Western's system of governance is founded on the principle of full participation by all members of the campus community, and the University provides many and varied opportunities for leadership. Since each component of the system is defined in its relationship to the whole, shared governance enables the University to make strides toward fulfilling its core values. Western consistently encourages different constituencies to provide input for discussions of key issues related to Western's overall mission. (See also Standard One for a thorough discussion of how Western revised its Mission and Strategic Action Plan in a collaborative fashion.) All University committees are designed to have broad representation from the campus community.

**Governing Board**

Authority to govern Western is vested by state law in a Board of Trustees composed of eight members, each appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the State Senate. The Rules of Operation (Section 010) are clear about the collegial roles of faculty, staff, and students in governance, and the document emphasizes that the channel of authority to and from the Board for faculty, administrative officers, staff and students is through the President, unless otherwise directed (see WWU Core Exhibit: Board of Trustees Rules of Operation). Faculty and student representatives are regularly invited to participate in meetings of the Board, and they may introduce reports through the President, or, in unusual circumstances, directly to the Board. Regularly scheduled meetings of the Board are always open to the public.

The makeup of the Board is representative of the public interest and
usually includes two members from the northwest region of the state who are familiar with local issues (see Appendix 6.1: Board Membership). Each regular member of the Board serves a six-year term, with terms staggered to assure continuity. Officers of the Board (chair, vice-chair, and secretary) are elected every other year. Board members receive no compensation other than per diem and travel expenses.

As of 1998, following state legislation, the Associated Students (A.S.) also nominate a student trustee, who is appointed following the recommendation of an on-campus student review committee. Student members serve one-year terms, and they are given copies of “Trustee Responsibilities” (see Exhibit 6.1: “Trustee Responsibilities”) so that they understand the roles and functions of their position.

The President of the University does not serve as a regular or ex officio member of the Board, though she, along with the Provost, Vice Presidents, and the University attorney attend each meeting of the Board. The President of the Faculty Senate and the President of the A.S. are also invited to attend each Board meeting, and items from both constituencies appear on the agendas of each meeting. Faculty and student representatives are regularly invited to participate in meetings of the Board, and they may introduce reports through the President, or in unusual circumstances, directly to the Board. All meetings of the Board are open to the campus community and the general public.

For the most part, the Board of Trustees acts only as a committee of the whole, having only one standing committee—the Audit Committee. (See also Standard Seven for a full description of this committee.) Occasionally, the Board appoints ad hoc committees to deal with specific issues and make recommendations.

**Lines of Authority**

The Board of Trustees possesses the following major lines of authority, which it exercises subject to the conditions and limitations of law; these responsibilities align fully with the NWCCU standards for governance:

- to employ the President under such terms and conditions as may be negotiated from time to time through a written contract, including, but not limited to, compensation, housing requirements, benefits, and tenure to an academic unit. The Board of Trustees evaluates the President yearly, with an extensive review at the end of the first three years and every four years thereafter.

- to approve the operating budget and capital budget for the University. Long-range financial plans are also discussed at regular Board meetings, and the Board reviews and approves the ten-year Capital Plan and Institutional Master Plan. The Board reviews the State audits of the University, as well as the financial and internal audits of units of the University. The Board established an audit committee in 2003.
• to establish or abolish colleges, divisions, schools, departments, and degree programs.
• to authorize the awarding of degrees for appropriate programs of study. For example, in 2006 the Board approved, through the budget, the creation of a new degree track: the Emergency Planning & Hazards Mitigation track as part of the BA degree in Environmental Studies, Planning, and Environmental Policy.
• to establish schedules for the collection of fees such as tuition.
• to approve and enter into collective bargaining agreements with employees.
• to establish retirement programs for employees.
• to retain responsibility for the expenditure of state funds by the University and its agents and employees.
• to authorize the purchase or long-term lease (for more than two years) of real property not located within the boundaries of the campus as described by the Institutional Master Plan for Western Washington University.
• to authorize the selection of professional, architectural, engineering, and related services for the design of public works in instances where the fee for such services will exceed $100,000.
• to authorize the execution of public works contracts for amounts in excess of $500,000, or where competitive proposals were not solicited and considered.
• to establish self-supporting facilities and to exercise all related authority delegated to the Board of Trustees.
• to authorize and approve bonded indebtedness.

(See also Core Exhibit: Board of Trustees Rules of Operation.)

The Board also regularly reviews and approves Western’s Mission and Strategic Action Plan. With Board representation on the campus committee, the trustees were actively involved in the major revision and update in 2006 (see also Standard One). In addition, in 2005, the Board approved changes to the Faculty Handbook, including the tenure to promotion, and grievance procedures (see also Standard Four). In the past year, the Board also approved policies for internal controls and internal audit (see also Standard Seven).

As noted earlier, the Board has authority to establish or abolish colleges. In 2003, the Board approved the formation of two new colleges—the College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS) and the College of Sciences and Technology (CST)—from the existing College of Arts and Sciences. The Provost led this process and, with the assistance of external consultants, the reorganization was considered at many levels—with focused discussions through the governance units, through public forums, and with public review...
by the Board of Trustees. Though many faculty members disagreed with administration over the efficacy of this action, the Board took their views into account before making its decision. (See also Standard Four for details on the process, and Standard Two College summaries for CHSS and CST discussions on the effects of this change.)

