

**SCOT ANALYSIS FOR UNIVERSITY RELATIONS (2009-10)**  
**October 12, 2009**

Operational Participants – University Communications, Printing & Copy Services, and Government Relations

**STRENGTHS**

- The division is made up of very diverse operations, but a common denominator is they are comprised of associates who have flexible skills and valuable breadth of experience.
- Personnel in the division are knowledgeable and technical skills they possess are of high quality. Many associates in the division are considered experts in their field and are sought out both on and off campus.
- The final products produced by each of the operations in the division are of high quality and are valued by the constituents and customers who request them. We have stepped up to the challenge and produced new products within University Communications.
- The division identifies strongly with “liberty ships.” This concept which derived from the World War II construction of ships, cites the efficiencies that are created when feedback from workers is sought and used. Associates cited this as a fact within the Division. Somewhat mixed results. Some feel they are less knowledgeable in general and would like to see more feedback provided from baseline workers.
- The Communications Department has a strong understanding of media expectations and because of experience and vision, is well-suited to meet the needs of, and proactively inform, the mediums it deals with at all levels.
- The associates in each of the operations of the Division are dedicated to providing a high level service and strive to share cost-saving ideas with its customers and constituents. An example of a cost savings idea was moving the graphic designers into University Communications.
- Creativity in thinking and practice is strongly encouraged and practiced by associates in the Division.
- Unlike the vast majority of operations at Western, the Printing and Copy Services operation is self-sustaining and does not require the use of state funds, thus allowing those resources to be used in other areas.

- Because of the nature of its mission, associates in the Division have established strong relationships with key constituents and stakeholders, both on and off campus. Those relationships are essential to securing and maintaining business, to the use of information disseminated to the media, and to fund procurement at the legislative level. We are continuing to build stronger and better relationships with the legislature, the media, community colleges, city and port officials, elected officials, neighborhood associations, and other key constituents.
- There is a high level of pride in each of the operations within the Division in their respective abilities to meet deadlines....Printing and Copy Services with customer orders, Communications with the media, and Government Relations with elected officials and legislative committees. There has been good communication between the graphics staff and communications staff. They have shown that they are good at adapting to change.
- Internal communications, a function that was once viewed as a challenge has matriculated into a strength. 'Western Today' is a great example of a new innovation. New Xerox copying software will help with customers and jobs. Government Relations still needs a better way to communicate with the university during the legislative session. This is both a challenge and opportunity.
- There is a an overall feeling that communication has improved within the division, but some feel they are less in the loop. Associates in the division are proving to be good at adapting to change. (variable data was discussed)
- Copy Services has instituted zero based pricing.

## CHALLENGES

- The WWU website presents a weak face for the university and must be restructured and redesigned to meet current and future needs.
- The Division, and the University as a whole, suffers from the absence of an institutional brand and the lack of design standards to guide print and web graphic design and overall presentation. This continues to be a challenge. It is being addressed with the Branding Initiative.
- The lack of an institutional marketing plan contributes to the perception that WWU is just another regional university and does not allow it to distinguish itself as one of the premier school's of its kind in the West. The lack of a plan has led to decentralized marketing efforts and a resulting duplication of marketing efforts. A marketing plan is in the works.

