

Distinctions

- Quality of graduates, employers are highly complementary of our graduates.
- Academic quality is at the forefront, there's a heavy emphasis on quality education, philosophy of academics first. Shows up in how WWU supports teaching and faculty innovation.
- I stay because of the quality of the student body. I looked at working at two other places, in terms of student quality WWU was better. The environment within the college is very collegiate.
- There is engagement of faculty at all levels, strong scholarly level of faculty, better than expected, great teachers, faculty are involved, they are not just great researchers who don't set foot in classroom. This makes for a lively collaborative environment.
- The location is unique, in between two large metropolitan areas. Bellingham is hidden, if people knew more about Western more people would be interested in staying.
- Faculty and students here could be at a more prestigious university but they choose to be here, quality of life is good. I don't have to burn the candle at both ends to be successful here.
- Class size is smaller, more personal, TAs are not teaching classes for the most part, students get professors.
- They were looking at coming to Western around the time that President Shepard made a comment regarding making the WWU community "less white". They didn't take that as a bad thing and were happy to see that the WWU is working toward a more inclusive and diverse community with a focus on social justice.
- The WWU identity is progressive, inclusive and brave in the pursuit of those things... sees that as a very positive attribute. Also, WWU has environmental programs that are nationally known, arts also seemed strong.
- WWU is known for its location, it is a beautiful place which was apparent even from a distance.
- Location was an important factor to accepting a position here, they wanted to live somewhere beautiful.
- When they came to interview, they noticed a big difference in how the faculty interacted with them versus their experience at another university. Many faculty members who were not on the hiring committee came to interact with them during the interview day. That was a huge deciding factor, seeing how committed the faculty are here.
- Taught WWU students at UW during the summer and felt that they were notable high caliber students. Also they appreciate the friendly environment and lack of politics.
- Strong faculty union, they came from an institution without a union and there was a high rate of turnover. There is a lack of stability without a union. They feel freer to pursue projects under a union.
- The best arts in this area are usually tied back to Western.

- It is my perception that Western is known for close faculty-student relationships, a commitment to liberal arts education, and its programs in Education and Environmental Studies, specifically. I started teaching at Western while I was completing my PhD, and immediately felt passionately that this was the institution for which I wanted to work. The focus on teaching, the stellar colleagues I have, and their collegiality were what I found most inspiring. The initiation of the President's Diversity Task Force and Western's ongoing commitment to equity, inclusion, and social justice have strengthened my admiration for this institution and the people within it.
- teaching, a long history for teaching
- for being outside the easy commute to Bellevue
- known for teaching but not like evergreen is
- known for Huxley
- beautiful campus, uniquely beautiful
- courses are taught primarily by faculty
- whole feel of the campus draws students
- size, not too big, not too small
- parents students see it as safe
- socially, environmentally conscious (rightly or wrongly)
- for faculty: known for some serious scholarship
- campus is well planned, going back 30 years, remarkable vision
- Shared governance and bottom up processes
- All location for me
- Only people who would offer me a job, but I stayed for the colleagues
- more focused on teaching and I kind of liked that without throwing away the scholarship.
- One of the only places that would do spousal accommodation (agreement from several)
- Fully paid sabbatical system
- Really like my colleagues
- WWU's emphasis on teaching (60/40) because I really wanted to be a good teacher. Supporting teaching.
- WWU's students are good.

- The setting
- All the beauty around, attributes and ambiance of surroundings, not just campus
- Good teachers everywhere, but people here who really like to teach, like students, are available, like their job; atmosphere is more available for students – includes staff too
- Appreciation of community; almost everyone here appreciates the concept of community; we aspire to and value community; look for new ways to connect, not only between various groups on campus but into the community, industrial partners, alumni
- Right size for this to happen
- Independent thinking of students; might be because of our size Hybrid degrees, not compartmentalizing
- Physical structure and attitudes encourage that
- We're not to be confused with a trade school or technical college; Western really creates thinkers
- Environmental sustainability
- Bellingham is unique, gives WWU its flavor, a lot of the draw
- Is the view of the bay worth the cut in pay?
- Turning out outstanding teachers
- Good product of student graduates, math department
- Grads known in town for being active
- Environmentalism
- Connection to family and alumni
- Diverse place
- Job protection, security, medical benefits
- I just came and never left—difficult getting used to the pay cut
- I didn't want to go back to a refinery environment
- Took a wage adjustment to get me back to where I was
- Got to see my son go through here
- To be secure, now I'm comfortable, good atmosphere, everyone's kind, there's a mission, education, and everyone's on board

