In the thirty years since the state of Washington granted it university status, Western Washington University has continually refined its mission and reinforced a strong position as an innovative, comprehensive educational institution. Western’s current mission statement, adopted in 2006, articulates how fully this campus values its role not only as a public university, but also as an integral part of a larger community:

“Western Washington University is committed to engaged excellence in fulfilling its tripartite mission of teaching, scholarship, and community service in a student-centered environment, with a liberal arts foundation and opportunities to develop professional skills. As a public institution of higher education, Western serves the needs of the citizens of the state of Washington by providing undergraduate and select graduate programs in Bellingham and at selected locations elsewhere in the state. Western provides students with a personalized teaching and learning environment of the highest quality.” (See Appendix 1.1: Engaged Excellence: WWU Strategic Action Plan, 2006.)

This new mission statement builds upon and emphasizes key concepts that have always guided Western: quality education serving primarily undergraduates within the context of strong ties to the community. The University adopted its former mission statement in 1987, and this mission remained essentially intact for more than nineteen years: “As a public comprehensive University focusing primarily on serving undergraduate students throughout the region, the University is dedicated to the pursuit of truth, learning and the dissemination of knowledge, and service to the community. Its programs contribute to the educational, economic, and cultural needs of a community that centers on Washington State and extends to the world beyond. This mission is addressed principally through teaching
which embraces the liberal arts and professional preparation.” (See Appendix 1.2.)

The Board of Trustees approved and adopted a Strategic Action Plan based on the 1987 mission statement; Western revised this plan in 1992 and reviewed and amended it in December 1997. The three main components of this strategic plan—quality educational experiences; diversity of students, faculty, and staff; and service to the community—formed the core of the University’s guiding philosophy. In 2005, Western decided to revisit this document to further clarify the University’s evolving character, reflect recent initiatives, and broaden (and specify) the mission, vision, and goals. This process resulted in a new mission statement and a comprehensive Strategic Action Plan, with clearly articulated Strategic Objectives and ten defined Strategic Actions the University can take to accomplish those objectives. The core values that guided the previous plan—quality, diversity, and service—remain the foundation of this new, comprehensive vision.

Shaping a Comprehensive Vision, Mission, and Strategic Action Plan

To begin this intensive re-visioning process, President Karen Morse convened a seventeen-member Strategic Planning Committee in 2005. In order to ensure that this process included as many constituencies as possible, membership consisted of faculty, administrators, staff, and students, as well as members of the Board of Trustees, the Western Foundation Board, and the Alumni Board. Each College and each Division was represented, as were the Faculty Senate, the Provost’s Council, and the University Planning Council (UPC). Beginning with a review of the existing mission and plan, the committee met with various constituent groups (Deans, chairs, professional and classified staff, Provost’s Council, Associated Students Board, President’s Council, UPC, Faculty Senate, Student Affairs, Alumni Board, Western Washington University Foundation, and the Board of Trustees) to solicit feedback regarding the existing mission and strategic plan. These meetings led to the completion of a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) analysis. (See Exhibit 1.1: Documents related to Strategic Action Plan update.)

The data gathered during this analysis led to multiple drafts. The committee revisited the constituent groups with these drafts to receive their feedback. Once the committee completed a final draft, various governance bodies—including the UPC, the Faculty Senate, and the President’s Planning and Resources Council (PPRC)—formally reviewed the document. Western also published the draft document on the Provost’s website to receive comments from the general University community. Each member of the task force presented the document to their respective constituencies and channeled comments back into the process.

After more than a year of review, the committee came forth with a final document that updated the Mission Statement, replaced the Role Statement
with a Vision Statement, and added a section on Values that highlighted the way Western’s core values—Excellence, Engagement, Diversity, Community, Integrity, and Innovation—motivate and guide Western’s actions. These values shaped the new Strategic Objectives, which, in turn, guided the ten new Strategic Actions. These combined statements formed the comprehensive Engaged Excellence: Strategic Action Plan, 2006, and the Board of Trustees approved the document in June, 2006.

The new Strategic Action Plan has been incorporated into Western’s administrative websites and has been distributed to faculty and staff at the President’s annual address on the State of the University. While the date of approval by the Trustees precluded the revised documents from appearing in the 2006-07 printed version of the University Catalog, the Strategic Action Plan has been included in the catalog online, and it appears in the 2007-08 version (see Core Exhibit: Western Washington University Catalog, 2007-08).

The Core of the Vision, Mission, and Strategic Action Plan

As would be expected for a University that is confident in its role, the core of the 1997 documents remains in the 2006 revision. The values of Excellence, Diversity, and Community are still central and guiding concepts for the new mission, and these core values have been expanded to include Engagement, Integrity, and Innovation. To guide progress toward animating these values most effectively, Western articulated five Strategic Objectives:

To demonstrate engaged excellence:
1. in interactive learning and the active participation of students in scholarly and creative activities.
2. in supporting teacher-scholars who integrate the highest quality teaching, scholarship, and creative activities.
3. in civic engagement by developing leadership, effective citizenship, and social responsibility in all members of the campus community.
4. as a diverse campus community where members appreciate, honor, and celebrate people with diverse perspectives and backgrounds.
5. in environmental stewardship and sustainable practices through our programs, scholarship, and actions.

Furthermore, in order to provide guidance on enacting these objectives, Western has articulated ten Strategic Actions:
1. Recruit and retain high quality students.
2. Recruit and retain high quality faculty and staff.
3. Maintain growth trajectory and improve enrollment management.
4. Build collaborative relationships with off-campus communities.
5. Become more diverse and enhance opportunities for students to understand and participate in different cultures and diverse
societies.

6. Develop and maintain campus infrastructure.
7. Improve communication throughout the University.
8. Promote the effective management of resources.
9. Increase and diversify funding.
10. Self-assess and develop outcomes.

In the text of the plan, each of these Strategic Actions contains several specific means by which they can be achieved. The plan also provides suggestions for succinct measures that can be used to assess progress toward fulfilling these objectives. The vision statement, in which Western aspires to “become the premier public comprehensive University in the country through engaged excellence,” clearly and succinctly expresses the goal that can be achieved through fulfilling the mission by way of these new outcomes-based objectives.

Implementing the Mission and Strategic Action Plan

This new Strategic Action Plan is designed to facilitate the creation and cohesion of individual strategic goals and actions across the University. Plans at all levels will now be easier to analyze in regards to accomplishments and challenges in light of specific objectives and actions. The Colleges and other units are now actively revisiting and/or revising their mission and goals to realign with the newly adopted mission and goals for Western. (See also Standard Two, Core Exhibit Binders College Self-Study Reports.)

Each year, the President updates her annual goals for the University. These goals emerge from the Mission and Strategic Action Plan, and they are published in Context, a newsletter distributed by the President (see Exhibit 1.2: Context). She also presents these goals to faculty at the annual State of the University address, held at the start of every academic year. In 2006, the President indicated that the five Strategic Objectives from the new plan are now to be used as an organizing structure for all annual reports; Divisional reports will also address how Divisional goals relate to and further Western’s strategic goals. (See Exhibit 1.3.) The President compiles an evaluation of goals and objectives for the Board of Trustees partly from analysis of these documents (see Exhibit 1.4).

In addition to Western’s internal planning process, external controls exist to ensure that the programs offered by the University enhance its mission and benefit the citizens of the state. In 1987, the Washington State Legislature and the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) issued a directive by which all state colleges and universities would prepare an annual Accountability Plan. Since Western had been involved in assessment activities for years, we saw this new reporting mechanism as a corollary to the University’s efforts to achieve its overriding goal: delivery of high-quality undergraduate education with an emphasis on increasing diversity and community involvement. The new Mission, Values, and Vision Statements,
along with Western’s detailed and specific Strategic Action Plan, dovetail quite effectively with this move toward greater accountability to the public Western serves.