- The existence of institutional silos results in a lack of common goals, focus, communication, and cooperation and thus, at times, a final product that does not realize its fullest potential. This is a work in progress with some improvement being made. There has been positive feedback in breaking down some of the silos. Partnerships are being strengthened with the Deans.
- Relationships between WWU and the greater Bellingham community are not at the level they should and could be. This continues to be a challenge. Progress has been made with local government and community leaders and the through the continued good work of the Campus Community Coalition, but overall, more work needs to be done.
- Because of the deteriorating economy in the state and nation, people are concerned about losing their positions as a result of budget cuts at WWU.
- The Printing and Copy Services operation is threatened by the ability of commercial entities to do the same work at lower prices while at the same time the operation is challenged by rising paper and materials prices. The lack of work for area commercial printers is forcing undercutting and competition in the private sector, resulting in pressure on the pricing structure at WWU. Copy Services has a new computer program that enabled the operation to lower its pricing.
- Changing computer and related social media technology is a threat both within WWU's Marketing and Communications and within other units across the campus. Many departments on campus have their own copy machines. There is much redundancy campus wide. Many print jobs being produced by individual departments are poorly done and reflect poorly on the entities producing them and on Western.
- Turmoil within the media industry (paper and electronic) is constantly changing the focus and strategies that must be used to work with the respective mediums. This turmoil has led to a dilution of strength of some traditional media. This continues to be a challenge. We must stay on top of new computer technology.
- As a part of WWU we recognize the threat that the establishment of branch campus' and community colleges expansion pose. Those threats carry down to the operational level at Western. This is a constant challenge. Progress is being made in working with other baccalaureate institutions.
- Because of the freezing of and/or elimination of positions in the division and across campus, people are doing more work and that has resulted, in some cases, in the reduction of the production of the highest quality product. With more work comes more stress. We feel we have stepped up to the challenge. Communications has its strongest staff ever, and is accomplishing a great deal despite being down one FTE because of the budget cuts. In each of the divisions it is a reality that some projects sometimes take a longer to produce.

- The current resource allocation process at WWU does not recognize areas of need nor recognize opportunity for future excellence. An open budgeting process has been implemented with a website and access to comment thus improving transparency. However, challenges remain as reductions in base budget and fewer FTE prevent departments from capitalizing on numerous opportunities.
- Decentralized vs. centralized in the areas of copy services, design and writing of web communications and the design and writing of printed materials. Colleges and programs continue to designate internal staff for their own in-house production.
- Need to continue to continue to strengthen relationships division- wide with all community constituencies.

### OPPORTUNITIES

- The bad economic and budget situation on campus, in the state and country has caused a new attitude where people are eager and willing to increase responsibilities within their own position to help others in their work.
- WWU has an opportunity to escape from its recognition and status as a “Regional” university because of new focus and energy devoted to developing an all encompassing brand and to subsequent integrated marketing.
- There are a wide array of new and exciting opportunities for website enhancement and general on-line presentations. Improvements to the Western website are sorely needed and everyone in the division is excited to make that happen in the near future. Unlike the past research activities can be tracked via the new Western Today.
- Possible new leadership structure in Printing and Copy Services. This is still an opportunity with the leadership structure still in transition.
- Because of turmoil in the media industry, there are multiple opportunities for the development of innovative ways for WWU to send its message to its constituents and stakeholders. Opportunity exists to be our own publisher both online and in print. Bullet numbers 3, 5 ,6, 9 and 10 all relate to this message.
- Changing computer and social media technology present the Division and University with a new world of new media opportunities to connect with constituents and stakeholders.
- The initiative to expand Western to the Waterfront is an important focus and opportunity within the Division and for the University.
- Capitalizing on the talents of students at WWU, the opportunity exists to engage Art Department students and students from other programs in the WWU branding process.

- While video is and has been used through links on the WWU website in the past, the opportunity exists to expand and refine that usage in the future. The expanded use of video for other purposes to constituents and stakeholders is also available. We have expanded our relationships with BTV10 to disseminate Western's message, but a great opportunity remains to improve our work with WTVW and Seattle TV.
- With audiences becoming less patient but still interested in gathering information quickly, the opportunity exists to merge on-line productions and print pieces to compliment each other and more effectively serve the needs of viewers and readers.
- Increased promotion for arts events at WWU and the broadcasting of some of those events would significantly improve the profile of the arts and showcase gifted and talented students and faculty. WWU still needs to be more accessible and customer friendly especially during evening events. For the campus as a whole, parking continues to be a significant barrier to access for customers.
- More opportunities exist for in-house production and the usage of the printing press.