 1. Number of Western students participating in study abroad programs.**  
505.5 per/yr over the last five years. Largest number = 549 (2012-13).
- 2. Number of exchange, international and non-resident students attending Western.**  
139.0 per/yr over the last five years. Largest number = 152 (2013).
- 3. NSSE: "Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds." (Seniors only.)**  
WWU 2.63 v. Peers 2.70 (2011).  
WWU 2.77 v. Peers 2.85 (2014).
- 4. NSSE: "Working effectively with others." (Seniors only.)**  
2011: WWU 3.29 v. Peers 3.21 (2011).  
2014: WWU 3.10 v. Peers 3.05 (2014).

**Objective 3b:** Students contribute to positive change as citizens in diverse communities.

### PERFORMANCE SUMMARY: OBJECTIVE 3b

These indicators, together with our Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement, and our consistent recognition on the president's Honor Roll for Community Engagement, speak to the great achievement of our students, relative to this objective.

#### Indicators of Achievement

- 1. Student community service hours (number of hours contributed). (CSL)**  
This indicator is under development.
- 2. Student community service participation (number of participants). (CSL)**  
This indicator is under development.

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## Core Theme 3: Strengthen Communities Beyond the Campus

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Indicators of Achievement (3b continued)

**3. Peace Corps participation.**

Western has ranked #1 in 2013 and 2014 for Peace Corps participation (medium-sized institutions).

**4. Fulbright placements.**

Western ranked 4th for Fulbright Scholarships for Master's-granting institutions, public or private (2013-14).

**Objective 3c:** The Western community contributes to positive change in communities beyond the campus.

### PERFORMANCE SUMMARY: OBJECTIVE 3c

These indicators, together with our Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement, and our consistent recognition on the president's Honor Roll for Community Engagement, speak to the great achievement of our students, relative to this objective.

Indicators of Achievement

**1. Total service-learning and community engagement (number of hours contributed).**

This indicator is under development.

**2. Number of non-credit students served through Extended Education.**

2010-11 = 3,348

2011-12 = 3,395

2012-13 = 3,414

2013-14 = 3,723