In this Accountability Plan, Western reports common accountability measures and institution-specific measures in terms of baselines and goals, and the University proposes strategies for reaching these goals. Western also reports any significant changes initiated by the University and discusses faculty productivity measures, as well as academic program reviews. These annual reports are presented to the HECB, and Western also provides a compilation and analysis of these reports to the legislature as part of the state’s overall accountability program. Since the entire University community has been enacting the tenets of quality education, accountability performances have continued to improve. (See Exhibit 1.5: Higher Education Accountability Plan, with Performance Measures and Targets.)

Western is particularly proud of the gains it has achieved in retention of students and time to degree. Progress in these areas required a comprehensive effort and cooperation across many sectors of the University, most notably Academic and Student Affairs (see also Standard Two and Standard Three).

**A Growing Emphasis on Diversity**

As evidenced by the new strategic goals in the 2006 Strategic Action Plan, Western is committed to understanding, valuing and enhancing the diversity of the campus.

> "Western appreciates the importance of diversity of thought and people and seeks to become more diverse. We honor the contributions of all members of the campus community. We are committed to listening to all sides of an issue and opposed to any form of discrimination." Western considers diversity an enhancement to education and an enrichment of the learning and work environment. Western’s Equal Opportunity/Nondiscrimination Policy prohibits discrimination against faculty, staff, and students based on the federal and/or state legally-protected categories (see Exhibit 1.6). Western extends these mandated categories and includes other characteristics of differences, such as socio-economic status.

Western’s Equal Opportunity Office (EOO) directly supports this aspect of the Strategic Action Plan and assists faculty, staff, and students by implementing both anti-discrimination laws and University policies that prohibit discrimination; it also helps create an environment in which diversity is valued. For example, in late 2005, the President endorsed sexual harassment prevention training for all Western employees. Since then, the EOO has trained over 1,300 employees and is now offering a specialized workshop focusing on supervisors’ responsibilities. The EOO also provides training workshops for faculty, staff, and students in racial and religious harassment; gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, transgender (GLBT) and gender identity/expression issues; disability awareness; gender communication in the workplace; and cultural competency.
In order to achieve Western’s strategic action priority for “increasing the diversity of its faculty and staff through recruitment, retention, and exchange opportunities,” the President has charged the Executive Director for Equal Opportunity with preparing an annual Affirmative Action Plan (AAP), with goals to achieve a more diverse workforce. Units across campus have developed initiatives to assist with these goals. One initiative, “The Bridge to Workforce Diversity Program,” developed in 2007, provides proactive outreach efforts to facilitate employment of underrepresented groups, with Western’s first efforts focused on Whatcom County’s English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) community. In partnership with Whatcom Community College, Western’s goal is to interest advanced-level ESL students in applying for employment at Western.

The Executive Director also administers Western’s Diversity Achievement Award by which the President honors an individual, department, organization, or community member who has distinguished him/herself in efforts to enhance diversity and multicultural understanding at Western. Also, in November 2007, Western published its first Diversity Handbook, a compilation of nearly 200 projects, initiatives, and academic courses dealing with one or more dimensions of diversity. (See Exhibit 1.6 for more comprehensive descriptions of EOO programs and diversity initiatives across campus.)

The President’s Office also established a citizen/alumni Multicultural Advisory Board to advise President Morse on diversity matters relative to Western. A Special Assistant to the President for Multicultural Affairs chairs this Board, administers the Multicultural Achievement Scholarship program, and works with the Ally Building Network. This network of Lifestyle Advisors is trained to help promote a civil and caring campus community (see also Standard Three).

Outreach, Recruitment, and Retention Efforts for Faculty Diversity

All Colleges now actively recruit for underrepresented faculty. For example, Woodring College of Education has a formal Diversity Plan complete with goals and timelines (see Exhibit 1.6). While not all Colleges have formalized their plans to this extent, the EOO has articulated to all Colleges goals that are derived from the Affirmative Action Plan. The EOO supports efforts to develop a diverse pool of applicants to fill faculty positions, and departments work closely with the Executive Director to identify targeted outreach for underrepresented groups. The EOO can identify women and minority caucuses/networks of professional discipline organizations and ensure that the job announcement reaches these groups, placing advertisements in journals and other publications targeted toward women and minorities in academe. Many Colleges use attendance at professional meetings to reach out to diverse candidates in a more personal manner. All use multiple sources of advertising to reach out to the most diverse population.
Western is currently in the process of enhancing its Appointments of Opportunity Policy which allows the institution to further its commitment to workforce diversity for both faculty and professional staff. The University has provided new faculty lines to the Colleges when opportunity hires of diverse candidates have presented themselves, and the Colleges are always active in their quest to identify such faculty as they recruit for replacement and/or new positions. In the past three years, Western has added three new faculty lines for opportunity hires, but has lost several more candidates to other universities in a highly competitive market. The policy enhancement will include procedures that will help Deans and Vice Presidents more efficiently explore dual career assistance when opportunities arise and will enable Western to be more responsive in addressing the needs of dual career couples.

Several years ago, Western also instituted the Diversity Fellows Program through reallocated base funds. The intent of this program is to provide up to two Diversity Fellowships per year to help recruit faculty members who are actively working toward completion of their terminal degrees. These fellowships are designed to combine undergraduate teaching with time for writing and research, and a mentor is provided for each fellow through the department and/or the Minority Faculty and Staff Caucus. Contingent upon the needs of the academic department, the evaluation of the Fellow, and the successful completion of his or her terminal degree, a renewable or tenure-track faculty position may result. The first Diversity Fellowship began in 2002, and since that time, Western has sponsored a total of eight Diversity Fellows. Three have been offered tenure-track positions, one shifted into non-tenure track status, and three have resigned their fellowships to accept competitive offers elsewhere. Western presently has one Diversity Fellow in the program. See also Standard Four for an overview of faculty diversity.

Community Service: An Integral Part of Western’s Mission

Western’s longstanding focus on community involvement has created abundant opportunities for service. The faculty, staff, and students of the University contribute to the larger community both as individuals and as participants in departments, centers, and research institutes. The Center for Service Learning (CSL) is a central hub in the University’s public service activities; established in 1991 by former President Kenneth Mortimer, this Center facilitates quality educational experiences through community-based service learning. It connects campus and community resources to create diverse learning experiences and to serve community needs. In 2006, more than 450 students enrolled in nineteen Service Learning courses benefiting more than 110 community partners. (See Exhibit 1.7: Center for Service Learning Self-Study Report. See also Standard Four for a discussion of CSL as a resource for faculty development.)

Every college at Western has developed strong programs that serve the community. In Huxley College of the Environment, students have

“I honestly think that my service learning and internship courses were my most important educational experiences at Western. They taught me to take what I learned in the classroom and apply it in real-world situations.”
– Western senior
participated in early efforts to clean up Bellingham Bay in conjunction with Georgia Pacific. They have also had the opportunity to participate in the Learning Environment Action Discovery (LEAD) service group which links Western, Whatcom County Schools, environmental organizations, and government agencies in order to encourage community-based environmental restoration, education and service learning. The College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS) formed the Center for Healthy Living (CHL) in 2002 to bring together a group of faculty and staff who were independently interested in working on health and wellness issues in the community and on campus. The goal of the CHL is to advance programs, activities, and individual efforts that improve or sustain components of healthy daily living. Workshops on Prevention Across the Lifespan, Stroke, and Childhood Obesity have already taken place, with more planned.

