

---

# College of Humanities and Social Sciences

*Core Liberal Arts: Pathways for Professional and Lifelong Pursuits*

Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities and Threats

November 10, 2009

Western Washington University

Bellingham, Washington

---

Committed to and understanding the importance of programmatic assessment and strategic planning, the College of Humanities and Social Sciences engages in continuous evaluation of its operations. Within the context of the University mission, the CHSS mission, and the priorities of the state and region, the College endeavors to maintain alignment with professional standards, accreditation requirements, and most of all with the needs of Western Washington University students, faculty, and staff. The following SCOT analysis is intended to provide a philosophical framework for establishing priorities and allocating resources not only in challenging budgetary environments, but also when growth is viable.

The source for all SCH/FTEF information and data included below is [http://west.wvu.edu/institutional\\_research/documents/StudentWorkbook.xls](http://west.wvu.edu/institutional_research/documents/StudentWorkbook.xls), published by the WWU Office of Institutional Assessment, Research, and Testing.

## STRENGTHS (Internal)

To quote from Western Washington University's *Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities and Threats: Surveying the Landscape for Budget Planning*, "Central to a well-founded liberal education is the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, providing students with a three-component liberal education: a program of education-in-breadth through major contributions to the General University requirements; a program of education-in-depth in a disciplinary or interdisciplinary major designed to prepare students for careers or graduate study; and a choice of elective courses which can help satisfy the student's curiosity about any of the multitude of subjects that the University curriculum embraces."

The centrality of CHSS programs and curricula to the WWU experience and to the institution's commitment to "engaged excellence" underlines a primary strength of the College. Departing from this notion, and understanding that it is not the intent here to list all the excellent programs and accomplishments of the thirteen academic departments and two interdisciplinary programs, some of the College's strengths are listed below.

### HIGH QUALITY FACULTY

CHSS faculty are committed to providing quality learning experiences and are fully engaged in serving both the community and the profession.

- Excellent classroom teaching is documented through rigorous assessment and by numerous teaching awards won by CHSS faculty. With faculty teaching in 41 undergraduate degree programs, 11 graduate degree programs, and in the general education component of the curriculum, CHSS teaches approximately 47% of the SCH generated at WWU.
- CHSS has many faculty who are nationally and internationally recognized as authorities in their disciplines. Making significant disciplinary contributions at

the regional, national, and international levels, CHSS faculty publish and present their work in a number of venues. Average CHSS faculty productivity in research/scholarly endeavor registers approximately 20 books, 120 refereed articles, 15 edited volumes, and 60 book chapters per year. Additionally, CHSS faculty members make some 250 presentations at professional conferences every year.

- Deeply involved in academic and professional service at many levels, CHSS faculty also work to facilitate and establish partnerships with the community.

### HIGH QUALITY STAFF

- The staff in CHSS are experienced, capable, and dedicated to the important tasks they perform in support of our mission. One of, if not the most, efficient colleges on campus in terms of staff support for academic programs and departments, CHSS relies on an excellent team of administrative and program staff.

### INTEGRAL TO CORE LIBERAL ARTS AT WWU

- CHSS is responsible for 50% of the general education program on campus. CHSS offers approximately eleven of the twenty-one courses in the Communication block, forty-seven of the sixty-three courses in the Comparative Gender and Multicultural block, forty-six of the fifty-six courses in the Humanities block, one course in the Natural Sciences block, one course in the Quantitative and Symbolic Reasoning block, and twenty of the twenty-nine courses in the Social Sciences block. There are a number of departments in CHSS, such as Liberal Studies, where a significant amount of the departmental contributions occurs at the general education level.
- CHSS has been a leader in encouraging and facilitating curricular and pedagogical innovation that promotes the creation of unique educational experiences and optimal learning. At the lower division level, CHSS has offered the majority of the First Year Experience courses, which are designed to provide a more intimate learning environment for freshman students.
- CHSS offers many courses that are required for or function as electives in programs in other colleges.

