

Division of Student Affairs and Academic Support Services

SCOT Analysis: Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, and Threats

INTERNAL ASSESSMENT — STRENGTHS

The Division of Student Affairs and Academic Support Services' strengths include:

- Co-curricular programs and services that complement the academic curriculum and provide students an opportunity to practice/apply what they have learned in the classroom.
- A broad range of experiential opportunities – including student employment, paraprofessional roles, student clubs/organizations, and internships – that enable students to develop and improve upon skills in leadership, social responsibility, and civic engagement.
- A highly experienced, dedicated, resilient, collaborative, creative, caring, responsive, and diverse staff that stay abreast of current trends and issues and are committed to the provision of effective student-centered programs and services.
- A strong commitment to student involvement in university governance, policy- and decision-making, including student participation in key division committees and initiatives.
- Collaborative relationships – both on- and off-campus – that result in enhanced service to students, shared education/problem solving, and a strength of response in crisis situations.
- An ongoing commitment to diversity, as evidenced by the success of division programs in recruiting, enrolling, and retaining diverse students and staff.
- Shared leadership in campus-wide sustainability efforts, particularly in the areas of renewable energy, recycling, sustainable food, and reducing the amount of paper used (by converting print publications to online versions).
- ***Emerging partnerships with community colleges, e.g. Northwest Higher Education Coalition***
- Excellence in the residential environment, including strengths in student orientation programs, outreach and advising services, and an emphasis on health and wellness.
- A balanced athletic program that ranked 6th nationally (among all Division II schools) in the 2009-10 Learfield Sports Directors' Cup standings. This is the highest finish in school history.
- Excellence in career and student employment services, as evidenced by the ***comparative*** placement rates of Western graduates in graduate/professional schools and careers.

- 92 ▪ Providing services and support for non-matriculated international students and *students enrolled*
93 *at off-site programs* presents an ongoing challenge, particularly for University Residences, the
94 Counseling Center, the Student Health Center, and the Dean of Students Office / Student Life.
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- 96 ▪ Utility, construction, salary, maintenance, overhead costs, and the costs associated with
97 maintaining the infrastructure of increasingly complex building systems are growing at a greater
98 rate than revenue, presenting an ongoing challenge for division auxiliaries.
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- 100 ▪ Technology poses an ongoing challenge, particularly our ability to purchase/maintain current
101 technologies, provide market-savvy and easy-to-navigate websites, and remain responsive to
102 students' changing expectations at a time when both staffing and resources are stretched thin.
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- 104 ▪ A growing number of staff in the division are nearing retirement; as they leave Western, they
105 will be taking with them a wealth of experience and wisdom that will be difficult to replace.
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- 107 ▪ Working within a *shrinking* budget, while providing the same degree of excellence in service
108 that students, faculty, and staff have come to expect, presents an ongoing challenge.
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- 110 ▪ Western's lack of accessible, close-in parking for visitors presents a challenge for division
111 departments – particularly Admissions, the A.S. Bookstore, and Intercollegiate Athletics – and
112 creates a perception of inaccessibility for members of the local community.
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- 114 ▪ *Increased demand to respond to various constituents (students, parents, legislators,*
115 *community members) on budget planning and expenditures, as well as greater levels of*
116 *scrutiny relative to how funds are being allocated and spent.*
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- 118 ▪ *Struggling to stay current and innovative, while faced with declining professional development*
119 *resources and increasing job demands.*
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- 121 ▪ *Losing SAA graduate students to support our programs and assessment efforts.*
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- 123 ▪ *Increasing number of duties with declining staff and salaries.*
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- 125 ▪ *Maintaining staff morale.*
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- 127 ▪ *Western lacks a long range or intermediate range enrollment plan*
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- 129 ▪ *Western lacks a comprehensive and integrated retention plan*
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EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT — OPPORTUNITIES

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134 Opportunities for the Division of Student Affairs and Academic Support Services include:

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- 136 ▪ Examining opportunities to encourage *cross-collaborations across departments and divisions* in
137 an effort to better serve students.

