President's Advisory Committee on Institutional Resource Modeling

Degrees Awarded Working Group

Drivers:

1. A supportive community for all learners, including underrepresented students of color, students of diverse gender identities and sexual orientations, students with disabilities, veterans, place-bound students, adult learners, first generation, and Pell-eligible students.
2. Curricular and co-curricular programs, modalities and locations that are attractive for all learners.
3. Affordable degrees for all students.
4. Increased presence and satisfaction of faculty and staff of color and other underrepresented colleagues.
5. Appropriate and effective marketing of Western.
6. Increased recruitment efforts particular to the selected outcome.
7. Programs, services, and practices that increase retention and graduation rates. (This driver is intended to refer to the drivers identified by the Retention/Graduation Rate Working Group.)

Assumptions:

1. A deep understanding and integrated institutional commitment to the success of all students including relevant support services where all are treated fairly and with respect.
   a. Related to Driver 1
2. Inclusive definitions of what constitutes excellence for students, faculty, and staff.
   a. Related to Drivers 1, 2, and 4
3. Western and the broader communities become more attractive to faculty and staff of color.
   a. Related to Drivers 1 and 4
4. Faculty and student support services are available and accessible for all students of all populations in all areas served by Western.
   a. Related to Drivers 2 and 6
5. As the pool of available students in Washington changes, financial need and debt aversion will both increase.
   a. Related to Driver 3
6. A substantial pool of broadly available scholarships is needed to fill gaps in student funding.
   a. Related to Driver 3
7. Western will formulate a comprehensive affordability plan which addresses all costs of attendance, including cost of living.
   a. Related to Driver 3

8. New or updated curricular, co-curricular, and student services offerings that are relevant on the Bellingham campus and beyond.
    a. Related to Driver 4
9. Western will represent itself authentically to target populations.
    a. Related to Drivers 4 and 5
10. Marketers must understand the various markets from the perspective of members of the targeted groups.
    a. Related to Driver 5
11. Increased awareness and desirability of Western for all students.
    a. Related to Driver 6
12. Financial resources will be available and used efficiently and effectively to address net cost of attendance.
    a. Related to Driver 6
13. Increased enrollments from new students and from higher retention rates for continuing students will be necessary on the Bellingham campus and beyond.
    a. Related to all drivers as it is a necessary sub-outcome to increased degrees awarded.
14. Assumptions are generated for relevant drivers from the Graduation Rate Working Group.

Degrees Awarded Working Group

Excellence for Faculty, Staff, and Students

The Strategic Plan posits that we must advance inclusive success, increase Washington impact, and enhance academic excellence, and clearly frames those three themes as interdependent, amplifying and strengthening one another. Academic excellence which advances inclusive success and which increases Western's impact on Washington requires some new thinking for us as an institution. How do we define excellence in this context--for students, for faculty, and for staff? What role does the institution play in identifying the potential for excellence, for fostering its development, supporting its full expression, and evaluating its impact in both students and employees?

As an institution of higher education, Western defines academic excellence as a pursuit of knowledge (broadly defined) and a pursuit of the truth. For faculty, this pursuit is typically contained within the three categories of faculty work described in the Collective Bargaining Agreement: teaching/librarianship, research/scholarship/creative activity, and service. Broadening our understanding and support for the ways those categories may be expressed in leadership, in public and community engagement, in action-oriented commitments to equity, inclusion, and diversity, and in emerging fields and frames of knowledge is essential if we are to meet our own goals. Departments control the evaluation process through their Unit Evaluation Plans, and to attract and retain faculty who will help Western fulfill its strategic plan, it will be necessary to examine and perhaps revise those plans to reflect the wide range of excellences we want to cultivate among the faculty.

For staff, excellence is defined through position descriptions and performance expectations. Just as with faculty, within that framework we may need to examine and consider what new values and capacities we elevate as core requirements which will help us achieve our strategic goals. At every level and location of Western, we can recognize the value of uncommon perspectives, a variety of lived experiences, special cultural and linguistic knowledge, capacity for care and support, knowledge of place, as enrichments of the excellence with which someone does their work.