### STRONG ACADEMIC MAJORS AND MINORS

- Majors and minors in CHSS build from the liberal arts core to focus on the traditional academic disciplines in the humanities and in the social and behavioral sciences. Strong and varied academic majors that explore the human condition from a variety of perspectives are created and delivered by a faculty

committed to high quality undergraduate programs. While curricular offerings are diverse, many common themes also span departments, providing students with an opportunity to make important connections between disciplines. The curricula in the departments are dynamic with ongoing enhancements and adjustments made through the college curriculum process.

- Majors in CHSS produce graduates who are skilled in a variety of areas. CHSS students constitute approximately 40% of the total WWU graduates per year. Once graduated, our students have an excellent record of finding employment. Many CHSS graduates are employed outside their field of study, a fact that further demonstrates the strength of our liberal arts core. For example, humanities majors often find employment in technology-based corporations, while social science graduates might be employed in hospitals.
- In the majority of majors in CHSS, there is active student involvement in the learning process, including faculty / student collaboration in research projects, and experiential education opportunities such as internships, service learning and study abroad.
- CHSS departments guide students through the curriculum utilizing a strong faculty advising system. Some departments have implemented a pre-major system that facilitates a smooth transition into the major and others have established a set of gateway courses for entry, both approaches being designed to foster student success. Once declared in a major, all students meet with faculty advisors to plan and monitor their course of study through the major.

## EFFICIENCY

CHSS delivers an efficient, high quality educational program at all levels (lower division, upper division, graduate). The College delivers approximately 47% of the total WWU SCH, making it the largest college on campus (See Figure 1). These educational services are provided with approximately 36% of the faculty, making CHSS the most efficient of all the colleges at a ratio of FTE students to FTE faculty of 22.9 (Figure 2). While careful management of limited resources can certainly be considered a strength, the SCH and FTE statistics below also emphasize that demand for our classes presents a challenge to our ability to effectively deliver the curriculum.

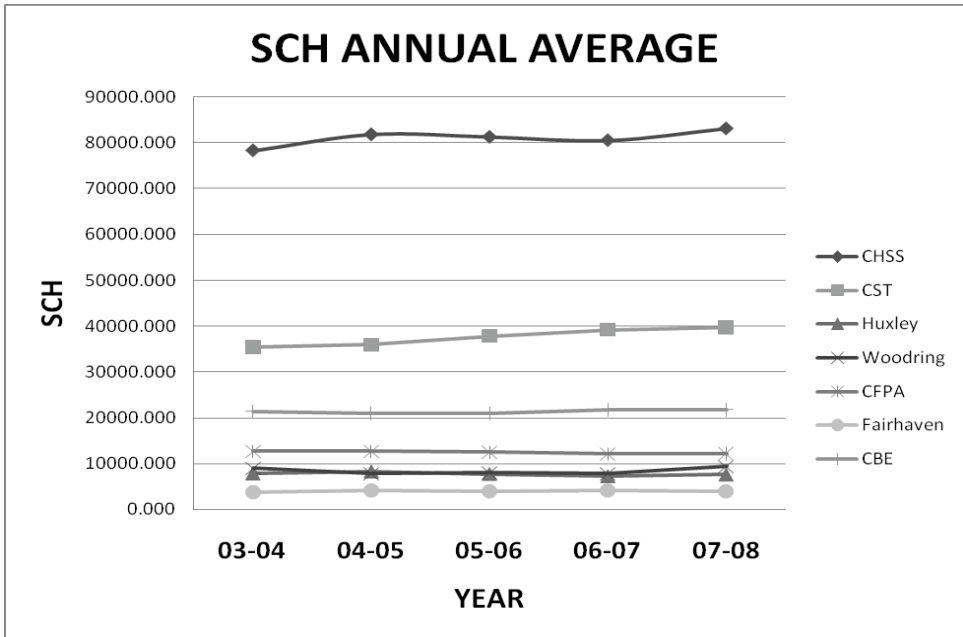


Figure 1. Comparison of Annual SCH across Colleges from 2003 to 2008.