Through such avenues as the Distinguished Lecture Series and Associated Students Programs, the University also enriches the cultural life of the community with live performances on campus. Most colleges also offer a lecture series program to the community. The College of Sciences and Technology (CST), for example, has recently introduced its new Science and the univerCity Community Service Lecture Series. The talks, which take place at the Bellingham Public Library, are part of the College’s ongoing outreach to the community on issues of science. The CHSS also offers a lecture series designed to showcase the breadth of topics in the humanities and behavioral and social sciences that dovetail with their faculty’s expertise. The College of Fine and Performing Arts (CFPA) also offers a wide array of quality, world-class programming every year that attracts thousands of community members to Western’s campus. (See Standard Two Core Exhibits, College Self-Study Reports, for more information on the work of individual Colleges.)

Community groups who need speakers can also contact the Public Information Office; they channel inquiries to faculty and centers (i.e. Western’s Border Policy Research Institute) whose expertise matches the nature of the request. (See Exhibit 1.8 for more descriptive examples of community outreach efforts. See also Standard Four for a complete listing of faculty research that has measurable community impacts.)

**Engagement, Integrity, and Innovation: A Growing Emphasis on Sustainability**

In 1971, Western instituted one of the nation’s first recycling programs, and in 1972 the Engineering Technology program developed the Vehicle Research Institute (VRI) to provide sustainable vehicle design, prototype construction, and consultation for government and private industry. Among other accomplishments, the VRI won the 2007 Brilliant Award in “Brilliant Innovations: Waste to Energy” category for its work creating a vehicle powered by biomethane distilled from cow manure collected at local dairies. The award honors “innovative solutions that go beyond ‘green’ to generate
**Timeline of Recent Sustainability Efforts at Western**

In 2002, Governor Locke appoints Dr. Bradley Smith, Dean of Huxley College, as co-chair of the Sustainable Washington Advisory Panel.

In spring of 2004, Western's student body passes the Green Energy Initiative, and Western becomes one of the largest institutional purchasers of renewable energy.

In April 2005, President Morse forms the Sustainability Committee to further Western's pursuit of sustainability on campus.

In April of 2006, Western creates the pilot Campus Sustainability Coordinator position to assist the University with coordinating sustainability initiatives across campus.

In September 2006, Western establishes the pilot Office of Sustainability to give a home to campus sustainability initiatives and provide resources for Western sustainability staff.

In February of 2007, President Morse signs the President's Climate Commitment, which sets Western on a path to climate-neutrality.

Looking ahead: Western's Presence on the Bellingham Waterfront

Since 2001, Western has been involved with an opportunity to expand the University's presence in the community. The Port of Bellingham had plans to purchase the site of the Georgia-Pacific (GP) paper mill on Bellingham's waterfront, and Western immediately became a key participant in community discussions about the future of this prime property.

President Morse appointed a campus committee in spring 2004 to discuss how Western might expand the campus to the waterfront, and this committee—comprised of faculty, students, and key administrators—developed guiding principles, based on Western's Strategic Action Plan, for considering Western proposals. The committee solicited reactions to the principles and ideas for possible waterfront projects and held three forums to encourage and inform input.

The Western Board of Trustees voted, in 2005, to endorse Western's efforts in working with the Port of Bellingham to plan for a University presence on the waterfront. With support from the Port, Western then hired a consultant to help refine proposals into a preliminary plan to help determine how much space the University might need to reserve for future development. Throughout this process, Western officials met with local officials to discuss aspects of University involvement in redevelopment of the former GP property. During the 2005-06 academic year, the committee narrowed the real economic value while mitigating negative environmental impacts.”

Sustainability is an integral part of Western’s 2006 strategic plan. One of the five objectives states that Western will demonstrate engaged excellence “…in environmental stewardship and sustainable practices through our programs, scholarship, and actions.” The means of achieving sustainability on campus—such as sustainability research and on-campus sustainability projects—further several more objectives, such as demonstrating engaged excellence “…in interactive learning and the active participation of students in scholarly and creative activities; in supporting teacher-scholars who integrate the highest quality teaching, scholarship, and creative activities; and in civic engagement by developing leadership, effective citizenship, and social responsibility in all members of the campus community.”

In large part due to the efforts of Western’s students, Western has continued to become a leader in environmental citizenship and sustainability efforts. In 2007 and 2008, the Office of Sustainability, Facilities Management, and the Sustainability Committee will be conducting a greenhouse gas inventory and developing a climate-neutral action plan for the University. Western is one of only a handful of schools nationally to both sign the President’s Climate Commitment and purchase 100% green energy. (See Exhibit 1.9: Office of Sustainability Self-Study Report, including the President’s Climate Commitment Initial Report, and President’s Climate Commitment Timeline and Milestones. See also Standard Eight for a more detailed discussion of sustainability issues on campus.)
list of programs that might most feasibly be moved to waterfront locations, and three programs received summer funding to further refine their space needs: Huxley College of the Environment, Woodring College of Education, and the College of Sciences and Technology’s Northwest Consortium for Technological Innovation and Development (NCTID).

The committee suggested that Western’s Geology Department faculty meet with port staff to discuss faculty concerns related to the stability of the GP site. The two entities held several meetings, and the Geology department and the Port continue to share data and research, as well as hold discussions of interest with the public. At the end of June 2007, the faculty met with the Port’s own experts and the University’s consultants to share information and approaches about the geology of the area and construction methods that mitigate risks. This kind of dialogue will continue.

The legislature has supported the project, with $400,000 in planning funds in 2006, and $1 million for phase-two planning, which includes creating a financial structure for the development. Summer funding was again provided for planning of specific projects in summer 2007. While the waterfront development is a long-range project that may take decades to complete, the committee is beginning to focus more concretely on plans to move appropriate programs—including those affiliated with Huxley College, CST, Woodring College, and CHSS—to the waterfront development so that Western can take advantage of emerging funding opportunities for building and operations.

This particular expansion of the Western campus into the community will have many benefits related to Western’s mission, including educational opportunities based on collaboration with the city, port, county, and national programs. For example, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is considering residence at the renovated waterfront, and Western students and faculty will likely have the opportunity to participate in NOAA projects. Also, additional facilities at the waterfront will help to ameliorate space constraints on the main campus, a benefit that will help Western meet the state’s higher educational needs. (See Exhibit 1.10 for documents related to the Waterfront Development project.)

Resource Allocation and the University Mission

Considerable evidence shows that resource allocation—human, physical, and financial—has closely followed Western’s Mission and Strategic Action Plan. New resources, including state appropriations and tuition revenue, have been allocated relative to the respective values of Quality, Diversity, and Community, and to each of the specific strategies for achievement of these goals. All but one strategic action—interdisciplinary and graduate programs—has had funding earmarked. Chart A aggregates Western’s new resource commitments from biennia 1995-97 through 2005-07 to demonstrate how the University has effectively aligned resources with strategic objectives.
Though Western has in place several opportunities for international, cross-cultural, and interdisciplinary learning—most notably in Fairhaven College (see College Self-Study Reports, Standard Two Exhibit Binders), and through such programs as International Studies, Women Studies and the Honors Program (see Standard Two)—this area was found to be a target of opportunity in the SWOT analysis. Western is making bolder commitments to innovative, interdisciplinary learning models for students. The recent efforts to develop curricula and co-curricula sustainability offerings reflect this commitment. Also, a new Center for International Studies is currently under development, with one of its charges being to provide leadership in order to coordinate programs across several disciplines. A new director has been hired.

