What should our approach be to meeting educational needs off of our campus?

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT OFF-CAMPUS NEEDS AND STUDENT INTEREST

• Recent high school graduates are a minor and decreasing share of all postsecondary enrollments. Washington’s high school population peaked in 2008 and has been slowly declining since that time. It will not return to 2008 levels before 2025. After climbing for 15 straight years, total college enrollment began falling in 2011 and accelerated in 2012, while the proportion of full-time students as a share of the total also fell.

• The percentage of students working while attending college and the number electing to live at home are both on the increase, even among children of affluent families.

• Nationwide, the fastest growing demographic group in the next decade will be adult learners ages 25 to 44.

• Washington is a net exporter of college students. More Washingtonians feel they must leave the state for higher education than are attracted into the state from outside.

• The U.S. Department of Education estimates 38% of all college students are adults (over 25 years of age), while only 27% (5mm of 18mm) of undergraduate college students nationwide are “traditional” (18-24 years-of-age and enrolled full-time in a four-year institution). The other 73% are “non-traditional” students (part-time, working, and/or adults).

• Just over 11% of Western students were 25 and older in fall 2013, and 10% of students were classified as part-time (only 8% of undergraduate students and just over 50% of graduate students were attending part-time).

• Washington ranks 41st among the 50 states in baccalaureate production. However the one area of rapid growth in degree production has been on the satellite campuses and instructional centers of the state’s six public four-year institutions.

• The state continues to invest in these branch campuses, most recently committing to a major capital construction project in Everett for Washington State University. Currently, Western students comprise more than 60% of the enrollment at Everett’s University Center of North Puget Sound.

• Five of the state’s six public institutions are located on the eastern and western fringes of the state. Only CWU is in the geographic center. While this partially mirrors population distribution, a few major population concentrations (Snohomish, Island and Skagit counties in the North Sound and Kitsap, Jefferson and Clallam counties to the west) are home to no four-year institutions. In addition, mountains, waterways, and overburdened highways are significant physical barriers in many areas. This problem is one reason, among many, why the Legislature opted to endorse Western Governors University and its online programs.

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT WESTERN AND OFF-CAMPUS PROGRAMS

• A Western degree is highly valued in our region, and would be the preferred option for many place bound students if they could access it locally.
Western has had an outreach and extension division since 1912. In 2010, just shy of the organization’s 100 year anniversary, a campus-wide Task Force of faculty and staff looked to the future, publishing the White Paper, *Extended Education at Western Washington University: Role and Prospects*. Its report states,

- “Our overriding conclusion is that Western should increase extended education while focusing on maintaining high academic standards. The task force finds that an expanded extended education can improve our services to local communities and adult learners.”

Western currently operates programs on select community college campuses in Everett, Seattle, Port Angeles, Bremerton and Poulsbo. However, nearly every one of Washington’s 35 community and technical college presidents has made appeals to have more four-year degree programs offered on their campuses. In some cases, they have sought authorization to offer their own baccalaureate degrees as well.

Western’s reputation is premised on being what President Shepard has called a “destination university” for academically qualified students.

Western’s mission statement reads: “Western Washington University serves the people of the State of Washington, the nation, and the world by bringing together individuals of diverse backgrounds and perspectives in an inclusive, student-centered university that develops the potential of learners and the well-being of communities.”

**Additional questions to consider in responding to this question**

1. To what extent does WWU’s mission statement give it an obligation to serve non-traditional-aged students?

2. To what extent does WWU’s mission statement give it an obligation to focus primarily on increasing the ability of students to attend classes on the Bellingham campus versus adding to its learning offerings away from the Bellingham campus?

3. What are the benefits or drawbacks of offering programs on a revenue-generation model?

4. Should new programs off campus be premised on expanding access to the breadth of WWU programs, or offering select programs targeted to meet local demand?