Source: [http://west.wvu.edu/institutional\\_research/documents/StudentWorkbook.xls](http://west.wvu.edu/institutional_research/documents/StudentWorkbook.xls)

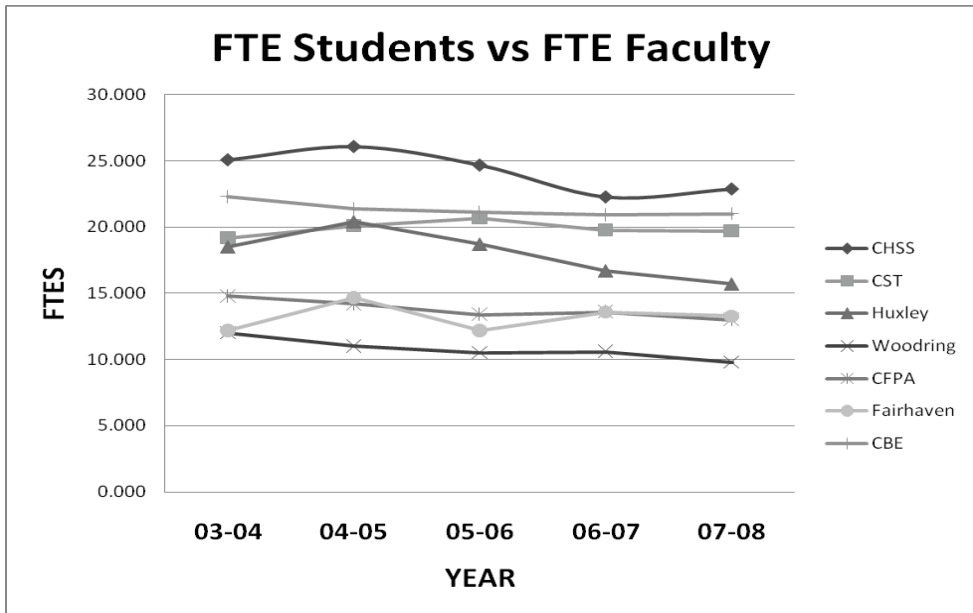


Figure 2. Comparison of FTES/FTEF for all colleges from 2003-2008

Source: [http://west.wvu.edu/institutional\\_research/documents/StudentWorkbook.xls](http://west.wvu.edu/institutional_research/documents/StudentWorkbook.xls)

INTEGRAL TO THE CORE VALUES OF THE INSTITUTION and to “ENGAGED EXCELLENCE”

Currently, through teaching, research and community service activities and a long-standing commitment to supporting a liberal arts foundation, programs in CHSS are integral to the WWU mission and goals. Samples of how CHSS supports the goals of WWU are illustrated below:

- CHSS faculty and departments support engaged excellence by providing educational opportunities that *instill in graduates a life-long passion for learning and foster individual curiosity, intellectual rigor, critical thinking, and creativity.* Departments and programs in CHSS are committed to providing stimulating educational experiences that develop lifelong learning skills in our students. With over 4,100 students majoring in College programs and with CHSS delivering approximately 50% of the general education curriculum, the articulation of this goal takes on many different forms. However, this goal is highly supported across CHSS departments and programs. How departments and programs pay specific attention to these skills is outlined in program missions and goals.
- CHSS faculty engage in *scholarly and creative work of significance and applies that scholarship in regional, national, and global communities.* CHSS faculty are scholar-teachers actively engaged in ongoing research projects that integrate and infuse the curriculum with new ideas. Significantly, undergraduate and graduate students are invited to collaborate and participate in a wide range of scholarly activities with faculty
- CHSS faculty and departments support engaged excellence by providing *opportunities for students to display leadership, civic engagement, social responsibility, and effective citizenship.* Active student involvement in the learning process is a high priority for departments and programs in CHSS. Students are provided with opportunities to display leadership through activities such as editorships, peer teaching and research. Leadership and citizenship opportunities are also provided through experiential opportunities in the community. These opportunities provide avenues for students to develop and demonstrate skills applicable to the workplace.
- CHSS faculty and departments bring *together an increasingly diverse and talented student body, faculty, and staff to form a learning community that, along with community partners, involves its members in active learning, scholarly discourse, and reflection.* Internally, CHSS promotes and encourages cross-disciplinary interchanges of ideas and has supported the development of a number of majors that span departments and colleges. It also supports two interdisciplinary programs, East Asian Studies and Linguistics, that draw faculty from multiple departments. CHSS is very involved in current discussions about the future of international studies at WWU. Additionally, community partnerships have become increasingly integral to the curricula and programs in CHSS. Many departments have close ties with a variety of community agencies for placement of students and co-sponsorship of events. The results of these partnerships have resulted in community workshops, joint-grants, internships, partnerships on projects, and assistance with fund-raising.