Also, two interdisciplinary programs—the Advanced Materials Science and Engineering Center (AMSEC) and Biomedical Research Activities in Neuroscience (BRAIN)—have recently received state appropriated funding (see also Standard Seven). AMSEC was founded in 2007 to promote interdisciplinary research and help regional companies solve their materials science and engineering challenges. It brings together faculty and students from multiple departments to facilitate interdisciplinary collaborations and solutions to complex, multifaceted problems. AMSEC is one of only two such labs in the country where undergraduate students are involved in such research.

BRAIN is also an interdisciplinary initiative linking the expertise of Western’s biology and psychology departments to prepare students for biomedical research positions in academia and industry. BRAIN also prepares students for graduate work in neuroscience, psychology, pharmacology, mental health counseling, and neurobiology.

The new Strategic Action Plan also calls for a study of the role of graduate education and its relative scope in relationship to the University’s mission.

### Substantive Changes to the Institution

No substantive changes to the mission or autonomy of the University, as defined by the Commission, have been made or contemplated since the previous accreditation review. Nor has the University sought to offer degrees at a higher level than the master’s degree. On the contrary, the University has reaffirmed its commitment to its current mission and menu of degrees.

While two notable changes have taken place over the last decade, they were designed to enhance management and efficiency within the existing vision of the institution and are not therefore considered substantive in this context. In December 2002, the Board of Trustees approved the formation of two Colleges—CHSS, and CST—from the existing College of Arts and Sciences. Western took this action to enhance the management of the units, better address the needs of the departments and their faculty, and enable the Deans to more effectively communicate with both internal and external
constituencies. (For a more comprehensive discussion of this change, see also Standard Two, Standard Four, and the College Self-Study Reports, Standard Two Core Exhibit Binders.)

In August 2001, the University Extended Programs and Woodring College of Education Extension Services were merged into the single unit of Extended Education and Summer Programs (EESP). This move served to eliminate duplication of efforts and allowed for more efficiency in marketing, assessment, and development activities (see also Standard Two). Both of these changes were discussed in the Interim Report of April 2003.

**STANDARD 1.B**

**PLANNING AND EFFECTIVENESS**

Planning and Resource Allocation in Accord with the University Mission

Western has been successful in adopting, enacting, and assessing its mission in large part because the University adapts its approach to its culture. The accepted culture at Western allows the administration to set broad goals and communicate clear messages about the mission of the institution while affording faculty, staff, and students the freedom to create and implement activities in support of that mission.

Western achieves effective, mission-based allocation of resources through strategic efforts to tie academic and administrative initiatives to the budget. For example, each College and non-academic department prioritizes its requests based on individual planning sessions and goals; these goals must reflect or enhance University goals. These individual priorities are then forwarded to the respective Vice President for consideration. An overall plan for each division is then prioritized and presented for consideration at the President’s Council and at the President’s Planning and Resource Council (PPRC). (See also Standard Seven.)

The PPRC serves as an expansion of the University Budget Advisory Committee (UBAC), and the Council’s main function is to provide considered advice and recommendations on a variety of issues related to the planning and allocation of resources. The PPRC is composed of eighteen members: the President and President-Elect of the Faculty Senate, the Executive Committee of the University Planning Council (UPC), one student, five staff members, two Deans, and all five Vice Presidents. The President chairs the Council, and it considers enrollment, technology, and capital budget plans, all in light of the Strategic Action Plan.

The PPRC also reviews the University biennial budget request to the Governor and Legislature and the University’s annual operating budget allocation plan. For example, in preparation for the 2007-09 biennial legislative budget allocation, PPRC heard from each division Vice President on how funding requests were directly related to the new Strategic Action Plan items. The PPRC also invited the Faculty Senate and Associated Students (A.S.) to make presentations with the same focus.

The UPC, a group responsible to the Faculty Senate, has also been
involved in recommendations related to the biennial budget request and recommendation for priorities in the allocation of resources. It has responsibility for review of the strategic plan and has had responsibility for the formulation and review of a Contingency Plan. This council is made up of eight faculty, two students, and four staff, including the Provost and the Registrar. The UPC is currently revisiting its charge in light of the recent collective bargaining unit formed by the faculty in 2006. (See also Standard Six.)

The Capital Budget Advisory Committee’s (CBAC) responsibility is to make a recommendation to the President on the University’s Capital Plan. This recommendation is always consistent with both the Strategic Action Plan and the Institutional Master Plan. The Master Plan provides a long-range vision for campus infrastructure and was developed through a highly participatory process that was guided by the mission and goals in the strategic plan. (See also Standard Eight and Core Exhibit: Institutional Master Plan.) The committee is comprised of six faculty, three students, eleven staff, and all five Vice Presidents.

In conjunction with the President’s Council, all of these groups have input into the budget and planning process at Western. Once the operating budget and/or biennial budgets are prepared, they are presented to the Board of Trustees for approval and submitted to the Governor as applicable.

An Emphasis on Assessment and Effectiveness

Figure 1 illustrates how the President’s goals—dictated by the Mission and Strategic Action Plan—form the basis for both the budget process and the evaluation of how well units meet the institutional goals. The counterclockwise arrows show how College and unit annual goals first emerge from the President’s goals and then, in turn, determine budgetary priorities for the units. These priorities are then evaluated by the committees described above and produce the final operating budget. The assessment process flows in a clockwise direction from the President’s Annual Goals and is based on an analysis and synthesis of annual reports completed by the units.

Assessment activities in light of the University’s mission have been ongoing at Western for more than thirty years, beginning in approximately 1970. Although sporadic at first, activities such as academic program reviews, capstone class assessments, and student and alumni surveys were conducted by several offices. Systematic assessment efforts began in 1987, when the Washington State Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) instituted a Master Plan for State Colleges and Universities. This Master Plan addressed the importance of assessment and introduced reporting requirements for a number of institutional outcomes. Assessment at Western is conducted both at the institutional level and, as shown in Figure 1, through a more “bottom-up” process initiated through unit-level annual reports.
The Role of the Office of Institutional Assessment, Research, and Testing (OIART)

See also Standard 2.B

Institutional Research responsibilities at Western have, in the past, been divided among three different offices. The Office of Institutional Assessment (OIA), the Office of Institutional Research (OIR), and the Office of Survey Research (OSR) now constitute one entity: the Office of Institutional Assessment, Research, and Testing (OIART). These offices now have a single director who reports directly to the Provost, and funding levels are adequate for the present operation. More than 1600 reports, profiles, and surveys have been completed, along with more than 120 technical reports. These are all available online, as is the Assessment Newsletter that is produced quarterly.

The Office of Institutional Assessment (OIA) supports continual improvement in student learning and faculty development at Western by collecting, analyzing, and reporting research data on academic programs, student learning outcomes, and curricular development. It conducts surveys, administers Western’s Assessment Plan, and publishes reports on student learning, behavior, and attitudes, and on institutional performance. The reports provide valuable information for measuring Western’s progress in light of its mission and goals, improving University programs and services, and measuring and reporting to various stakeholders.

The Office of Survey Research (OSR) provides survey research and other applied research methods that support the mission of Western. In particular, OSR surveys students, alumni, employers, and the campus community to provide valuable assessment data, analysis, and reports that can be used for improvement of programs, instruction, faculty scholarship, and information services. Along with the other divisions of the OIART, the OSR helped develop the Western Educational Longitudinal Study (WELS). Moreover, the OSR was and continues to be responsible for the administration of the WELS.

Western’s Office of Institutional Research (OIR) supports institutional planning, policy formulation, and decision making through the development and dissemination of accurate and timely data, reports, and analysis. The OIR is committed to providing support and expertise for the evaluation and support of assessment activities, and the office also provides data and analysis to administrative and academic departments to inform institutional decision-making and planning. The OIR also provides assessment support for Western committees and departments and for reports submitted to external bodies such as Washington’s Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB), state legislative committees, and Washington’s Office of Financial Management (OFM).