The Board looks to the President for leadership in organizing and staffing Western to reflect its mission, size, and complexity, and it has been supportive of the minor opportunities to reorganize and revise staffing that arise in connection with each annual budget process. Some recent changes undertaken by the President include moving Publishing Services from Business and Financial Affairs to External Affairs, which placed that service in greater synergy with University Communications. Similarly, the President moved the Alumni Office from External Affairs to Advancement to provide more cross-functional planning with the Office of Development.

In the interest of ongoing assessment, the Board periodically conducts a self-study to determine its effectiveness in carrying out its responsibilities. For example, the Board made several changes to its agenda format to help the meetings run more smoothly. The Board also holds an annual one-day workshop to allow in-depth study of issues of interest to the members. These workshops provide context for the decision-making process, such as information about enrollment planning.

Throughout 2006-08, the Board devoted time to learning about and contributing to the accreditation process. Presentations and discussion of the subject occurred at several meetings, building a solid understanding of the accreditation process and the Board’s role in the University self-study.

President’s Role and Leadership

The Board of Trustees appointed the current President of Western, Karen Morse, in August, 1993, following an extensive, nation-wide search. She has a full time appointment and is granted the authority by the Board to:

- be the primary representative and spokesperson for the institution to the public.
- exercise leadership and direction in the management of the University while maintaining effective working relationships with faculty, staff, administrators, and the internal governance units.
- have general supervision of all operations and programs of the institution.
- appoint, in the name of the Board of Trustees, all employees of the University.
- negotiate banking and credit card services.
- sell, assign, transfer, or otherwise dispose of any and all donated types and kinds of securities.
exercise in the name of the Board all of the powers and duties vested in or imposed upon the Board by law.

- establish the organizational structure of the University.

- enter into emergency contracts and agreements when essential for the protection of health, safety, or property.

(See Core Exhibit: Board of Trustees Rules of Operation.)

The Board reviews the President annually, and undertakes a comprehensive review every four years after the first three years of a presidency. The Board conducts the evaluation and is responsible for establishing the criteria and the process for evaluation. In 2004, an extensive review of President Morse was carried out with the assistance of an outside consultant, and a summary of this review was published for public access. (See Exhibit 6.2: President Morse’s Review Summary.) Based on findings in this review, the President made some key changes, which included creating the President’s Planning and Resource Council (PPRC) and starting a newsletter to enhance communication between the administration and the campus community. She also began developing a new policy review procedure (see Standard Nine).

Every year the President also presents a report to the Board. This report is compiled from evaluative reports submitted by the Vice Presidents, and Western plans on publishing these reports for public access. (See also Standard One for a discussion of the role of the Mission and Strategic Action Plan in these reports.)

Administrator Qualifications and Duties

The administrative organization consists of five divisions: Academic Affairs, External Affairs, Business and Financial Affairs, Student Affairs and Academic Support Services, and University Advancement. Western administrators are typically hired through national search processes that stress effective experience and credentials in leadership and management (see Exhibit 6.3).

The President meets regularly with the President’s Council, which consists of the Vice Presidents of the five divisions, the Executive Director of University Planning and Budgeting, the Director of Government Relations, the Executive Assistant to the President, and the Director of Planned Giving/Senior Advisor to the President. The President’s Council reviews and advises the President on issues and activities associated with Western that span across the organizational units. This council has a strong strategic planning focus and works in concert with the PPRC, an advisory committee that includes representation from Deans, faculty, the executive committee of the University Planning Council (UPC), classified staff, exempt staff, and students.
Administrator Evaluations

The President is directly responsible for performance reviews of administrative staff, and she reviews each Vice President using a comprehensive evaluation every five years. Faculty, staff, students, and appropriate constituents are asked to participate in the review, and the President distributes a summary of the review to the campus. The President also conducts an annual review of each Vice President relative to their goals and objectives from the prior year. Vice Presidents are responsible for personnel reviews in their own areas, and they perform reviews on a regular schedule they have established. (See Exhibit 6.4: Template for Administrative Review.) Formal reviews, however, are not the only opportunities for evaluation; evaluation occurs on an ongoing basis, as the President meets weekly with the Vice Presidents to review tasks, goals, and long-term issues.

Academic programs are housed in the seven Colleges, the Graduate School and the Library. Western is currently searching for a new Dean of Libraries, and Dean vacancies exist in the College of Fine and Performing Arts and the College of Business and Economics. Three of the Deans have been appointed since 1998. The Provost—with the agreement of the President—appoints the College Deans and the Dean of Libraries after a national search and considerable input from faculty, staff, and students. The Deans meet on a weekly basis in the Provost’s Council, where they provide input to the Provost on issues of importance to the implementation of academic programs.