On an annual basis, CHSS students contribute approximately 150,000-175,000 volunteer hours. Two hundred different agencies have served as hosts to CHSS student volunteers.

- CHSS faculty and departments support and seek a *high quality environment that complements the learning community on a sustainable and attractive campus designed to support student learning and environmental stewardship*. The learning environment remains an important focus for CHSS and there is ongoing attention paid to class size, instructional environments, departmental environments and conservation. CHSS has worked with the administration to advocate for more space for CHSS programs, to sponsor smaller classes, and to promote optimal learning environments.

## COMMITTED TO COLLABORATION

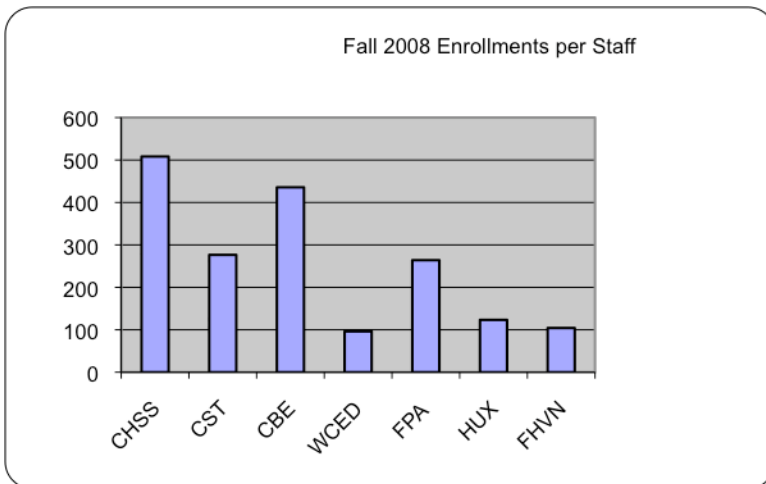
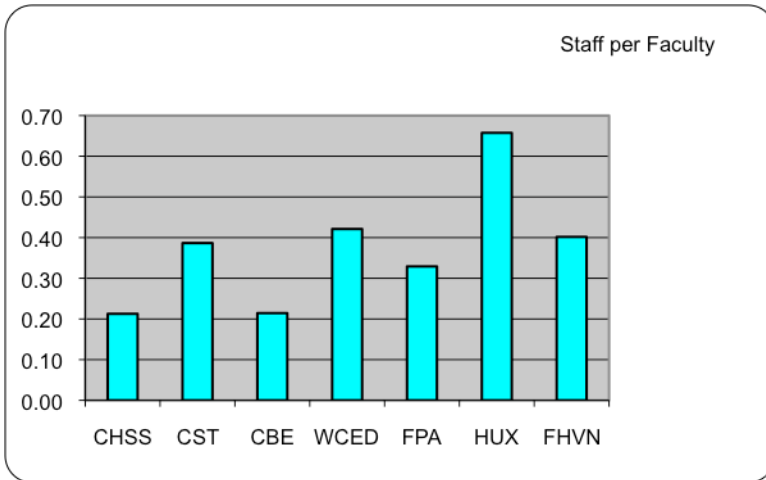
- CHSS enjoys productive relationships with the six other colleges in the University. As the largest college, CHSS has the diversity to interact and collaborate with a wide variety of units on campus, resulting in a number of distinctive interdisciplinary curricula, combined majors, and teacher education majors. Research collaborations have also taken place.