The OIR is currently working to be more proactive with respect to routine reporting. While ad-hoc reporting is an important part of institutional research, adding routine reporting would alleviate many special requests for data and analysis. Also, additional regular reporting and analysis
would benefit the University by helping to identify areas of concern early on. The office is currently working to identify regular reporting that would most benefit decision-making and to make the information available to administrative and academic units. A survey of administrative and academic units is also being carried out to see what other areas of need can be met by OIR. For example, OIART is creating an Academic Fact Book that will be posted on the Provost’s website. This data will be more accessible and may be downloaded to spreadsheets for the creation of personalized reports for enrollment management. (See Exhibit 1.12).

Other Assessment Activities

An Assessment Committee, a standing committee of the Academic Coordinating Commission (ACC), has existed for many years. In 1999, the committee name was changed to the Committee on the Assessment of Teaching and Learning (CATL). The charge to CATL includes a responsibility to advise the Director of the OIART and the Director of the Center for Instructional Innovation. The committee provides a liaison between University faculty, the two centers, the University Writing Program, and other ACC committees. CATL also identifies and recommends annual priorities for assessment studies and analyzes and interprets assessment and accountability research findings in terms of possible implications for the University’s mission, goals, and practices. CATL also enhances communications with other groups on campus. Membership of CATL is made up of five faculty members, one student, a representative from the Center for Instructional Innovation, the Director of Institutional Assessment, and an assessment representative from the Writing Program. (See also Standard Two and Standard Four for a description of the Writing Accountability/Assessment Group.)

Examples of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness

Western has consistently used its assessment resources to evaluate the three core values that form the foundation of the Mission and Strategic Action Plan: quality, diversity, and community service. Quality is primarily related to the excellence of the students, staff, faculty, and facilities, and this assessment has typically been conducted at the departmental and University level. Western assesses diversity at the institutional and departmental levels, and the University’s Equal Opportunity Office (EOO) has played a key role. Finally, the assessment of community service relies upon reports on activities from the units, as well as reports at the institutional level.

Assessing Quality

The five examples below illustrate cases in which institutional assessment activities helped the University identify the need to reallocate budgetary resources to further strategic goals associated with the quality of student’s educational experience, the quality of campus technology and classroom
utilization, and the recruitment and retention of quality faculty. These particular cases are representative and evoke the bigger picture of Western’s overall effective use of assessment data. (See also Standards 2.B and 2.C.)

Example One: The Freshman Interest Group (FIGs) Program

Since quality undergraduate education forms the heart of Western’s mission, vision, and Strategic Action Plan, it is fitting that Western has put forth several new programs and initiatives that specifically fortify this key area. In order to improve retention rates among freshmen, for example, Western convened a First-Year Experience (FYE) Task Force that developed several initiatives to improve undergraduates’ first year at Western (see also Standard 2.C). One strong example is the FIGs program. Basic to such first-year programs found elsewhere (such as the University of Washington), a Western FIGs student enrolls in two large GUR courses (150-400 seats) that have shared thematic connections, as well as a two-credit seminar. Western offered the first FIGs program in the fall of 1999, and eight sections enrolled between twenty and twenty-five students each. In each fall since then, the program has enrolled about 10% of the entering freshman class, or roughly 230 to 250 students.

As generators of a pilot program, FIGs developers included a comprehensive assessment element, one designed with a robust feedback loop to inform and guide program development. First-year assessment included: a pre/post survey of all FIGs lecture courses; a pre/post survey of all FIGs seminars; a focus group conducted at the end of the term; qualitative analysis of FIGs participant open-ended responses; analysis of both FIGs and non-FIGs Student Tracking System DATA (GPA’s, ethnicity, gender, etc.); incorporation of Western’s (then) annual Freshmen Survey findings into FIGs analysis where appropriate; and solicitation and analysis of open-ended comments received from most FIGs instructors.

In every year since the program’s inception, FIGs developers have studied quantitative and qualitative data, identified program strengths and weaknesses, adjusted curricula, and reconfigured administrative strategies. For example, in the first year of FIGs, Western implemented four different seminar models. Findings then led to a single design for all seminars in the second year. From the second to third year, developers introduced an experiment in the seminar—a focus on information literacy—with mixed results. From the third to the fourth years, Western integrated the best of the seminar components. This process continues, with components scrutinized and adjusted based on the data.

While FIGs served as the first dedicated effort to enhance the freshman experience, many other initiatives have grown from this concentrated focus, such as the development of new courses specifically tied to the First-Year Experience, the restructuring of the GUR program, the introduction of a Freshman Reading Program, and expanded new student and transfer advising. (See also Standard 2.C for a comprehensive discussion of first-year...)

“The FIG seminar made the transition to a big university much easier for me...I have some familiar faces in my classes and easy access to a study group to help prepare for tests.”

–Western freshman
initiatives and general education reform and Standard Three for a discussion of initiatives aimed at freshman retention.)

**Example Two: Classroom Renovations**

In Western’s 1997 Strategic Action Plan, one of the strategic action principles and strategies for achieving the goal of quality was to “…improve the technological infrastructure of the campus…to enhance the learning environment for students and faculty.” At the time, the University’s classrooms were seriously in need of renovation and update in order to meet evolving teaching technologies. Recognizing the problem, the University administration made a charge to Vice Provost for Information Technology, committing to the renovation and mediation of general University classrooms as a capital budget priority. Meanwhile, academic planners, facilities planners, and faculty engaged in a concerted planning effort to identify the types of needed teaching technologies and create a prioritized list of classrooms that required attention.

The University has been following through on its commitment and has been successful in renovating and mediating approximately 85% of classrooms over the past eight years. No longer is it a struggle to schedule a classroom that is the right size and that also contains the appropriate technologies for teaching and learning. (See also Standard Five: Information Technology Resources.)

However, Western purchased most of the equipment for these renovated classrooms through one-time funds (although base funds were allocated for maintenance and software acquisitions). As the equipment ages, the University will need to provide funding for replacement and upgrades. (See also Standard Eight.)

**Example Three: Classroom Scheduling Policies**

In 1999, Western was experiencing a severe shortage of classroom space. With the knowledge that Western would continue to grow, and that the relief of a new building would not come until the fall of 2004, it became apparent that Western needed an in-depth analysis of classroom use and scheduling policies. Preserving Western’s niche as a traditional, residential University that offers almost exclusively daytime programs would require fundamental changes to classroom scheduling.

The OIR conducted a thorough analysis of current classroom use, policies, and scheduling procedures. While the classroom use analysis showed that the University had very high utilization overall, it also highlighted possible areas for improvement. Meetings with scheduling software consultants revealed ways to improve the underlying program so that it could better find appropriate rooms, and this change reduced the need to hand-place classes and, in turn, improved efficiency. Also, in the fall of 2000, the University adopted a trial block-scheduling policy. While there was an adjustment period, the academic units accepted the change. The new
policy greatly improved efficiency and allowed the University to weather a serious space shortage. (See also Standard Two.) A review of the data in fall 2006 showed that departments continue to adhere to the block schedule constraints almost as much as they had in the earlier study. The review also showed that while the supply of classrooms is obviously constrained during peak times, there are still some rooms available. (See Exhibit 1.13: Report on Classroom Space, and Exhibit 1.14: Report on Classroom Scheduling.)

The completion of the new Communications Facility in 2004 also helped with the space shortage. Sixteen new classrooms were added to the inventory (943 seats), as were fifty new faculty offices. Western used the space vacated by the occupants of the new building to create eight additional general-purpose classrooms. Western also consolidated academic centers into the vacated space, freeing up additional space for three academic departments. Also, Western moved several programs to a new office building located near to campus to free up core academic space in the heart of campus (see Standard Eight).