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- Facilitating an inclusive community by reaching out to diverse student populations – including veterans, low-income and first-generation students, ethnically diverse students, international students, students with disabilities, and others who have been historically underserved by higher education – and building on outreach and retention services to ensure their academic success.
- Partnering with Academic Affairs to strengthen new student recruitment efforts, enhance the first-year and undergraduate student experience, and engage students in efforts that help to facilitate their learning and development.
- Expanding grant-writing, sponsorship, and fundraising efforts; identifying alternative sources of revenue and *implementation of fees for service* to support division programs and activities, and enhance student scholarships.
- Increasing partnership and collaboration with the Associated Students, and working together to identify areas of potential overlap and/or shared interest.
- Making the shift from a usage- and satisfaction-based assessment model to an outcomes-based model focused on student learning, and partnering with Academic Affairs to explore options for demonstrating accountability, including the Voluntary System of Accountability, the National Student Clearinghouse, and the National Survey of Student Engagement.
- Reinvesting in intercollegiate athletics, in partnership with the Viking Athletics Strategic Advisory Committee, to address gender equity issues and strengthen existing programs.
- Working collaboratively with Academic Affairs, the Associated Students, and University Residences to maximize Western’s long history of excellence by enhancing the student experience through a comprehensive portfolio of leadership development opportunities.
- Enhancing relationships with current and former student leaders – including A.S. Board members, Resident Assistants, Orientation Student Advisors, Student Admissions Representatives, Lifestyle Advisors, student athletes, etc. – and partnering with the WWU Foundation, Alumni Association, and parents around fundraising/development efforts.
- *Maximizing our presence on the web and exploring forms of social media* – e.g., Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, blogging, etc. – that reach out to, communicate with, and engage prospective and current students.
- *Working with Business and Financial Affairs to explore options that improve student services. For example*, using the Western Card as an on-campus credit card, enabling students to “charge” books at the A.S. Bookstore and have the charges posted to their student accounts.
- Partnering with WWU faculty and staff to offer a range of internal professional development opportunities; utilizing our talents on campus, instead of reaching beyond Western, to meet staff members’ professional development needs.

- 184 ▪ Increasing opportunities for division staff to cross-program, cross-train, and work more
185 collaboratively with one another and with other divisions/departments across campus.
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- 187 ▪ *Utilizing consulting services to identify strategies for more effective financial positioning in*
188 *the marketplace.*
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- 190 ▪ *Strengthening partnerships with academic departments to enhance outreach, recruitment, and*
191 *enrollment management efforts that improve course access and provide strengthened*
192 *academic and career advising for students.*
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- 194 ▪ *Utilizing available and newly identified tools to improve course access and assist with*
195 *academic planning.*
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- 197 ▪ *Availability of more user-friendly features as a result of upgrades to the Western website and*
198 *its templates.*
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- 200 ▪ *Developing a communication system with Institutional Research that improves access to the*
201 *data departments need to make informed decisions (in areas such as enrollment planning,*
202 *course availability, etc.) and effectively evaluate their programs.*
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206 EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT — THREATS

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208 Threats faced by the Division of Student of Student Affairs and Academic Support Services include:

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- 210 ▪ Declining financial support for students has required an increasing number of students to work
211 and/or take on additional debt in order to finance their education and stay in school.
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- 213 ▪ The need to generate revenue to make up for state and federal funding shortfalls – through grant
214 writing, external fundraising, and other sources – detracts from the provision of core programs
215 and services for students.
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- 217 ▪ Mandated increases in the minimum wage *and reductions in work-study funds* have impacted
218 division departments, stretching budgets thin and limiting the number of on-campus jobs
219 available to students.
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- 221 ▪ As greater numbers of students and their families are losing jobs, demand for service – from
222 financial aid re-packaging to on-campus health care – continues to increase.
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- 224 ▪ Division departments are facing increasing demands, expectations, and scrutiny from a variety of
225 internal and external groups, including students, parents, legislators, and others *regarding budget*
226 *planning and how funds are being utilized.*
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- 228 ▪ New unfunded mandates and accountability requirements – at both the state and the federal level
229 – have impacted a number of division departments and increased overall workload.

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- The A.S. Bookstore faces a rapidly changing environment, including increased competition from online book sellers, growth in the availability of electronic course materials, and a number of new state and federal mandates/regulations which they must implement.
- The recession has had a direct impact on the availability of internship and employment opportunities for students; job postings on the Student Employment website and employer participation in Western’s Career Fairs are both down significantly compared to prior years
- Technology — and students’ use of it — is rapidly changing; the cost of adopting new advances is expensive, and requires a level of technological support that is not currently available.
- *Increased competition for securing out-of-state students and for attracting in-state students who are being recruited by other states.*
- *Continued budget reductions and lowering levels of state support.*
- *Declining resources in the community (e.g. health care).*