## CHALLENGES (Internal)

### HIRING & RETAINING HIGH QUALITY FACULTY & STAFF

- The high quality of the educational experience in CHSS is directly attributable to the excellent faculty that we have been very fortunate to recruit and hire. We are now faced, however, with the challenges of hiring faculty in a more competitive environment due to the escalation of salaries in areas where salaries had been compressed. The College should continue to seek a more competitive salary structure to recruit and retain excellent faculty. Additionally, the College should partner with the University to provide additional funding for competitive faculty start-up packages.
- Ongoing support of faculty activities will continue to be important for retention and to maintain a vibrant faculty. With increased travel costs and restrictions, diminishing discretionary money, and possible decreases in funding from the Research and Sponsored Programs office, the College will need to continue to seek money to support scholarly activity and professional development of both new and experienced faculty.
- Compensation for staff is not keeping pace with the cost of living and the heavy workload in the departments. Added responsibilities such as advising or

Banner expertise have significantly changed job duties. The College should continue to seek additional support for departmental staff to ensure that adequate faculty and program support is available. The data below is from the 2008-09 WWU Operating Budget Report and the Fall 2008 SCH/FTEF Report:



**FUNDING FOR DELIVERY OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS**

- The College will continue to seek sufficient levels of instruction support through operating monies. This does and will continue to affect almost every aspect of what we do, including the recruitment and retention of faculty, program creation and support, and the continued success of graduate education in the College.

- CHSS faces constant challenges in temporary funding for sections taught outside the permanent base as allocated by the State. To find a way to secure reliable temporary funding for this important and large part of our program will be crucial. This is a more problematic issue for CHSS than for many of the other colleges because of the higher proportion of FTEF funded through limited term dollars. As illustrated in Figure 3, CHSS funds its basic instructional program using a high level of temporary funding. This is a historical problem due to increased demand for programs in CHSS, increased demand for CHSS contribution to general education, and the inconsistent addition of base FTEF to CHSS. To obtain additional base FTEF is a challenge and goal that we must meet. The '09-'11 biennium reductions to permanent base budgets in the College meant the loss of approximately \$375,000 previously available to fund NTT sections, leaving less than \$100,000 in operating budgets for that purpose. While the entire campus was extremely hard hit by the budget reductions, the unique challenge faced by CHSS was how to reduce its permanent budget by 5% and still offer adequate access to curriculum and programs. **There is little question that this funding issue constitutes the most urgent challenge we currently face.**
- Despite a record of success in obtaining capital funding for building renovation, financial means to address renovations will continue to be important. The exclusion of the planned Carver renovation from the '09-'11 capital budget was a significant blow to our ability to effectively support curriculum, faculty, students, staff, and program development in the Department of Physical Education, Health, and Recreation.