An additional new academic building is presently under construction. The Academic Instructional Center (AIC) will house the Department of Psychology and the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders. The move of these units will free up much needed space for departments in Humanities, Business, and Education. (See also Standard Eight for a comprehensive description of these facilities.) The Chemistry Infill Project will also provide approximately 3900 square feet of instructional space. This will be shared by the Chemistry and Biology Departments and will accommodate six to seven additional student/faculty areas.

**Example Four: Recruiting and Retaining High Quality Faculty**

The Strategic Action Guidelines consistently identify the need to recruit and retain a “diverse faculty of the highest quality,” and Western has taken actions to measure its performance in regard to this objective. Furthermore, the University has allocated new funds and reallocated existing funds to this endeavor when state budget allocations have jeopardized institutional targets for faculty salaries. (See also Standard Four and Standard Seven.)

Western adopted a target of paying salaries at the 75th percentile of salaries for its peer institutions, and the University monitors progress toward this goal on an annual basis, as well as periodically examining the composition of the peer group used for comparison. In December 2004, Western adopted a new list of twenty-five peer institutions that replaced the previous peer group identified by the HECB (see Exhibit 1.15).

The use of this peer group data has had significant impacts on the resource allocation process at the University. The state allocations for faculty salary increases have not always been sufficient to attain our goal; the impact of these resource shortfalls, however, has been mitigated by the administration’s commitment to allocate local funds to increase faculty salaries. Table 1 shows the average salary increases for all staff at Western over the last nine years, and the funding percentages applied by both the state
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<td>Academic Deans</td>
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<td>President, Vice Presidents, Senior Administrators</td>
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<td>4.0%</td>
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<td>4.5%</td>
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<td>Exempt Professional</td>
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Note 1: 3% salary increase funded by state appropriations plus additional 1% increase funded at the discretion of the institution by local funds.
Note 2: 2% increase funded at the discretion of the institution by local funds.
Note 3: 3% salary increase funded by state appropriations plus additional 1.5% increase funded at the discretion of the institution by local funds.
Note 4: 3% salary increase funded by state appropriations plus additional 2% increase funded at the discretion of the institution by local funds.
Note 5: 3.7% salary increase authorized by the legislature plus an additional 0.8% increase funded at the discretion of the institution.
Note 6: 1% across-the-board salary increase funded at the discretion of the institution by local funds.
Note 7: 2% across-the-board salary increase funded at the discretion of the institution by local funds.
Note 8: 3.2% salary increase authorized by the legislature plus an additional 1.3% increase funded at the discretion of the institution.
Note 9: 3.2% and 1.6% salary increase as negotiated in collective bargaining agreements effective July 1, 2005, and July 1, 2006, respectively.
Note 10: 1.6% salary increase authorized by the legislature plus an additional 3.4% increase funded at the discretion of the institution.
and internal funding. Western was guided in these internal allocations by the factors identified in the Strategic Action Plan and the peer-group analysis conducted by the University. While Western still struggles to meet this target goal, the Mission and Strategic Action Plan, which guides assessment efforts, ensures continuous attention to this important issue. (See also Standard Four for more detailed information on faculty salaries.)

Example Five: Assessment at the Departmental Level

As will be seen in Standard Two, Western has made great strides in coordinating assessment strategies at the departmental and College levels in accord with the University’s strategic goals and with Western’s comprehensive institutional assessment plan. Currently, 100% of Western’s departments have formulated outcomes assessment plans that are already implemented, with results, or that are in the process of full-scale implementation. Western’s mission and newly revised strategic plan guide the departments and programs in the formation and development of their mission statements (see College and Department Self-Study Reports, Standard Two exhibits), which, in turn, guide the formulation of learning outcomes and assessment activities and procedures. To support these efforts, the OIART has developed two comprehensive assessment handbooks: one to be used by departments, programs, and Colleges, and one to be used by individual instructors for course level assessment of student learning. These handbooks provide guidance and consistency for assessing student learning across Western, as they offer many different approaches to assessment processes and activities. Departments and professors are free to use methods that work best for their specific academic discipline and their course goals.

For example, the English Department has chosen a course-embedded assessment method: the faculty articulate key skills for English majors to master, and they examine closely, as a department, assignments and pedagogical strategies that can assess those competencies in every course. By so doing, the English Department gains a clearer sense not only of their students’ achievement of outcomes, but also of their own evolving curriculum and how it serves students, faculty, the College, and the University. (See also Standard Two Core Exhibit Binders: College and Department Self-Studies and Outcomes Assessment Plans.)

These are just a few examples that show why Western remains the Second Ranked Top Public Master’s Granting School in the West by U.S. News & World Report for the 11th consecutive year (see Exhibit 1.16: U.S. News & World Report). Western has been ranked in the top ten on this list for thirteen of the past fourteen years. To help maintain quality, academic departments at Western also consistently undergo review as determined by the HECB. (See Exhibit 1.17: History of Existing Program Reviews. See Standard Two Exhibits for Program Review reports). OIR provides data and information in support of these department reviews. This consistent monitoring of departments and programs has led to a streamlining of

“Almost every teacher I have had is very approachable and very helpful when it comes to not only the class material, but with everyday topics as well. It creates a very comfortable and fun learning environment and makes it easier to learn and do my work well without feeling overwhelmed.”

—Western Senior
offerings, and suspension and/or elimination of redundant programs (see Exhibit 1.18: Programs Deleted and Added Since Last Self-Study). Furthermore, the majority of Western's programs are nationally accredited (see Exhibit 1.19: Academic Programs and Accreditation Status.)

Assessing Diversity

As noted previously in Standard 1.A, a variety of initiatives have been put into place to ensure that diversity remains a guiding force to all of Western's activities; departments and units across the University have instituted programs to assist with fulfilling the University's strategic goals related to diversity. Below are two examples of how assessment activities have been used to identify the outcome of some of these efforts. (See Exhibit 1.6 for a list of additional diversity programs).

Example One: Student Outreach and Recruitment Efforts

The Division of Student Affairs and Academic Support Services has implemented a “diversity initiatives action plan” to ensure that all persons affiliated with Western are appreciated and valued for their diverse talents and contributions. By enacting diversity initiatives, Western is able to create an environment that supports student success through graduation from Western and beyond. (See also Standard Three.)

For example, as part of a multi-faceted recruitment program designed to identify, attract, and enroll a talented and diverse student body, the Office of Admissions developed a Strategic Outreach Plan (see Exhibit 1.20: Office of Admissions, General Freshman Recruitment Plan). The application for admission invites all students to share their experiences with and/or commitment to diversity. Admissions also partners with the Ethnic Student Center (ESC), Student Outreach Services (SOS), and various academic programs to tailor group and individual visits to meet specific needs. They also participate in ESC events to connect prospective students with the University community.

Through such actions, Western continues to exceed State Ethnic Proportions for Native American and Asian American students. While Washington State's population is approximately 1.5% Native American, Western's student population is 2.1% Native American, about 144% of the state proportion. Western's students are 8.0% Asian American, about 126% of the state's proportion of this ethnic group. Western enrolls about 72% of the state proportion of the African American population and 38% of the state proportion of the Hispanic population (Figure 2). Western's total ethnic minority student population is 15.8%, up from 13.7% in 1996 (Figure 3). This represents an increase of more than 15% over a ten-year period, even with an increasing enrollment base and though First Time in College (FTIC) and Transfer applications from students of color have remained fairly consistent.
Western’s challenge in recruiting a diverse student body stems from concerns of particular importance for students from underrepresented groups. Through assessment efforts, the University has ascertained that these concerns include Western’s physical distance from students’ families, the financial burden of higher education, and a perception that our wider community presently lacks cultural diversity. Consequently, attracting a diverse pool of applicants and helping students feel comfortable at Western requires an integrated plan and an institutional effort. Enhancing the diversity of Western’s student body is best facilitated with increased focus and staffing. Funding for low-income students’ financial support will also help Western reach its goals.