The Provost is scheduled to conduct an evaluation of each Dean on a five-year cycle, involving solicitation of input from a wide range of campus constituencies (see Exhibit 6.5: Documents for Dean Reviews), but given the flux in these positions, these reviews have not occurred consistently in the past. The lack of clear and open evaluations has been a substantial point of concern for faculty governance. As a result, the Faculty Senate is developing its own processes to review administrators in order to ensure sufficient faculty input into this process. The current Provost has set up a regular schedule for review of all Deans.

An outside consultant conducted a thorough review of the Western Libraries in 2007 (see Standard Five).

Ethical Conduct
See also Standard Nine

The duties, responsibilities, and ethical conduct requirements of all administrators are clearly defined and published on Western’s website, and University administrators have reliably acted in a manner consistent with the requirements. Training in ethical conduct is provided regularly by the Assistant Attorney General and by the Internal Auditor, and a short course is available on the University’s website. Duties and responsibilities are defined in the position descriptions that are required of all positions, and many are published on divisional web pages.
The Ethics in Public Service Act, Revised Code of Washington (RCW) Chapter 42.52, effective in 1995, applies to all University employees and officers. This ethics law establishes high ethical and public service standards, and it holds state employees and officers accountable to the public in many areas, including outside consulting, use of University facilities and equipment, outside business interests, and conflicts of interest. The Executive Ethics Board plays a key role in maintaining ethics accountability in the executive branch of Washington State government.

General rules for ethical conduct by faculty are specified in Appendix F of the Faculty Handbook and in University policies relating to conflict of interest. (See also Standard Nine for a comprehensive account of guidelines for ethical behavior across the University.)

Institutional Advancement Activities

The Board of the Western Washington University Foundation, led by the Vice President for University Advancement, ties all of its decisions to the Mission and Strategic Action Plan of the University. The University Advancement office was reorganized in 2002 to include Alumni Relations so that the office could more effectively coordinate the friend-making and fund-raising capabilities of the University. In addition, Major Gift Directors have been assigned to work with specific colleges, the library, athletics, student affairs, and parents to support fund-raising activities at all levels. A successful scholarship campaign spanning eighteen months in 2004-05 brought in pledges of $8 million dollars, surpassing the $5 million target. A campaign to support the partnership of faculty and students for undergraduate research was successfully carried out in 2005-06. (See Standard Seven for a more comprehensive overview of University Advancement activities and the Division’s relationship to Western’s mission.)

Timeliness of Institutional Decision-Making Processes

Western has a reputation in the state legislature for meeting all deadlines and providing excellent, well-supported proposals through the annual and biennial budgetary processes, the most comprehensive decisions that are made each year. (See also Standard Seven.)

Internally, most decision-making processes take the amount of time necessary in order to ensure broad consultation, campus involvement, and appropriate outcomes. For example, for the review and update of Western’s Mission and Strategic Action Plan (see Standard One) and the creation of the comprehensive Institutional Master Plan (see Standard Eight), Western’s administration allowed enough time to gather the input and information necessary to create strong and cohesive documents, while ensuring that the process was not unduly delayed or drawn out. Decisions where lack of timeliness has been an issue for departments include budgetary decisions on resources to hire limited-term faculty, central administration delays on search issues, and decisions on partner accommodation. This point was identified
in the administrative review of the previous Provost, and Western has seen some progress in this area.

Western designed a new policy—Developing and Maintaining University Policies—in 2006-07, with input from the campus community. This policy formalizes the process of review to assure that shared governance will be consistent, timely, and effective. The new policy also establishes an Executive Policy Group, a recommending body that includes the President’s and Provost’s Councils, as well as the Presidents of the Faculty Senate, Professional Staff Organization, and Associated Students. Previously, only the President’s Council approved policies; the new process establishes a format for all new and substantially revised University policies using the “Peabody Method,” the standard policy format approved by the state of Washington and local municipal governments. The process involves stakeholder review by faculty, staff, and students, and it includes a thirty-day open comment period prior to final consideration and approval. (See also Standard Nine.)

The Board of Trustees calendar of bimonthly meetings helps to shape the decision calendar for various actions, and a number of decisions have been moved on the Board of Trustees calendar to ensure timelier decision-making. For example, summer fee approval has been moved from the April to the December Board meeting so that there is ample time for publication of the new fee rates.

**Working Relationships**

Vice Presidents are encouraged to form cross-functional teams to promote coordination within and among organizational units. For example, the Executive Dining Group, which includes representatives from EESP, the Foundation, Student Affairs, faculty, a dean, the President’s Office, and students, works on policies and issues related to campus food service. Administrators continually form teams whose members have the expertise necessary for particular tasks. The President’s Council focuses attention on coordination of efforts, and for the past two years, the President’s Council and Provost’s Council have met together to further promote coordination and understanding of University decision-making.