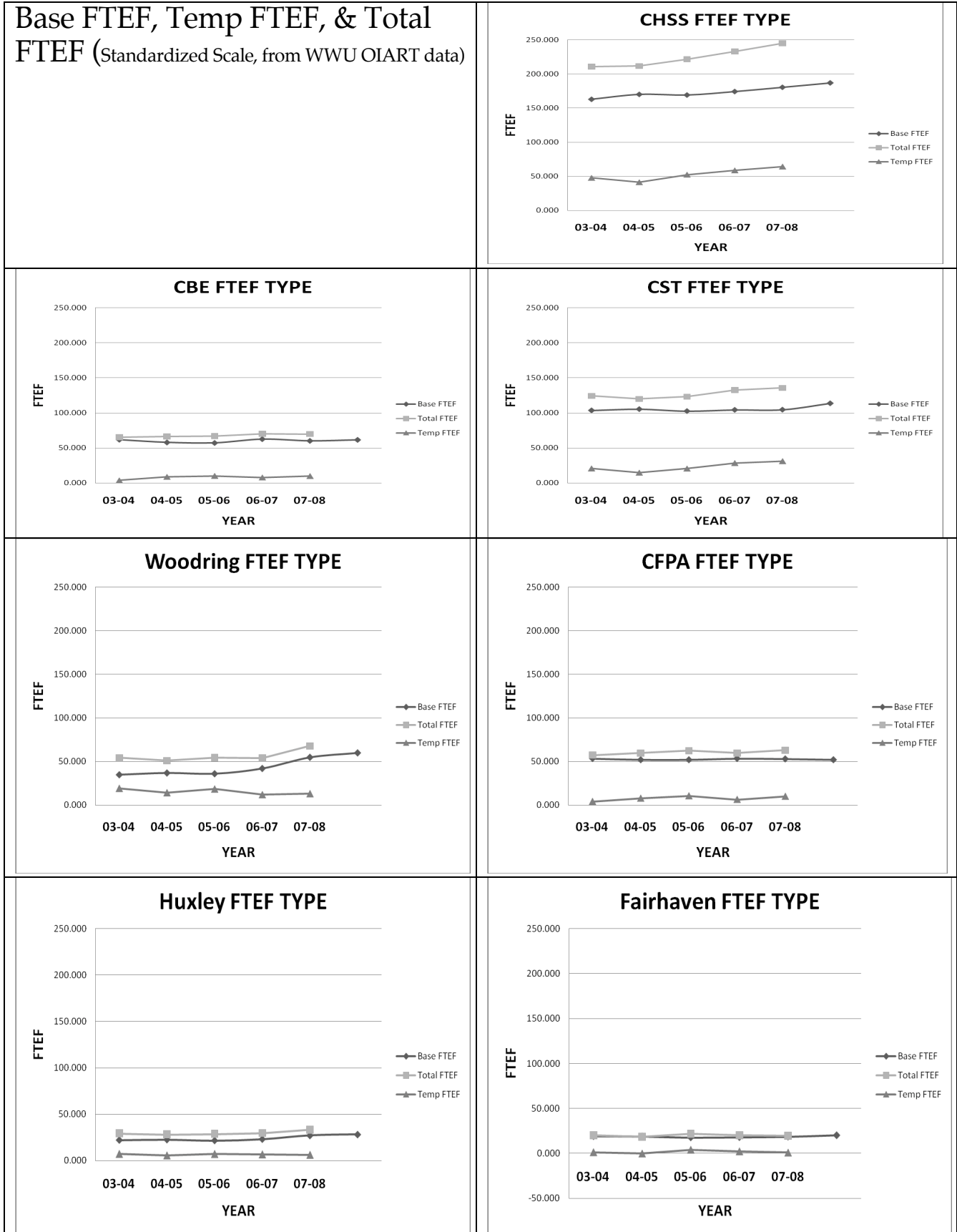


Figure 3. Base, Temporary and Total FTEF for each college for years 2003-2008.

## DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS

- Departments in CHSS are short of staff at a time when more of the university work and business has been shifted to the departments. Additionally, classified staff job descriptions are not keeping up with the additional duties that have been passed to the departments. An extensive review of university-wide staff support, duties, and compensation should take place.
- Departments in CHSS are operating annually with a budget that has seen very little adjustment for inflation or for the increased cost of “charge backs” by other units. This is beginning to influence basic levels of support that is available for faculty and for the delivery of the educational programs. One possible consequence of this will be an increase in departments who establish student fees for provision of basic educational support.
- Technology and equipment support is important for both departmental operations and for delivery of educational programs. If decreases in funding for the faculty workstation program or for other lab or basic equipment is eliminated or reduced, the College will need to examine alternative ways to continue to provide support for technology and equipment needs.

## COLLEGE IDENTITY

- The College will continue to work on articulating an identity that might be used both internally and externally to promote and educate about the interests of CHSS. The *CHSS Strategic Plan* was adopted in 2007 and will continue to guide the College in this area.

## ACCESS TO MAJORS & ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT

- Many of the majors offered in CHSS are attractive to students, resulting in some very large majors and other majors that have moderate access issues. The College will need to continue to monitor curricular changes and requirements that impact access, to assess resource allocation for curricular changes, and to examine time-to-degree issues.
- The College annually reviews enrollment data with department chairs to discuss any changes in the number of majors, graduates, or changes in upper and lower division SCH. We actively participate in university-wide enrollment management discussions and look forward to assisting Admissions as they strive to provide more systematic data to the departments.

## GRADUATE EDUCATION

- While not all departments have graduate programs, CHSS offers eleven graduate programs in seven departments. Graduate education not only fosters an invigorating environment for students and faculty, it provides important

instructional support in lower division courses. To secure adequate levels of funding and support for these programs will continue to be a challenge. The College has participated actively in providing input and response for the White Paper on Graduate Education that is currently under review.