Example Two: Faculty and Staff Outreach and Recruitment Efforts

In accord with federal regulations, the EOO prepares a yearly Affirmative Action Plan (AAP) for Western to assess whether the University’s workforce proportionately represents women and minorities, according to their availability in the labor force. This plan is based on the following three analyses:

- A workforce analysis (indicating the number of women and
An availability analysis (using census and other data, assessing the approximate percentage of women and minorities in various job groups that are qualified and available for Western’s open positions).

A utilization analysis (determining if the diversity of women and minorities in Western’s faculty and staff proportionately represents the availability of these groups that exist in the workforce).

These analyses result in Western setting its federally required yearly affirmative action goals for women and minorities, for each of Western’s job groups. The EOO consults with faculty and professional staff search committees to discuss strategies and best practices for diversity outreach. In addition to identifying targeting recruitment sources for minorities and women, Western also seeks to reach out to people with disabilities and veterans to encourage their applications for positions. Once hired, employees with disabilities who have a need may request an accommodation. The Employee Accommodation Section of the Human Resources Office works with these employees and their supervisors to ensure the necessary accommodation is provided for them to be able to perform the essential functions of their job.

Based on analyzing the AAP data, it is clear that strides have been made in the hiring of underrepresented women and minority, tenure-track faculty. (See also Standard Four.) In the fall of 1999, the percentage of full-time, underrepresented minority faculty was 8.7%. By the fall of 2006, this percentage had climbed to 14.1%. Asian Americans now comprise 7.9% of the full-time faculty, Hispanic Americans, 2.6%, Native Americans, 2.0% and Black Americans, 1.6%. The percentage of women in tenure-track faculty positions has risen from 30% in 1999 to 39.7% in 2006 (see Figures 4 and 5).

In spite of these positive increases, Western’s 2007 AAP identified three of seven Colleges where the incumbency of tenure-track, minority faculty is less than that which would be reasonably expected, based on their availability.
Reasonable goals have been set in these Colleges. There is also a notable lack of representation of Black faculty, and Western is exploring a number of initiatives to address this issue.

Three of the seven Colleges have been identified where the incumbency of underrepresented women in tenure-track faculty positions is less than would reasonably be expected based on availability. Initiatives to increase representation of women are also being explored, and reasonable goals have been set.

Assessing Diversity of Staff

Minority staff members have increased from 100 in 1999 to 134 in 2006, a 34% increase. Minorities now represent 11.7% of all staff. Women staff increased from 553 in 1999 to 661 in 2006. This is a 20% increase and represents 58% of the staff. Figures 6 and 7 show the breakdown of staff by racial and gender group.

The 2007 AAP indicated that women were proportionately represented with respect to their availability in the labor force, in all professional and most classified job groups, with the exception of those in the “skilled craft support” job group. However, minorities were underrepresented, according to their availability, in eleven of the fifteen job groups. Again, the AAP sets goals to try to proactively attract diverse applicants for Western classified and professional positions. The Executive Director of EOO meets with all professional search committees to review best practices and strategies in reaching out to minority applicants and to ensure diversity of the applicant pool. Professional staff are encouraged to identify minority caucuses or networks associated with professional organizations and to target their advertising to this group, with the hope of increasing the diversity of the applicants.

Other strategies include targeted advertising and attending professional conferences with large numbers of minority and women participants and sharing Western’s job announcements. The EOO monitors the hiring process and signs off at each stage of it, to ensure good faith efforts are undertaken in searches where the positions belong to a job group in which minorities are underrepresented. In addition, enhanced efforts are underway to provide additional outreach to veterans and people with disabilities. The Minority Faculty and Staff Caucus also meets periodically with the administration to discuss policies, processes, and areas where improvement can be made.

Assessing Community Service

As noted in Standard 1.A, public service remains an integral and growing part of the University’s Mission, Vision, and Strategic Action Plan; continual assessment ensures that each component of this public service mission continues to evolve to meet Western’s objectives. For example, the Center for Service Learning uses its own assessment data to respond to student, faculty, and community partner needs. As the result of such assessment, the
Center developed the Service Learning Faculty Fellows program, designed to help faculty integrate service learning more successfully in their courses, with a strong focus on assessment of service learning as an effective vehicle for educational and public service goals (see Exhibit 1.7: Center for Service Learning, Self-Study Report).

Two other strong examples of how assessment has been used to enhance the public service aspect of Western’s mission are the Small Business Development Center and the Science, Math, and Technology Education Program.

**Example One: Small Business Development Center**

The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) exemplifies how planning and assessment of community service activities takes place within units. The mission statement of the SBDC, featured prominently in its annual report, is “…to foster success in business by empowering owners and managers with knowledge and skills, through technical assistance and strategic partnerships, contributing to economic development in our community.” The report provides some specific examples of SBDC’s activities but also devotes a full page to a “Performance Impacts Summary” that uses performance measures such as jobs saved or created, new investments generated per client, and number of hours counseling per client. Table 2 shows the ten-year impact that SBDC has had on Whatcom County. The 2005 SBDC Annual Report was distributed to the public and within the University, and it provides evidence of the effectiveness of the center’s programs. (See Exhibit 1.21: SBDC Annual Report.)

**The Science, Math, and Technology Education Program**

The Science, Math, and Technology Education Program (SMATE) within the CST brings together faculty from multiple disciplines (elementary education, chemistry, geology, biology, mathematics, physics, and science education) to prepare future K-12 teachers. The North Cascades and Olympic Science Partnership (NCOSP), developed by faculty in SMATE, is a five-year, NSF-funded program focused on improving science teaching and learning K-16.

Planning for assessment of the Academy’s learning strands was an essential part of the NCOSPs team’s mission. After intensive study, the team devised comprehensive evaluations on several levels: participant, facilitator, and administrative. The overarching evaluation questions were: *To what extent was the Summer Academy (SA) aligned with the strand goals and the Principles of the Partnership? To what extent did the SA serve the needs of the participants (including facilitators)? To what extent were the content, resources and delivery aligned with best practices?*

According to an analysis of three years of participant evaluation responses, understanding increased in several areas over the course of the program, and the analysis also showed annual comparisons and areas for improvement.

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**TABLE 2**

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<tr>
<th>SBDC’S TEN YEAR ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR WHATCOM COUNTY (1996-2006)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jobs Saved or Created ............ 3,361</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Clients Served............... 4,222</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital Investment Created ........ $115,531,999</td>
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<td>Total Hours Counseled ............ 32,829</td>
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Western Washington University, NWCCU Self-Study Report, 2008 1-25
From this data, the evaluation team recommended several specific changes that will enhance the experience for both participants and facilitators, thus improving the quality of public service this particular program provides for the community. These changes will be put into effect for subsequent Summer Academies. (See Standard Two, Department and Program Self-Study Reports, for a complete overview of SMATE activities.)

**Public Documentation of Progress**

Western publicizes progress in meeting strategic goals in a variety of ways. The main avenues of communication include committee member communications, written reports, publication in campus newsletters and communiqués, websites, and reports to state boards and the legislature. Western will continue to explore how the University can use benchmarks and assessment data to evaluate how well Western enacts its core values, and the University will publish these results in public forums, such as the President’s newsletter—Context—and Western’s website. Such publications will document Western’s evolution as a quality, innovative, and diverse educational institution.

