Fairhaven College 2014-2015 SCOT Analysis

Approved by the Fairhaven College faculty and staff 11/25/14

Strengths:
- Extensive student-teacher contact, academic advising and personal development
- Excellence in seminar-style education in learner focused, small classes
- Student-centered learning opportunities, including creation of self-designed concentration
- Strong Social Justice thread in curriculum that supports students in developing critical consciousness
- Small classes
- Thematic and perspectival interdisciplinary study
- Expertise in narrative assessment
- Flexibility; ability to respond nimbly to opportunities to create and test alternative ways of facilitating learning
- Use of reflection as a tool to enhance student learning
- Diverse, interdisciplinary faculty committed to teaching
- A curriculum that fosters interdisciplinary inquiry
- Emphasis on community awareness and participation

Challenges:
- The ongoing struggle to recruit and support students, faculty and staff of color
- High teaching and advising workload
- Lack of time/head space/support for faculty research
- Inequities in workload with advising, concentrations, mentoring independent study projects, supervising student taught courses, etc.
- Continued loss of flexibility to teach innovative courses and to team teach
- Need for effective teaching about white privilege that moves students past guilt and into a place where they are ready to work across boundaries for positive social change
- Lack of space for classrooms, offices, faculty gathering, student collaborative work, etc.
- Unhealthy levels of stress on physical and mental health experienced by faculty, staff and students
- Need for better ongoing faculty development
Opportunities:
- Bridge service/community-based and classroom learning; lead WWU in fostering a “Changemaker” campus
- Team teaching emphasis; explore linked class opportunities
- Rebuild the living-learning community concept within the Fairhaven Complex
- Provide leadership in discussions on the future of higher education
- Raise funds for endowed scholarships for first-generation-in-college students
- Provide more leadership for curricular and pedagogical innovation at WWU
- Create collaborative spaces; use existing spaces more effectively
- More intentional curricular linkages between courses in the Fairhaven Core Curriculum
- Collaborations with Northwest Indian College
- Documentary film-making as an inter-departmental effort
- Development of an e-portfolio platform to document student progress through the Core Curriculum
- Do more to share best practices in teaching among Fairhaven faculty and beyond

Threats:
- The difficulty in recruiting and retaining diverse students
- The danger of creating a homologous, stagnant social environment of cultural and political thought that doesn’t allow for expression of other views
- Rising tuition costs
- Possible threats to the College’s financial integrity in the context of the state and university budget processes
- Alienation of students with marginalized identities
- Lack of strong alliances with other departments at WWU
- Loss of the distinctiveness of Fairhaven College
- Lack of Fairhaven College student access to courses in other departments
- Limited space for offices, classes and collaboration
- Number of retirements of faculty that the College is experiencing over a 3-year period
- How we may be influenced by our own fear to become “safer” and less innovative