## FUND RAISING

- The College will need to find ways to increase private philanthropic support and to secure resources through grants and special State allocations in order to enhance the quality of the educational experience in the College. The assignment of a WWU Foundation staff member to the College has had a significant and positive impact on fund raising activities in the College. However, the College is still challenged by peripheral fund raising tasks such as public relations, developing publications and other promotional materials, and assisting the thirteen departments with fund raising opportunities and events.
- CHSS has a large alumni base, and many of our graduates are consistent supporters of the department(s) in which they studied. The College will continue to work with the departments to maintain and establish alumni relationships for the purpose of sustaining mentorship opportunities as well as to seek programmatic support for activities in the College.

## OPPORTUNITIES (External)

### SEEKING NEW PROGRAMMATIC OPPORTUNITIES

- CHSS is poised to contribute to the development of international studies on campus due to faculty interest in expanding multicultural education and providing students with experiences that transcend cultural boundaries. Recent faculty sponsored student trips to Africa and multiple study abroad initiatives exemplify this.
- The College will continue to seek programmatic opportunities that meet strategic statewide workforce needs. This includes the support of existing decision packages in Communication Sciences and Disorders and History-Digital Archives as well as the possible application for state funds to develop professional programs in the health professions. The English Department's Technical Writing Program is an example of a successful funding request that addresses a high-need area. The opportunity to coordinate a health initiative that might see the creation of a cohesive program will have the specific purpose of addressing workforce needs in the healthcare industry in the State of Washington. Partnerships with the local community college and technical college might also be possible.
- Pursuit of HECB high demand enrollment grants might assist CHSS in responding to a number of initiatives and shortages in the state.

## ENHANCED PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- The renovation of Miller Hall will afford an excellent opportunity to dramatically improve physical space occupied by the Department of Modern and Classical Languages and the Department of English. Careful planning during this project will enhance learning experiences for students, improve work environment for faculty and staff, and offer a multitude of other benefits.
- Should WWU move to establish a physical presence on the Bellingham waterfront, CHSS is prepared to participate in space allocation decisions that might improve work environments.

## PURSUIT OF REVENUE GENERATING OPPORTUNITIES

- CHSS offers the majority of the summer session curriculum on campus and would be interested in expanding those offerings if departments are also interested. CHSS would see a review/revision of the summer session budget allocations as an opportunity for all colleges.
- CHSS should study opportunities to expand programs and increase revenue through alternative curriculum delivery models, when and if possible within the WWU structure. This might include the development of an online learning community, possible development of online-distance learning courses, expansion of our current library of “hybrid” versions of existing courses, and encouraging faculty to explore new teaching technologies.

## ONGOING ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION OF PROGRAMS

- CHSS will continue with an ongoing assessment and evaluation of programs in the College. In the annual individual meeting with each chair, a number of departmental measures such as outcomes assessment, faculty productivity and workload, program characteristics, and program needs are discussed. The College will continue to review other strategic parameters with the departments in an effort to assist in identifying curricular, programmatic, and curriculum delivery opportunities. Assessment of GURs is also an area that will receive renewed examination.

## PARTNERSHIPS

- CHSS will continue to build strong relationships with alumni for both financial support and mentorship. These relationships might also assist us in studying employment opportunities for students who major in areas not oriented toward professional training.
- The College will seek out opportunities to raise the visibility of CHSS student and faculty achievements. CHSS will also continue to promote student-faculty mentorship in research and scholarly endeavors.

- CHSS will encourage the development of additional partnerships and collaborations with business, industry and healthcare organizations through internships and projects.
- CHSS will examine strategies for partnerships with other institutions and with the State in order to further programmatic initiatives.

## THREATS (External)

### DIMINISHED RESOURCES

- The current economic crisis has resulted in significant revenue shortfalls at the state and national levels. This has led to decreased support for higher education, and our programs are threatened. Additionally, this funding reduction might significantly compromise our ability to recruit and retain talented faculty and thus to meet the needs of our students.
- In CHSS, the funding reduction has been problematic for two basic reasons. First, as illustrated in Figure 3, CHSS funds its instructional programs with a large amount of temporary funding (non-permanent base). These are funds that are used to teach a significant portion of the general university requirements and to meet access needs in the majors. The loss of these funds has a dramatic impact on our ability to meet our instructional needs. Secondly, CHSS is funded in the base allocation at a relatively low level, meaning that any funding reduction has a significant and negative impact. An examination of base budget plotted against average annual SCH (Figure 4) shows that there is great variation in the base allocation and the SCH provided by each unit. This rough approximation of base budget allocation vs. SCH delivered shows that CHSS is funded at a rate of approximately \$180 per SCH (Table 1). This again illustrates the efficiency in CHSS but also points to a more extreme threat to the integrity of instructional programs if either temporary or base funds are further reduced at any significant level.

