
OFFICE OF THE VICE PROVOST FOR UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

2011-2013 SCOT ANALYSIS

In coordination with the Provost, Deans and the Academic Coordinating Commission, the Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education (VPUE) is responsible for the quality and assessment of undergraduate academic programs at Western—particularly in the first two years and especially for the first year. The VPUE serves as director of academic first year programs and as the Provost’s designee for a variety of internal and external committees. The Office of the VPUE is responsible for developing policies and programs that enhance the undergraduate experience of students, with particular emphasis on the assessment of student learning and other outcome measures that demonstrate student engagement and retention. The Office carries out New Faculty Orientation, New Chairs Orientation and coordinates Western’s participation in the Voluntary System of Accountability. The Office fulfills other functions pertaining to curriculum, faculty development, assessment, accreditation and reporting, as directed by the Provost. The Office of the VPUE includes several programs with specific responsibilities for student academic services and faculty development. These include the Honors Program, Center for Instructional Innovation, Center for Service Learning, First Year Interest Groups, First Year Experience courses, Fellowships Office, Teaching-Learning Academy, Western Reads, Women Studies, Writing Center, Writing Instruction Support and the Catalog.

STRENGTHS

- VPUE office working in close partnerships on significant initiatives; all initiatives moving forward successfully:
 - Development of GUR assessment plan.
 - Response to accreditation recommendations 1-4.
 - Student Affairs/Academic Affairs First-Year Planning Group.
 - Restructuring of University assessment plan.
 - Early Fall Start.
 - Development of assessment-data summary for deans and chairs.
- VPUE relationship with Provost, Budget Director, Deans and ACC Chair very positive and effective.
- VPUE receives excellent support from administrative assistant and Provost’s Office.
- Experienced, qualified and motivated directors leading VPUE programs.
- Most VPUE program smaller and more efficient than comparable programs at Central or Eastern.
- The American Democracy Project successfully transitioning off staff support.
- VPUE budget no longer dependent upon discretionary funding.
- Office of the VPUE has designated space in Old Main.
- Office of VPUE has improved communication with deans and chairs.
- Catalog and Curriculum successful with early registration.
- Catalog and Curriculum providing increased support via workshops on curriculum process to chairs and department managers.
- Transition to E-catalogue progressing smoothly.
- Office of Survey Research (OSR) has reduced duplication of senior exit surveys and alumni surveys.

- OSR has standardized and improved WELS surveys.
- OSR permits departments to customize WELS surveys, heightening their value to assessment efforts.
- Fellowships Office effectively communicates opportunities for distinguished fellowships to students; faculty are beginning to identify potential candidates and to volunteer to interview and evaluate applicants.
- Fellowships Office successfully assisting students in building resumes and winning major awards.
- Fellowships Office effectively coordinated with Honors program.
- The General Studies major has a new home with the CHSS and a new advisor.
- Faculty now initiating GUR improvement efforts through the CII.
- PRAXIS communicates teaching and learning resources to the campus community.
- Data demonstrates that FIG program contributes positively to freshman retention and graduation rates.
- Center for Service-Learning (CSL) praised by faculty fellows and community organizations.
- CSL international service program now established and successful.
- CSL serving more than 800 students a year.
- CSL initiating new service learning opportunities for first-year students.
- Women Studies provides key CGM offerings for the GUR program.
- Honors Program draws high achieving students to WWU and raises campus retention and 4-year graduation rate.
- Writing Instruction Support and Writing Center successfully initiating new services support for faculty and students.
- Writing Center providing extended hours of assistance.
- Writing Center successfully employing time-saving and innovative audio-visual response method to enhance online/distance writing tutorial services.
- Writing Center pursuing successful partnerships with Tutorial Center and Library.
- Writing Center providing enhanced service to students in off-campus degree programs in Bremerton and Everett.
- The Center for Instructional Innovation (CII) website redesigned, exemplary and frequently accessed.
- CII's Innovative Teaching Showcase has improved web presentation.
- CII providing Small Group Instructional Diagnosis services to faculty.
- CII providing more faculty development services via online video modules.
- CII and Writing Instruction Support (WIS) faculty development workshops receive extremely positive survey ratings.