We promise students a "transformational education" at Western, which implies that we expect them to change while they are here. We can also recognize that a student's potential excellence may be affected by externalities, and that cultivating the fullest development of many kinds of excellence will take different kinds of inputs for different students. This perspective will change how we identify potential students, how we engage with them while they are here, and how they impact Western, Washington state, and the world.

Strategic Objective: Total Degrees Awarded[1]

Driver #1

Name Driver	*Community |* A supportive community for all learners, including underrepresented students of color, students of diverse gender identities and sexual orientations, students with disabilities, veterans, place-bound students, adult learners, first generation, and PELL-eligible students.	
Expected Impact	A supportive community will enable Western to attract and retain the population of learners, both student and faculty, that it seeks in its strategic plan.	
Confidence Level	*High*	People succeed where support is provided for them as individuals, and as part of the community. In areas where Western has not provided the levels of service it would like, retention rates have lagged.
KEY ASSUMPTIONS		
	Assumption A *A deep understanding and integrated institutional commitment to the success of all students including relevant support services where all are treated fairly and with respect.*	**Assumption B** *Inclusive definitions of what constitutes excellence for students, faculty and staff.*
Why is this assumption important?	*Understanding and providing relevant and meaningful support services to students is critical for the success of enrolling them at Western and retaining through to graduation.*	*In order for Western to grow and increase the number of graduates while the State is changing, it will need to live its values and define inclusive excellence.*
What challenges affect whether this assumption is true?	*Understanding the changing needs of multiple student groups and designing and delivering relevant services/opportunities will be an ongoing challenge.*	Defining inclusive excellence will require rigorous self-examination, robust discussions and, potentially, shifts in practices.
	Assumption C *Western and the broader communities become more attractive to faculty and staff of color and underrepresented.*	

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Degrees Awarded Driver 1, Updated 4/15/2019

Why is this assumption important?	*Recruiting and retention will be at least as difficult as they are now, negatively affecting the possibility of increased presence.*	
What challenges affect whether this assumption is true?	Western will need to become a more active, relevant partner in local communities to assure that they are welcoming to students, faculty and staff from underrepresented social identity groups.	
Complicating Factors (if any)	Success in this driver is a necessary precondition for success in all other drivers of the number of degrees awarded at Western, including all strategic objectives (total degrees awarded, degrees awarded to students of color, degrees awarded on the Bellingham campus and at other sites).	

[1] *Including Bellingham campus and beyond, and for underrepresented students of color and increased number of underrepresented faculty of color.*

Name Driver	**Programming**	Curricular and co-curricular programs, modalities and locations that are attractive for all learners.	
Expected Impact	*Western will increase enrollments and ultimately degrees awarded by adding or expanding high demand programs and by adding programs at other locations and in other modalities.*		
Confidence Level	*High*	*Expanding to meet demand will lead to increased enrollments and number of degrees awarded.*	
KEY ASSUMPTIONS			
	Assumption A *Faculty and student support services are available and accessible for all students of all populations in all areas served by Western.*		**Assumption B** *Inclusive definitions of what constitutes excellence for students, faculty and staff.*
Why is this assumption important?	*Expanded programs and locations will require additional faculty and support services which will support an increase in the number of enrollments and increased number of graduates.*		*In order for Western to grow and increase the number of graduates while the State is changing, it will need to live its values and define inclusive excellence.*
What challenges affect whether this assumption is true?	*Challenges will be in program development and planning, faculty and staff recruitment and in finding adequate space for new and expanded programs.*		*Defining inclusive excellence will require rigorous self-examination, robust discussions and, potentially, shifts in practices.*
Complicating Factors (if any)	Additional or expanded programs, locations and modalities are complex endeavors and will likely higher collaboration across colleges and divisions.		