**Institutional Research**

Western’s Office of Institutional Assessment, Research, and Testing (OIART) maintains an extensive and searchable database of hundreds of reports published by the office. OIART distributes all of its study findings, summaries of data analyses, and reports to the entire University community through use of an electronic format and the website. Additionally, results of the OIART’s findings are published eight times a year in their journal, FOCUS, and widely distributed in the form of data memos. For example, results from the OIART’s ongoing Western Educational Longitudinal Survey (WELS) that bear directly on student learning are distributed to programs and departments at least twice per year. Similarly, OIART distributes results
from alumni surveys to units and programs every other year.

Research analysts distribute quarterly enrollment, faculty and course information, and studies via the OIART website. The OIART supports Western's Student Data Warehouse and provides extensive ad hoc support to the Provost, Student Affairs offices, committees, and directly to academic departments. This information provides a useful repository for chairs to utilize in department planning. (See also Standards One and Two for a more comprehensive overview of OIART activities and the office's role in fulfilling Western's mission.)

**Policies, Procedures, and Criteria for Administrative and Staff Appointment**

The Professional Staff Handbook, revised effective January 1, 2007, includes policies, procedures, and criteria for administrative and staff appointment, evaluation, retention, promotion, and/or termination. That handbook is published on the University website and distributed to all exempt staff. (See Exhibit 6.6: Professional Staff Handbook.)

Salaries of administrators and staff are reviewed against CUPA (College and University Professional Association) data nationally, and against peer institutions. Human Resources maintains the University title and salary system, which was reviewed last year, and it was found that Western's salaries are less competitive in some areas due to lack of state funding. (See also Standard Seven for a more comprehensive discussion of this issue.)

Insurance, leave, and pension benefits are prescribed by the state and are reasonably competitive nationwide. Faculty, exempt professional staff, and permanent classified staff with a minimum of six months of half-time service are eligible for tuition and fee waiver for up to eight credits of coursework at the University on a space-available basis.

**Authority and Responsibility of the Higher Education Coordinating Board**

Western must work closely with the Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB), a ten-member citizen Board that administers the state's student financial aid programs and provides planning, coordination, monitoring, and policy analysis for higher education in Washington. Major functions of the Board include:

- Developing a strategic master plan for higher education and monitoring progress in meeting the plan's goals and strategies.
- Developing and recommending policies to enhance the availability, quality, efficiency, and accountability of public higher education in Washington.
- Serving as an advocate for students and the overall higher education system.
- Creating a seamless system of public education.
Western administration takes advantage of public and private opportunities, including discussion before the HECB, to advocate for more equitable funding for the University based on per-student support. In recent years, the share of funds Western has received from the state has been enhanced through funding provided by the legislature, and particularly through appropriated, high-demand program funding administered by the HECB (see also Standard Seven).

**Faculty Role in Governance**

*See also Standard Four*

The faculty at Western has a long history of active participation in University governance. The faculty, through the Faculty Senate, works with the President and Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs to develop, implement, and evaluate University policies. Western encourages faculty to participate—through the Faculty Senate or other recognized faculty bodies—in matters concerning academic planning and budgeting, and in other key issues at various levels of internal University governance. This stance is consistent with the University’s policy of open participation.

Western’s Mission, Strategic Action Plan, and the Board’s Rules of Operation all posit a central role for faculty in institutional governance at every level, particularly in academic policies and decisions. Many faculty have been members of ad hoc planning committees, for example, to develop the current Strategic Action Plan, to advance a comprehensive sustainability program, and to work out a proposal for Western’s presence on Bellingham’s renovated waterfront. (See also Standard One.)

**Faculty Senate**

The Faculty Senate represents all faculty members and is composed of thirty voting Senators, representing their collegiate numbers, and the President and Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs as ex officio, non-voting members. The Executive Council of the Senate prepares the agenda for Senate meetings, considers matters of grievance or delicacy with respect to individual faculty members, meets on a scheduled basis with the President and/or Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs, and performs other duties as may be delegated to it by the Faculty Senate. Elections of senators are held yearly in spring quarter. Voting members of the Senate serve for two years or until the installation of a new Senate, and elected senators may not serve more than two consecutive terms. Voting members of the faculty are those holding appointment of at least 0.5 FTE (annual average). The officers are President, President-elect, Secretary, and Appointments and Elections Officer; officers are members of the Faculty Senate, nominated from the floor and elected by secret ballot, majority vote, of the Faculty Senate. The Executive Council
consists of the officers of the Faculty Senate, one Faculty Senate member, and the Faculty Legislative Representative as voting members. Non-voting members include the Chair of the Academic Coordinating Commission (ACC), the Chair of the University Planning Council (UPC), the past President of the Faculty Senate, and the President of the United Faculty of Western Washington (UFWW).

The Faculty Senate has a number of standing committees through which much of the work of the senate occurs:

- **The Academic Coordinating Commission (ACC):** This committee has jurisdiction over all matters relating to the University’s academic programs. (See also Standards Two and Four.)

- **The University Planning Council (UPC):** This committee is responsible to the Faculty Senate for the formation of policy in all aspects of University planning, including review of the University strategic plan and recommendation of priorities to be used in preparing the University’s biennial operating and capital budget request. This committee is currently revisiting its charge and determining its relationship to the PPRC. (See also Standard Four.)

