Purpose of Submittal
The purpose of this session is to engage the Board in a discussion of some of the current and emerging strategies used to retain at-risk students at Western.

Supporting Information
Western has a strong record of successfully supporting students towards graduation. Freshmen retention rates remain strong at 85% and graduation rates are near 70%. Retention and graduation rates for students of color, first generation, and low-income students are also comparably high and have steadily improved through the efforts of Student Outreach Services and other initiatives aimed at providing support to these students. As a result, today those rates are more than 10% higher than those of our Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System (IPEDS) comparison schools.

Despite a strong overall retention rate, we also recognize that approximately 30% of students are not graduating, that our graduation rates for students of color are not as strong as our overall graduation rates, and that a greater percentage of those students dropping out are leaving with debt that may take years to repay, all without the benefit of a college degree and the higher salary that usually accompanies that degree.

Furthermore, though our rate of success with low-income students is better than IPEDS comparison schools, Western has a significant differential in its graduation rates for low-income students (59% as opposed to 67% overall). This differential is greater than that of the other state universities in our system, and greater than that predicted by academic ability.

As an institution, these concerns have our attention and we take responsibility for ensuring that our students have the support and information they need to be academically successful and to graduate from Western. While not a comprehensive list of retention efforts at Western, what follows is a description of some present and newly emerging retention strategies.

Student Outreach Services [SOS]
As a publicly purposed university, Western has always had a deep commitment to provide access to and serve traditionally underrepresented and/or underserved students (first-generation, non-
traditional, low-income, and students of color). SOS was created to: (1) serve student populations with unique struggles and provide holistic academic, social and cultural support as they integrate and adjust to college life; (2) provide academic advising, coaching and mentoring and the requisite tools and resources that enhance academic achievement and personal success; (3) monitor students’ progress and intervene when students are academically at-risk; and (4) engage in community building with these students to develop, maintain and enhance the motivation needed for academic success through to graduation.

SOS is part of an integrative unit that includes the Ethnic Student Center and the LEADS (Leaders Engage in Action, Discernment, & Skills-building) Program. Under the leadership of Western’s Associate Dean of Students/SOS Director, this unit works together to address the challenges faced by these students and to invite participation in a broad array of SOS programs and services, including some listed below that promote persistence, retention and graduation.

**Strategies for Success (SFS):** SFS serves first-year students identified as first generation or Pell-eligible. Upon acceptance to Western, these students are invited to participate in SFS. Generally, about 250 students choose to participate each year. SFS participants get specialized advising during Summerstart and Transitions and one-on-one advising throughout the year. These students are also invited to participate in the Mentor Project (a program that matches incoming students with upper class students), to enroll in EDUC 108 (a 2-credit course designed to assist students with their transition to college and to understand the process of adult learning), and to attend workshops designed to enhance their academic and study skills.

**All Nations Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (ANLSAMP):** Funded by the National Science Foundation, ANSLAMP is a national initiative that targets Native American students pursuing degrees in Science, Technology, Engineer and Mathematics (STEM). SOS and the College of Sciences and Technology partner to provide a quarterly stipend and to offer opportunities for broad involvement in conferences, internships, mentoring relationships, and undergraduate research for students in the program.

**College Success Foundation (CSF) programs:** CSF manages many scholarship programs including the Gates-funded Washington State Achievers Scholarship Program, the Costco Scholarship Fund, the Washington State Governor’s scholarship for Foster Youth, and the Washington State Opportunity Scholarship. CSF programs target Washington state students from high-potential, low-income backgrounds with a goal to improve college access.

**ACCESS:** A year-long program targeting first-year students who have low academic-index scores but show potential for high achievement if provided “access” to higher education and a different life experience. Students are invited to participate in the program. Participants are assigned an Academic Support Coordinator to assist with class selection, financial aid needs and developing long-term educational plans. ACCESS students are assigned priority class registration and generally benefit from further preparation in math and study skills.

**First Alert:** SOS and Academic Advising staff provides outreach and access to resources for multicultural students whose academic performance puts them at risk of dismissal.
Transfer Access Program (TAP): TAP offers support to transfer students from underrepresented and/or underserved populations. These students are encouraged to enroll in the EDUC 108 class. In addition, they receive the support of a full-time Academic Support Coordinator for selecting classes, navigating financial aid, developing an educational plan, and preparing for a major.

Academic Care Team [ACT]
ACT was formed 2011 and meets regularly to provide coordinated individual support to students who utilize two or more of the offices represented on ACT, to examine data to more holistically understand general academic success and retention trends, and to offer ideas for improved policies/practices to the appropriate sources. ACT includes representatives from Residence Life, Academic Advising, Financial Aid, disAbility Resources for Students, the Tutoring Center, Student Outreach Services, Institutional Research, Student Life and the Registrar’s Office.

Student Success Collaborative [SSC]
After substantial review, involving more than 100 faculty and staff, Western joined a 3-year pilot initiative in January 2013 using the Student Success Collaborative (SSC), a predictive analytics tool and advising platform created by the Education Advisory Board in Washington, D.C.

Using more than a decade of historical academic data from Western, the SSC combines technology, research, and predictive analytics to reveal the correlates, pathways and course sequences shown to be characteristic of successful students at Western. This data and information is expected to (1) help departments and colleges adjust their curriculum to improve graduation, (2) help administrators identify where resources will make the most impact, and (3) assist advisors in more rapidly identifying those students who have deviated from a recommended pathway or course sequence. Via an alert system, advisors can be more proactive in supporting students and getting them back on track before more serious consequences, such as course failure, occur. Furthermore, we expect that SSC data can be used to assist with two specific areas of concern: time to declaration of major and the differential in graduation rates for low-income students.

Implementation will begin this fall with five early adoption workgroups at Western: the College of Business & Economics, Huxley College of the Environment, the College of Fine & Performing Arts, the Academic Advising Center, and Student Outreach Services.

Western is on the forefront of this national initiative. It is one of only 22 universities in the official first pilot phase of the SSC, the first institution in Washington state to sign up with SSC, and one of 60+ schools who will be adopting the platform over the next year. Furthermore, Western’s thoughtful and thorough approach to implementation has been recognized by EAB staff and a representative has been asked to serve on a new Product Advisory Council and help shape the future direction, language and features of the platform. Only 12 members were selected from across the country to serve on this council. Other schools of similar size in the winter 2012/2013 cohort include: East Tennessee State University (TN), Eastern Kentucky University (KY), James Madison University (VA), Southern Illinois University – Carbondale (IL), Stephen F. Austin University (TX), University of North Florida (FL), and University of Texas – Brownsville (TX).