[1] *Including Bellingham campus and beyond, and for underrepresented students of color and increased number of underrepresented faculty of color.*

Name Driver	*Affordability* | *Affordable degrees for all students*	
Expected Impact	*Increase the number of degrees awarded, extend access to degrees to more students, serve the people of the state better.*	
Confidence Level	*High*	*When college is affordable, more students attend and complete college.*

KEY ASSUMPTIONS

	Assumption A *As the pool of available students in Washington changes, financial need and debt aversion will both increase.*	Assumption B *A substantial pool of broadly available scholarships is needed to fill gaps in student funding.*
Why is this assumption important?	*As first-generation students and Pell-eligible students increase, loans will be a less desirable financial aid solution, at the same time as need increases and Expected Family Contribution declines. Attracting and retaining those students will be challenging.*	*Most scholarships are major- and department-specific, giving little flexibility for funding first-year and undeclared students with scholarships.*
What challenges affect whether this assumption is true?	*Federal and state financial aid regulations may change, as well as state funding.*	*Building scholarship funds takes time and a major change in fundraising strategy.*

Strategic Objective: Total Degrees Awarded[1]

3**Driver #3**

	Assumption C *Western will formulate a comprehensive affordability plan which addresses all costs of attendance, including cost of living.*	
Why is this assumption important?	*Affordability extends into most aspects of the college experience, and must be addressed holistically.*	
What challenges affect whether this assumption is true?	*Many elements of affordability are difficult to control or account for—such as room and board and personal emergencies. Other institutional or community values may drive costs up.*	
Complicating Factors (if any)		

[1] *Including Bellingham campus and beyond, and for underrepresented students of color and increased number of underrepresented faculty of color.*

Name Driver	*Faculty and Staff Diversity |* Increased presence and satisfaction of faculty and staff of color and other underrepresented colleagues.	
Expected Impact	*An increase in satisfaction among faculty and staff of color and other underrepresented groups will lead to increased success in recruiting and retaining such faculty and staff. This is a goal in itself; it also should lead to increased success in recruiting and retaining students of color and other underrepresented groups.*	
Confidence Level	*High*	*It has been shown that increased faculty and staff diversity, and especially satisfaction among diverse faculty and staff, has a positive effect on the number of diverse students who are interested in a university and end up graduating.*

KEY ASSUMPTIONS		
	Assumption A *Western and the broader communities become more attractive to faculty and staff of color.*	**Assumption B** *Western will represent itself authentically to target populations.*
Why is this assumption important?	*Recruiting and retention will be at least as difficult as they are now, negatively affecting the possibility of increased presence.*	*Recruiting and retaining faculty and staff from underrepresented groups will be very difficult if Western does not acknowledge its problems as well as its efforts to overcome those problems.*
What challenges affect whether this assumption is true?	*Western will need to become a more active, relevant partner in local communities to assure that they are welcoming to students, faculty and staff from underrepresented social identity groups.*	*Actions, behavior and culture must reinforce the recruiting message.*

Strategic Objective: Underrepresented Faculty of Color

Driver #4

KEY ASSUMPTIONS		
	Assumption C *New or updated curricular, co-curricular, and student services offerings that are relevant on the Bellingham campus and beyond.*	**Assumption D** *Develop inclusive definitions of what constitutes excellence for students, faculty and staff.*
Why is this assumption important?	*Faculty, staff, and students all are more likely to come to universities that offer programs and services of interest to them, as such programs show attentiveness and relevance.*	*Understanding the totality of a person's experience and how it makes that person qualified as faculty, staff, or student both increases the pool of potential applicants and signals an understanding that people's individual overall qualifications will differ without one being better or worse generically.*
What challenges affect whether this assumption is true?	*Since curriculum is under faculty control, efforts to achieve this outcome will require deliberation, a commitment to shared governance processes that involve all stakeholders, and a willingness to listen to all positions, in order to work collectively to the best solutions for this campus.*	*Inertia regarding qualifications is strong.*
Complicating Factors (if any)	The City of Bellingham has shown interest in working with Western to help improve climate in the city, although at least some aspects of that climate are not under the City's control.	