- **Faculty Standing Committee on Grievance and Sanctions:** This committee deals with specific cases of faculty grievance.

- **Ombuds:** The University Ombuds is a member of the faculty or an emeritus faculty member responsible for providing information about rights and procedures on all matters affecting faculty affairs and for providing assistance to the faculty in matters affecting the working environment including tenure, promotion, and issues that could lead to a grievance. (See also Standard Four.)

- **Library Committee:** This committee provides advice to the University Librarian and acts as a liaison between the faculty and the University Libraries. (See also Standard Five.)

- **Academic Technology Committee:** This committee is responsible for recommendations of overall procedures pertaining to academic technologies at Western. (See also Standard Five.)

Students sit on the majority of Senate committees, and their participation is highly valued for at least two reasons: students bring knowledge and perspectives that are highly relevant to the work of the Senate, and meaningful committee work enhances their education, incorporating the core values of Quality and Engagement. (See Exhibit 6.7: Currently Active Committees and Task Forces. See also Standard Three.)

Reports on Faculty Senate Meetings, including motions passed, are regularly published in the weekly faculty and staff newsletter, *FAST* (see Exhibit 6.8 for sample copies), and all minutes, motion logs, and committee reports are published on the Faculty Senate website (www.acadweb.wwu.edu/senate/).
Faculty Roles Outside the Senate

Recently, faculty have been invited to comment on line items and priorities in budget decisions, through participation on the President's Planning and Resources Council (PPRC). The purpose of the council is to provide advice and recommendations to the President on issues related to planning and allocation of resources. A wide variety of constituencies, including faculty, staff, and students, are represented on this committee, and issues such as faculty salary compression have been addressed as a result of the Council's recommendations. (See also Standard Four.) The PPRC replaced the former Budget Advisory Group, which also included faculty members.

Members of the faculty also sit on a number of University standing and ad hoc committees, including the Capital Budget Advisory Committee, the Central Health and Safety Committee, the Emergency Management Committee, the Employee Training and Development Advisory Committee, the Parking Appeals Board, and the Sustainability Committee.

Although the faculty is generally well represented in the affairs of the University, the Faculty Senate remains concerned that currently, no consistent faculty representation exists on either the Provost's Council or the President's Council, entities which the Provost and President consider to be administrative staff meetings. The Senate continues to work with central administration to advance greater faculty participation in strategic decision-making and evaluative processes.

The Transition to Collective Bargaining (Policy 6.2)

In the past, the Senate's Faculty Salary and Welfare Committee played an active role in assessing faculty economic issues, but in February, 2006, Western faculty voted to unionize by a margin of 300 to 286. The sole bargaining agent for all faculty will now be United Faculty of Western Washington (UFWW). This is the third union on campus; the others are Washington Federation of State Employees (WFSE) and the Public School Employees (PSE), both representing classified staff. The roles of the Faculty Senate and administrative advisory committees will undoubtedly change as the University must bargain with the faculty union in accord with state law. Faculty Senate will retain authority over all areas relating to curriculum and academic procedures, whereas UFWW will be concerned with faculty salary, benefits, and working conditions. Similarly, the charge of the PPRC is being revisited to ensure that the decision-making process does not conflict with the obligation to bargain collectively.

During Western's self-study process, the UFWW and the University administration were negotiating a first contract. Thus, some of the relationships among the faculty and the administration for university governance have not been solidified and will be impacted by negotiations. The University and the UFWW bargaining teams have agreed that their common goal is the quality and effectiveness of the institution in fulfilling its
mission, and UFWW conducted a comprehensive survey of faculty to assess faculty priorities (see Exhibit 6.9). Leaders of the UFWW have indicated that they fully support a robust Faculty Senate, and lines of communication and collaboration between the UFWW and the Faculty Senate have already been established. The President of UFWW regularly attends meetings of the Faculty Senate and reports on UFWW activities.

Student leaders have raised concerns about the role of students in collective bargaining with unions. The A.S. points out that there is no proposal for how students might fit into this process, and under the current system, decisions that affect students could be made without student input. For example, class size, faculty workloads, and using tuition to cover faculty salaries could all be potential issues that directly affect students' educational experience. The A.S. suggests that an avenue for student input be opened and maintained so that the views and interests of students will not be lost in the collective bargaining process.

Unionization and collective bargaining have not precluded full participation by the campus community in the accreditation self-study.

**Student Role in Governance**

*See also Standard Three*

Student leaders have always played an active role in Western's governance, planning, budgeting, and policy making, particularly with respect to student fees and the formulation of policies related to student life, services, and interests. As described more fully in Standards One, Three, and Seven, students have been a driving force in fulfilling many key aspects of Western's mission and strategic goals. For example, Students for Sustainable Energy, working through the A.S. and with the administration, initiated a program for funding the purchase, by students, of renewable energy to power the campus. Students have spurred Western's current focus on sustainability and good citizenship in many aspects of its operations.