- CII providing assessment support services to the campus.
- WIS has increased visibility and influence on new Committee on Undergraduate Education.
- WIS website successfully coordinates writing research fellowships, external faculty workshop and writing residency for faculty.
- WIS leading campus efforts to clarify GUR writing requirements.
- Western Reads has greatly expanded participation across campus, integrating the WR book with academic instruction.
- Western Reads successfully integrated with Huxley and Fairhaven Colleges.
- Western Reads enjoying new visibility on and off campus.
- Teaching-Learning Academy (TLA) effectively provides opportunities for dialogue and discussion about teaching and learning among students, faculty, staff and administrators.
- TLA demonstrating increasing participation among first and second-year students, faculty and staff.
- TLA successfully partnering with sustainability academy, Viking Village and Woodring Diversity Committee.

CHALLENGES/WEAKNESSES

- VPUE programs requiring additional leadership and management efforts over a period in which VPUE has rapidly increasing external responsibilities. VPUE unable to provide directors with all the oversight and attention they request.
- VPUE office, operating with a reduced staff (no special assistant, no first-year clerical support) now handling additional responsibilities. Office must become very efficient to ensure excellence in both leading and managing.
- Decentralized campus assessment model provides special challenges to VPUE in effort to meet accreditation demands for more systematic campus-wide assessment efforts.
- Transition to new assessment standards occurring over same period in which VPUE office must lead response to previous standards.
- VPUE program directors lack sufficient support staff.
- Multiple initiatives and tasks of significance challenge the office to ensure excellence in each effort.
- Construction projects required multiple VPUE programs to move offices twice in single year while sustaining services.
- VPUE must manage programs amidst economic uncertainty.
- Catalog and Curriculum Coordinator challenged by new responsibilities for e-catalog, early registration; errors in previous catalog require lengthy revision by catalog coordinator.
- Center for Service-Learning unable to meet all faculty requests for assistance.

- Low attendance at some faculty development events reduces impact of professional development efforts.
- Center for Instructional Innovation must meet new assessment responsibilities while maintaining ongoing faculty development initiatives.
- Efforts of Fellowship Office to secure distinguished fellowships for students impeded by lack of campus resources for undergraduate research and internships.
- College Hall location reduces visibility of Writing Center.
- Lack of sustained server space impedes OSR efforts to share its software.
- Shift to new IR and assessment structure challenges OSR to work amidst uncertainty.
- OSR Director challenged to provide services on reduced appointment.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Funding limitations provide opportunities to improve efficiency and collaboration.
- Strategic downsizing can result in a more streamlined core of coordinated programs and services.
- Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) and LEAP initiatives provide impetus and leverage for creating more systematic, campus wide assessment efforts.
- Economic crisis has brought additional attention to value of TLA discussions.
- Restructuring of IR and assessment offices moves CII to center of campus assessment/accreditation efforts.
- Restructuring of IR office provides opportunity to connect OSR to initiatives of provost and president.
- VPUE office positioned to participate in new leadership efforts of provost, president, and the vice presidents.
- New responsibilities of VPUE office may raise visibility of VPUE programs.
- Fiscal crisis and downturn in high academic-index freshmen draws new attention to Honors program, providing and impetus for expansion.

THREATS

- Changes in NWCCU Accreditation standards threaten to increase workload of VPUE office and to complicate current assessment efforts.
- Program directors and staff challenged to increase services while bearing budget reductions.
- Lack of support staff impedes director initiatives to innovate and serve the campus.
- Financial crisis and funding uncertainty threaten capacity of office to maintain services while “leading by example” to reduce costs.
- Retention and graduation rates improvement efforts threatened by scheduling challenges of financial crisis.
- Faculty fears regarding budget and workload threaten support for assessment initiatives.