Name Driver	*Marketing |* Appropriate and effective marketing of Western	
Expected Impact	*Communicating with authenticity, sensitivity, and cultural awareness, Western will deliver positive and affirming messages to the diverse audience of prospective students. Western will attract a greater portion of its new students from groups previously underrepresented in the student body.*	
Confidence Level	*Medium*	*The university's messaging must shift away from its current internally focused emphasis on "brag points" to one tailored to specific external audiences. We must meet prospective students where they are, we must be sensitive to their concerns, and supportive of their educational objectives. We must help students of all backgrounds see themselves as a natural and valued part of the Western community.*
KEY ASSUMPTIONS		
	Assumption A *Western will represent itself authentically to target populations.*	**Assumption B** *Marketers must understand the various markets from the perspective of members of the targeted groups.*
Why is this assumption important?	*Marketing that is not accurate or authentic cannot be either appropriate or effective.*	*To be appropriate and effective, marketing must speak to the targeted groups on multiple levels. Without a deep understanding of those groups, the ability of marketing to reach them will be limited.*
What challenges affect whether this assumption is true?	*This requires a shift in the tone and focus of messages to reflect external realities and aspirations at Western.*	*It will be difficult to craft culturally appropriate messages free of the biases of the dominant culture without the active participation of group members.*
Complicating Factors (if any)	This driver's relationship to driver 1 is particularly important. Without a culture shift at Western to reflect driver 1, students in specific populations will not respond to Western's marketing.	

[1] *Including Bellingham campus and beyond, and for underrepresented students of color.*

Name Driver	*Recruiting* / *Increased recruitment efforts to attract more students in an environment of changing demographics*	
Expected Impact	*The anticipated impact of this driver is of the highest level. The increase in recruitment efforts will directly translate into a net increase of degrees awarded by Western.*	
Confidence Level	*High*	*Factors that increase the confidence level in this driver include: a) the recognition that knowledge of institutional and regional dynamics (e.g. social, political, economic) can best inform successful recruitment practices; b) the expectation that successful recruitment practices will translate into positive outcomes for the regions and populations that we serve; c) the anticipation that positive outcomes will help increase institutional visibility and enhance brand awareness.*

	KEY ASSUMPTIONS	
	Assumption A *Increased awareness and desirability of Western for all students.*	**Assumption B** *Faculty and student support services are available and accessible for all students of all populations in all areas served by Western. This includes underrepresented students of color, students of diverse gender identities and sexual orientations, students with disabilities, veterans, place-bound students, adult learners, first generation, and PELL-eligible students.*
Why is this assumption important?	*Without awareness of and interest in Western, students will not respond to the increased recruiting efforts.*	*These services will be an important part of providing assurances to students and their families that Western will be a good university to attend.*
What challenges affect whether this assumption is true?	*Some populations of interest to Western have not been a focus in the past and may require intensive awareness efforts before recruiting can succeed.*	*Tailored services to targeted populations in multiple locations may be organizationally complex.*

Strategic Objective: Total Degrees Awarded[1]

Assumption C *Financial resources will be available and used efficiently and effectively to address net cost of attendance.*		
Why is this assumption important?	*Net cost of attendance is a key factor in student decisions on which college to attend. Reducing it for certain populations is vital if Western's recruiting efforts are to succeed.*	
What challenges affect whether this assumption is true?	*A balance between offering aid and maximizing tuition revenue must be achieved.*	
Complicating Factors (if any)	*Complication factors include changes in marketplace demands, such as the increased desirability for programs with diminished capacity; institutional offerings that are misaligned with regional employment/skillset requirements; and lack of online instruction or degree-completion options for adult or place-bound learners. Additionally, shifting demographics represent other challenges due to the decrease in the number of the state's high school graduates and those transferring from community colleges; increase in the percentage of students of color graduating from WA schools; increase aversion by students to incur a significant amount of student loan debt; and expansion of city- or state-sponsored "free" community college programs in targeted regions (e.g. Seattle Promise).*	

[1] *Including Bellingham campus and beyond, and for underrepresented students of color.*

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Degrees Awarded Driver 6, Updated 1/9/2019