Western values student input on a wide variety of issues, and thus has created many student positions on thirty-four key committees of the University. Students have made significant contributions to these University-wide discussions, and the presence of a student representative on the Board of Trustees has been an invaluable asset for the Board (see Appendix 6.2: University committees with student appointments). The students undertake significant issues and programs on behalf of the student body and work well with the administration to accomplish their goals.

In support of student leadership, the Vice President for Student Affairs, Dean of Students, and others provide guidance and counsel to student leaders. In 2004, A.S. changed its mission statement to reflect a growing emphasis on supporting student leadership as a key aspect of “The Western Experience,” and it has allocated $10,000 per year to support this effort. (See Exhibit 6.10: Associated Students Self-Study Report.) Western offers a course annually, for credit, to provide an academic foundation for developing

“I absolutely loved Western, not only for its strong academic programs, but also for the wonderful people (both students and faculty) and its beautiful location.”

—Western graduate
student leadership, and, in 2006, a staff member was hired to develop a new leadership program.

The addition of a student Trustee in 1998 has presented a continuing challenge to A.S. and to each new student Trustee to define and understand his or her leadership role. Through documents that outline the Board’s roles and responsibilities (see Rules of Operations and Exhibit 6.1: Trustee Responsibilities), A.S. leadership generally understands that the student Trustee is not its representative on the Board, and each student Trustee is counseled that each Trustee is charged with a public trust that does not tie one to a University constituency.

Students understand their roles on most University committees; however, in many other areas (such as capital projects) they are unaware of policy documents that explicitly outline their role in the decision-making process. There is an implicit understanding that student views are generally taken into consideration, but the line between areas of student control and administrator control could be further clarified, articulating the circumstances in which the University administration might have jurisdiction to override decisions made by student leaders. As part of Western’s self-study, A.S. has identified key areas for reexamination of its own administration (including assessment of its programs), and students continually seek more effective integration into the current decision-making processes.

Staff Role in Governance

Professional Staff

The professional staff is comprised of approximately 350 employees who formulate and direct the University’s orderly, day-to-day operations, working within all Divisions and Colleges of the University in management, counseling, advising, administrative, and support functions. All professional staff employees are members of the Professional Staff Organization (PSO). The mission of the PSO is to promote an active role for professional staff in the University governance structure, provide a voice for professional staff in establishing University operating policies and procedures, and represent professional staff in policies pertaining to personal and professional welfare. The PSO has a professional and collegial relationship with Western’s administration.

The PSO operates under a constitution that provides for a nine-member executive committee, including three officers: a President, Vice President/President-elect, and secretary, as well as six representatives from each of the University’s five divisions. The PSO Executive Committee collaborates well with the administration, ensuring that professional staff interests are actively represented in the planning, budgeting, and policy development of the institution. The Executive Committee meets regularly during the year to oversee PSO affairs and facilitate the objectives of its mission. A general membership meeting is held each quarter to inform the membership about topics and issues being addressed by the PSO.
In addition to participating with other University constituents and administrators on various, University-wide councils and committees, the PSO is currently working on a number of issues, including collaborating with Human Resources to implement its recently updated compensation plan and initiate a Leadership Training Program for professional staff.

**Classified Staff**

The classified staff is comprised of 759 employees, the University's largest employee group. The classified staff is diverse, ranging from departmental administrative support, professional and technical employees and facilities management personnel. Classified staff members understand and appreciate their supportive roles to the administration in fulfilling Western's goals. They provide a range of services, support a clean and safe environment for the housing of students, provide computing support, and maintain facilities for the enactment of Western's mission, to name a few. (See also Standard Eight.)

Historically, classified staff representation in the shared governance system was provided by the Staff Employees Council (SEC), an avenue for staff participation in processes that affect them. However, in 2002, the Washington State Legislature passed the Personnel System Reform Act. This legislation established full-scale collective bargaining for state employees, set up a system of competitive contracting, and revamped the state human resource system. This legislation gave staff more responsibility in the negotiation of their working conditions and also involved reclassification of some personnel. Under laws of collective bargaining and interpretations by the Public Employment Relations Commission, the unions are the sole representatives of employees in their wages, hours, and working conditions, placing in question the role of the SEC role in University governance.

Western currently has five bargaining units represented by two unions. The Public Service Employees (PSE) represents classified staff, professional and technical employees, and employees who supervise administrative support employees. The Washington Federation of State Employees (WFSE) primarily represents clerical, trade/maintenance employees, police officers, and employees who supervise trade/maintenance and police officers.

Contracts with these unions are in effect for two years. The agreements serve to promote harmonious relations between Western and the unions, establish prompt and equitable procedures for the resolution of differences, and establish conditions of employment.

Western recognizes that classified staff members are key to the mission of shared responsibility in the education of Western students. Their participation in counseling, mentoring, and support for student learning, health, and welfare are integral components to student success at Western. However, there have been concerns expressed by some staff about the weakening role of the SEC in University governance. Though classified staff members are included on many committees, the SEC has indicated that staff
views have less impact in the current system of governance. Some of these difficulties can be attributed to the need to clarify and improve relationships between administration, SEC, and the collective bargaining units. Some staff perceive that the President plays a dual role as: a) the staff representative to the Board of Trustees and b) the Board representative for union negotiation. This dual role could place her in a position that conflicts with the President’s traditional fiduciary responsibility as an advocate for staff with the Board of Trustees.