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**Standard One**

**SUMMARY & ANALYSIS**

**Significant Changes Since 1998**

- In 2006, “Engaged Excellence” becomes Western’s guiding philosophy as the institution revises and reinforces its Values, Mission, Vision, and Strategic Action Plan. The process involved a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) Analysis and a broad spectrum of University and community input.
- In 2002, the Board of Trustees approves the formation of two new Colleges from the existing College of Arts and Sciences—the College of Humanities and Social Sciences and the College of Sciences and Technology—to better serve their constituencies.
- In 1999, Western creates the Office of Institutional Research and then merges it, in 2004, with the Office of Institutional Assessment and Office of Survey Research under one umbrella organization, OIART. This merger enhances Western’s ability to coordinate and utilize assessment data.
- In 2001, Western merges University Extended Programs and the Woodring College of Education Extension Services to better serve the community.
- In 2005, the Board of Trustees endorses Western’s efforts to plan for a University presence on Bellingham’s renovated waterfront.
- In 2006, Western creates the pilot Office of Sustainability to coordinate sustainability initiatives.
• During the last decade, Western institutes several initiatives and programs to make strides toward increasing diversity among students, faculty, and staff.

• In 1999, Western institutes the Freshman Interest Group (FIGs) Program as part of a First-Year Education initiative to improve undergraduate education, a core component of Western's mission.

Strengths

• Western maintains strong state, regional, and national reputations, as evidenced by numerous reports. For the eleventh consecutive year, in 2007, Western was ranked first among top public master's-granting institutions in the Pacific Northwest by *US News & World Report*. Western was also ranked among the top “100 Best Values in Public Colleges” by *Kiplinger's* magazine.

• The core of Western's 2006 Mission and Strategic Action Plan essentially remains the same as in previous years, a consistency that enhances the clarity of Western's mission and reinforces Western's niche in the community.

• The process for updating and refining the University's Mission and Strategic Action Plan involved a wide range of participants within the community, and therefore reflects a comprehensive vision.

• The 2006 Mission and Strategic Action Plan contains more specific Strategic Objectives and Strategic Actions, making it easier for units to formulate their own plans and activities in line with Western's goals. Each administrative and educational support unit of the University now has a clearly defined mission statement that supports the University’s goals.

• Western supports its primary mission of providing opportunities for obtaining a quality education with adequate and appropriate planning and evaluation processes, educational programs, educational support services, financial and physical resources, and administrative processes. The University employs a broad array of committees and administrative divisions to carry out this mission, and the annual reporting process provides a formal means for assessing effectiveness.

• Western shows a high level of commitment to assessment of all its activities. This assessment occurs at many different levels: Department, College, Division, and Institution.

• Sustainability has become a strong focus for student, faculty, and University innovations. President Morse signed the President's Climate Commitment, ensuring that Western will make sustainability efforts a high priority.
Western has renovated and mediated over 85% of the general-purpose classrooms and adopted a block scheduling policy in response to assessment data.

Challenges and Next Steps

- Western will make progress in carrying out the new Strategic Action Plan throughout the University, ensuring that all units understand their roles, their relationship to the University, and effective actions to take to meet Western's goals. Western will continue to emphasize the creation of more detailed strategic action items at the unit level, with measurable outcomes.

- Western will establish clear and measurable baseline and benchmark data that will help the University assess how well it is moving forward toward the goal of “Engaged Excellence.” OIART data and the WELS report will enable Western to use such areas as student retention, time to degree, civic engagement, labor force participation after graduation, and employee satisfaction as measures of progress in fulfilling the Strategic Action Plan.

- Western will continue to make institutional research a priority, supporting systematic reporting processes and a proactive, rather than a reactive, stance to assessment. Western will continue to emphasize the use of assessment results in all areas to enable effective strategic actions.

- Western will continue to address issues that become obstacles to attaining strategic goals. Such strategies include:
  - new funding to mitigate reduced state appropriations.
  - an emphasis on increasing faculty salaries to remain competitive.
  - new funding streams to maintain and improve facilities.
  - enhanced strategies for recruitment and retention of a diverse student body, faculty, and staff.
  - increased funding for low-income students' financial aid.

- Western will continue to strengthen opportunities for interdisciplinary work and will conduct a review of its graduate programs as indicated in the new strategic plan.

- Western will continue to monitor, improve, and develop innovative programs, such as FIGs, AMSEC, and BRAIN that improve the undergraduate educational experience and boost retention rates.

- Western will continue to examine how the University can create permanent and adequate funding for programs that help us fulfill our Strategic Objectives, such as sustainability, community service, faculty support, and diversity.
Western will continue to make progress on strategically expanding the campus to Bellingham’s renovated waterfront, where the University will have opportunities to enhance its educational programs in line with strategic goals.

Progress on Recommendations from 1998 Accreditation Report

There were no formal recommendations for Standard One in the 1998 Accreditation Report. However, a few comments in the text of the report have been addressed.

“Assessment of WWU’s educational effectiveness began long before many national and state initiatives... The Board of Trustees expressed commitment to assessment and cited examples of its use in their actions, including the adoption of enrollment management policies and summer session changes and diversity in the mission. Nonetheless, much remains to be done by faculty in academic and support units...”

- Western has continued to refine and expand its use of assessment data to enhance the educational experience at Western. The Board of Trustees continues to support strong assessment practices, and assessment is used in every aspect of Western’s operations. Western has come a long way in creating a cohesive culture of assessment and, as will be seen in Standard Two, all academic departments now have clear outcomes and assessment plans for their degree programs.

“The committee heard a number of comments that pointed to the desirability of connecting the various parts of WWU’s continuous planning, and others that suggested some confusion over the commission Standard, on the one hand, and ‘accountability’ demands within the state. The connection and confusion could be addressed in broad campus discussion that are recommended in the section on Standard 6.”

- As described earlier, Western can be commended for its broad-based, inclusive approach to the Mission and Strategic Action Plan revision process. These discussions brought together constituent groups from across the University to create a cohesive and cutting-edge vision for Western’s future.

STANDARD ONE
SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

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

1.2: Western Washington University Mission and Strategic Action Plan, 1997

Western Washington University, NWCCU Self-Study Report, 2008
Exhibits (located in Standard One Exhibit Binders, Committee Room)

1.1: Documents related to the Strategic Action Plan update process, including Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) analysis and draft report with feedback

1.2: Context, the President’s Newsletter

1.3: President’s State of the University Address

1.4: Divisional Annual Reports and President’s Evaluation of Goals and Objectives

1.5: Higher Education Accountability Plan, with Performance Measures and Targets

1.6: Documents related to diversity programs, including Equal Opportunity/Non Discrimination Policy, Diversity Handbook, Woodring College of Education Diversity Plan, and other diversity program initiatives

1.7: Center for Service Learning Self-Study Report

1.8: Community Outreach Activities

1.9: Office of Sustainability Self-Study Report, with President’s Climate Commitment documents

1.10: Waterfront Development documents

1.11: New Base Funding Allocations Table

1.12: Evidence that demonstrates the analysis and appraisal of institutional outcomes, including list of reports, profiles, and surveys from OIART, and sample surveys from OSR

1.13: Report on Classroom Space

1.14: Report on Classroom Scheduling

1.15: List of Peer Institutions

1.16: U.S. News & World Report

1.17: History of Existing Program Reviews

1.18: New program offerings, suspensions, and eliminations

1.19: Academic Programs and Accreditation Status

1.20: Office of Admissions’ General Freshman Recruitment Plan

1.21: Small Business Development Center Annual Report

1.22: Enrollment Figures for Past Five Years, with Projections

“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