Table 1. Base Funding (09) vs Annual Average SCH

| College | Base Funding \$ (09) | Average Annual SCH (2007-08) | \$/SCH |
|---------|----------------------|------------------------------|--------|
| CHSS    | 14988373             | 83095                        | \$180  |
| CST     | 11530252             | 39670                        | \$291  |
| CBE     | 6803803              | 21717                        | \$313  |
| WCE     | 5614869              | 9324                         | \$602  |
| CFPA    | 4501489              | 12213                        | \$369  |
| HUX     | 3168814              | 7593                         | \$417  |
| FAIR    | 1816161              | 3925                         | \$463  |

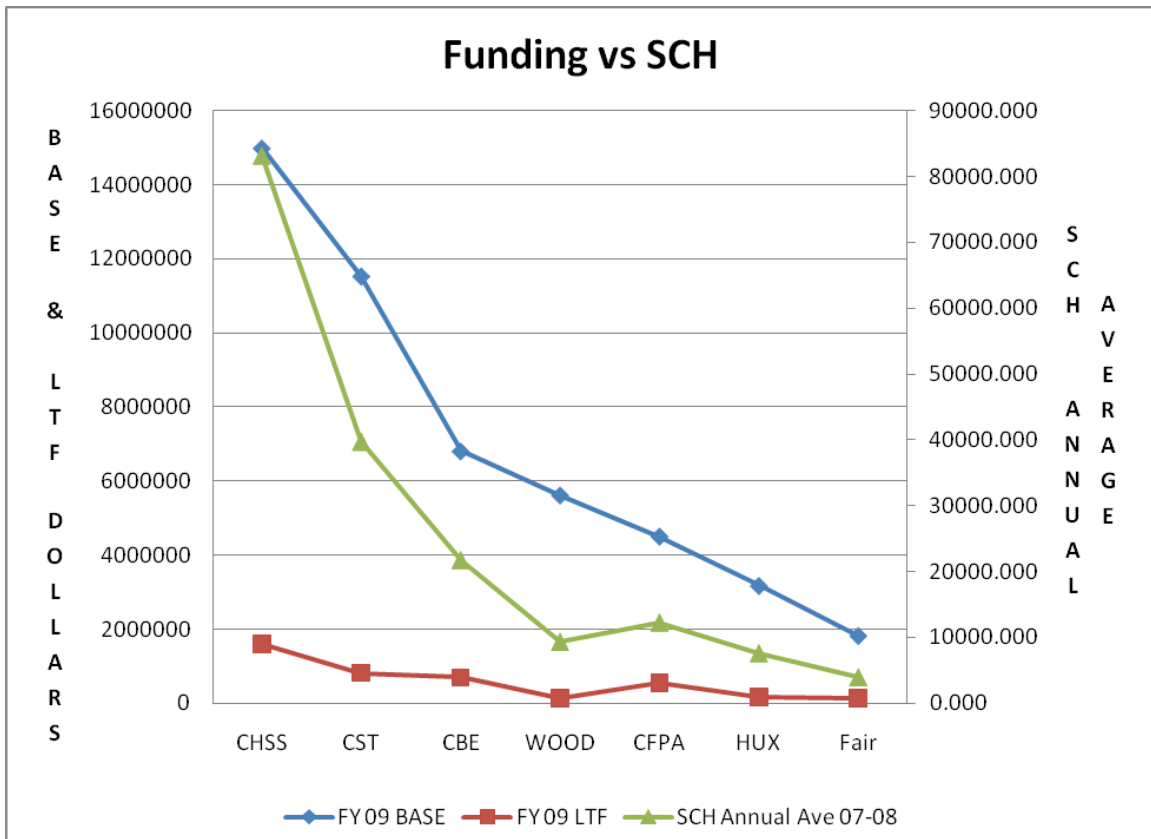


Figure 4. Base and temporary funding compared to SCH across the colleges.