Western administration continues to negotiate how to honor the collective bargaining framework and still involve classified staff as much as possible in the governance process. The collective bargaining units recognize that upper management does not impede efforts at meaningful wage negotiation, and in many ways supports them. However, without representation in higher levels of governance, the communication process between staff and the President could narrow to union negotiation sessions every two years. An ongoing issue of salary disparity between exempt and classified employees, which results from having different compensation systems, can also cause low morale among classified employees. The administration recognizes the importance of addressing apparent inequities as it is possible to do within the limits of collective bargaining agreements and market conditions.

Affirmative Action and Nondiscrimination (Policy 6.1)

The Director of the Equal Opportunity Office (EOO) at Western reports directly to the President of the University, and the office seeks to implement Western’s commitment to a diverse workforce by providing assistance, leadership, advice, and training in all areas of equal opportunity and diversity. Working through Deans, Directors, and Department Chairs, the EOO also ensures compliance with state and federal regulations pertaining to affirmative action. (See also Standard One and Standard Four.)

STANDARD SIX
SUMMARY & ANALYSIS

Significant Changes Since 1998

- In 1998, the composition of the Board of Trustees changes to include a Student Trustee, nominated by Associated Students and appointed by the Governor following the recommendation of an on-campus, student review committee.

- In 1999, Western hires a new Provost, replacing the outgoing Provost in a timely and efficient manner. This Provost, Andrew Bodman, serves for eight years before resigning in 2007. The President appoints a Provost, Dennis Murphy, to serve for a two-year term.

- In 2003, the Board of Trustees approves the formation of two new colleges—the College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS) and the College of Sciences and Technology (CST)—from the
existing College of Arts and Sciences. This reorganization expands the total number of undergraduate Colleges to seven. This change necessitates a Dean search for each of the two Colleges. Whereas CHSS largely keeps the existing administrative structure of the old College of Arts and Sciences, CST develops a new administrative structure.

• In 2002, the Washington State Legislature passes the Personnel System Reform Act. This legislation changes the employee classification system and expands the scope of collective bargaining, allowing staff to bargain for wages, benefits, and working conditions.

• In 2006, the faculty of Western vote to unionize. The United Faculty of Western Washington (UFWW) replaces the Faculty Senate as the organization responsible for negotiating faculty salaries, benefits, and working conditions with University administration. The union begins negotiating its first contract with the University in spring 2007. The Faculty Senate eliminates the Salary and Welfare Committee.

• In February 2005, the President creates the President’s Planning and Resource Council (PPRC). The purpose of the council is to provide advice and recommendations to the President on issues related to planning and allocation of resources. A wide variety of constituencies, including faculty and staff, are represented on this committee.

• In fall of 2007, President Morse announces her pending retirement, effective September 1, 2008. The Board of Trustees immediately begins the process of searching for a new President, with input from the campus community.

Strengths

• Western has a long history of faculty, student, and staff involvement in shared University governance; this history has created a positive culture of interest in the welfare of the University. This culture of shared governance should assist the University as it moves forward in a new area of faculty unionization.

• Abundant opportunities exist for faculty, students, and staff to provide input on discussions of key issues related to Western's mission. The process for updating Western’s Mission and Strategic Action Plan, for example, included a wide variety of input and consideration.

• Associated Students has been an integral, proactive, and driving force in creating initiatives that animate Western’s core values.

• Professional and Classified Staff contribute both to the effective
operation of the University and to the wider Bellingham community. Their work is recognized and appreciated by the University.

- There have been many good faith efforts by the administration to establish clear policies for administering the University. Recent examples include the creation of the PPRC, the new *Developing and Maintaining University Policies* that makes decision-making processes more transparent, and the adoption of the “Peabody” method for policy adoption (see also Standard Nine).

- While Western currently has a Provost and two Deans of limited term, historically Western shows a relatively low rate of turnover, indicating a strong core of stable administrative positions. Of the twelve administrative positions (Deans, Vice Provosts, and Provost), Western has averaged one vacancy per year (about 9%). This compares favorably with overall turnover rates in higher education, which generally are in excess of 20% per year. The median number of years that Western's administrators have been in their current positions is six.

**Challenges and Next Steps**

- Though faculty, students, and staff have strong representation in many aspects of shared governance, there continues to be a desire on the part of faculty for representation on the Provost's Council and the President's Council. In response to constituent concerns, Western has created several avenues for community input in policy-making—most notably the creation of the PPRC and the Executive Policy Group—and the University will continue to consider how to most effectively represent all voices within other administrative entities.

- The Faculty Senate will continue to examine how evaluations of key administrators, even in times of flux, can utilize faculty input more effectively.

- Though students are invited to participate extensively in shared governance, the A.S. wish to be included more fully as agents in decision-making processes that directly affect the student body. For example, students are currently working to develop ways to improve student involvement in the process of evaluating fees and developing capital projects. The role the students will play in a collective bargaining environment is under consideration and development. Students and administrators need to develop clearer and more transparent guidelines for decision-making authority, especially in matters related to A.S. internal policies and activities.

- Western will clarify the relationship between administration and unions on campus, articulating lines of authority, reporting,
representation, communication, and accountability. Western will continue to work out avenues for staff representation in shared governance.

- Western will clarify levels of involvement, mechanisms of involvement, and points of access for all groups on campus.

**Progress on Recommendations from 1998 Accreditation Report**

“Pursuant to Standards 1, 6, and 9, the committee recommends that the administration, with support of the Board of Trustees, if possible, and in consultation with the campus and community, initiate a widely communicated process to chart the future direction of the institution using as a foundation, the recently revised mission statement, the draft Master Plan, and the abundant sources of information accumulated from educational assessment.”

- As described in Standard One, Western conducted a thorough and comprehensive process for updating the University’s recently adopted Mission and Strategic Action Plan, with full participation by constituent groups across campus and in the community. As seen in Standard Eight, Western also formulated its Institutional Master Plan, based on the draft Master Plan, in the same manner, involving all interested parties in creating the most effective document possible. Both these processes, and their end products, greatly enhance the effectiveness of the University in fulfilling its goals. As described in Standard Two, institutional assessment provides a wide variety of resources for many different constituencies to function both proactively and effectively.

The following was not a formal recommendation, but the comment has been addressed by the administration:

“Representatives of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee were less positive about the extent to which faculty views as expressed by the Senate were considered by the administration…While perfection from all sides is unlikely, “trust” levels might rise through initiating earlier discussion and further explanation about pending decisions with the formal governance structure. In response to the Faculty Senate’s request for better communication, the president has invited the Faculty Senate to participate in a workshop being planned for deans and chairs that will involve a nationally recognized facilitator. Full participation by all relevant parties should contribute to better understanding of the respective roles of all parties involved in decision making.”

- Western held a two-day “Professional Development Program” led by Edward Penson, President of Penson Strawbridge consulting firm, at the Best Western Lakeway Inn on October 19 and 20, 1998. One hundred people were invited to participate, and approximately eighty to eighty-five people participated, including the President,
Western Washington University, NWCCU Self-Study Report, 2008

the Provost, Deans, academic department chairs, directors, Vice Presidents, various staff members, and members of the Faculty Senate.

Western holds similar programs annually at the beginning of fall quarter. These workshops began in the early 1990's as “Deans' Retreats,” and the participants grew to include department chairs and, depending on the agenda, academic affairs directors, the Faculty Senate Executive Council, and University Vice Presidents. These annual “Academic Leadership Conferences” vary each year. Usually scheduled the week before classes begin, they may be scheduled for half a day or a full day. In addition, for several years, Western held quarterly chair/dean meetings. The Provost asked several senior department chairs to help organize these meetings by determining appropriate agenda items and topics of discussion.

Western administration sees these activities as just one measure needed to fully involve the campus community in effective shared governance. The President and Provost meet with the Faculty Senate and, in alternate weeks, with the Faculty Senate Executive Council. However, representatives of the Council indicate that they do not feel significant changes have occurred concerning the extent to which faculty views are considered. In particular, they feel it is necessary to have faculty representation on decision-making bodies such as the President’s and Provost’s Councils. Western will continue to seek more avenues of communication that will help raise levels of trust to further the work of the University.

STANDARD 6
SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices (located in Volume II of the Self-Study Report)

6.1: Board Membership
6.2: University Committees with student representation

Exhibits (located in Standard Six Exhibit Binders, Committee Room)

6.1: Trustee Responsibilities
6.2: Presidential Review Summary
6.3: Administrative Position Descriptions and Resumes
6.4: Template for Administrative Review
6.5: Documents for Deans Reviews
6.6: Professional Staff Handbook
6.7: Currently Active Committees and Task Forces (with names and phone numbers of chairs)
6.8: Sample Copies of FAST
6.9: UFWW Survey of Faculty
6.10: Associated Students Self-Study Report
6.11: Articles of Incorporation and bylaws
6.12: Board Agendas and Minutes for the last three years
6.13: Salary Data for Administration and Staff
6.14: Collective Bargaining Agreements
6.15: Constitutions and bylaws of faculty and staff organizations, with minutes of meetings for last three years
6.16: Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes with Annual Reports from Committees
6.17: Motions Log from Faculty Senate Meetings, 2003-2007
6.18: Associated Students Charter

“WWU Core Exhibits”
(located on Core Exhibit Shelves, Committee Room)

Engaged Excellence: Strategic Action Plan, 2006
Western Washington University, Board of Trustees, Rules of Operations
Western Washington University Catalog, 2007-08
Western Washington University, 2006-07 Operating Budget
Western Washington University, Capital Plan
Western Washington University, 2007-08 Fees and Rates Book
Western Washington University, Institutional Master Plan
Western Washington University, Faculty Handbook