- They allow you to be stewards of the system, they respect the opinion of employees, stakeholders in institution
- But that is changing as campus turns to Big Business—we have waned in last 7-10 years
- Depends on the department
- Wonderful people, the majority
- That's why I do union work
- We talk equity and inclusion, but we live the opposite—there's not equity across the board for classified staff
- Hard to recruit for the trades, no one wants to learn them
- Classified like working here for the environment, but they're exploited—closed the employees' break room in Old Main—always trying to squeeze work out without paying any more
- There are now people with three computer monitors because there's so much work to do—I don't know if that's acknowledged in strategic planning
- If as much thought was put into staff as into faculty and students, this place would be ten times more productive—it's hard being at the bottom of a caste system
- I love the contact with student and with the public through my roles
- Unique, everyone cares about the student and their success
- Destination campus—can be prepared for careers
- Brings amenities to town that wouldn't be here otherwise
- Four people on our staff are WWU grads—exceptionally well prepared
- Quality education and good value—Institute for Energy Studies, education school, Huxley, Fairhaven
- Students can align their personalities to a career track, to how they want to be mentored and coached
- Community in which it sits—people want to stay once they get here—that's a challenge
- Relationship between WWU and Bellingham—both are better off—unique that people like to be here
- Very different to be at a university that focuses on teaching, faculty engaging with students
- Love to see us figure out ways to communicate that
- Depends on scale

- Outside of region – National reputation based on the cluster colleges
- Regionally – commitment to quality of undergraduate education
- Community – College of Fine and Performing Arts – is known in the community – Bellingham Music Festival – Marrow Stone
- Huxley and Fairhaven – innovation – new ideas welcome
- Student activists – demand good teaching and get it – a teaching center
- Social justice – environmental activism
- Cluster colleges have
- Nationally pre-eminent – student focused liberal arts and sciences - public – brand
- Professional programs – do kind of get lost
- Small towns – graduate polished professionals
- Mentioned professors
- Not trying to grow our way out of problems
- Concentration on excellence –
- Recent Computer Science faculty recruits were attracted towards the emphasis upon faculty/student interactions in research and having a teaching load that enabled research compared to other regional institutions.
- a better balance of teaching and research.
- The integration of science ed faculty (SMATE) in departments is fairly unique
- the description of WWU identifying qualities in the existing Strategic plan is accurate.
- commitment to diversity and change
- consistency has been here that other places haven't had; commitment is ongoing used to have minority achievement scholarship—other schools in state didn't diversity has grown
- if we continue to do some of the things we're doing that will keep me here and bring other people of color
- people of color are in leadership positions, not just maintenance staff etc.
- investment—staff so committed and invested in work; integrated into cultural identity of institution; staff go over and above because they care; wasn't like that at an R1

- we have a history of incredible folks who have been here who bring us back there is natural beauty, but it's the people
- excellence in undergraduate teaching; known for sustainability; academic assets
- not clear to me that the university is known for having large numbers of scholars of color, LGBTQ+ endowed chair, etc. that other liberal arts institutions are known for—
- commitment to social justice and diversity, but are we fully doing that? natural beauty
- premier liberal arts university
- staff and level of engagement—almost a level of passion in contributing to university and in teaching; level of curiosity around learning coming from students
- build communities within the community but it's not across the board—not everyone is represented in the numbers they should be
- shadow side—for staff—people went to school here and never left; a kind of provincialism
- Quality educational opportunities among Washington Public institutions
- Huxley & Woodring
- Once here, students are very satisfied with their major
- Don't want the urbanity etc. Of University of Washington
- Broad liberal arts experience
- Employers perceive high quality education from WWU.
- Art/visible/art/art-centric
- Can become immediately involved-strong community of talented and engaged faculty-colleagues
- Welcoming place & impressed with quality of programs
- Impressed with students- lots of energy and seem to be happy here
- Hadn't heard of Western before
- Balance of teaching and research- can do pedagogical research
- Bellingham/schools/location
- Recognize students are really stretched, work many jobs
- Social justice emphasis- strong ethic in Woodring
- Fairhaven is unique & allows for....

- Fairhaven & Huxley distinguish us
- In WA- degree to which undergrads are involved in scholarship
- Strong focus undergraduate education
- Elite vs. unique (naturally)
- Tenure track involved in gov & in undergrad education.
- Western is known for its educational value, the quality you get in return for your investment. Location and its outdoors opportunities.
- Western is not known for great outreach in recruiting. For example, WSU will bus people out to campus from King County, including from highly diverse schools. Schools in Seattle don't always have Western "on their radar." Having a strategic recruitment plan would be important. What is the standard investment in recruitment for universities such as ours?
- Regional choice, being from Washington. Western was an ideal fit. Positive climate for faculty. Likes the lifestyle, outdoors, short commute, easy access to biking and outdoors. Engaged students.
- Attracts quality faculty, unbelievably comprehensive, people are drawn to the location, "punch above our weight in faculty quality". The location makes up for the smaller pay.
- High quality interaction between faculty and students – intensive – because of highly rigorous focus – high quality teaching and high quality research - balance between – research and teaching
- It's all about faculty, students, community
- Continue to offer high quality from teaching – cutting edge research – and undergraduate involvement
- Mission – does not say anything about faculty research – it should
- We stand out between quantity and quality – most actively involved in high quality research – intertwined with teaching – we are involved all the time in both – one feeds the other
- Are we making it clear that to the new hires – how these are intertwined – evaluation plans – must make it clear
- Very supportive of students in class and other parts of their life –we can't be a small liberal arts college – but can provide something close – but people do have to work very hard to do so
- Western faculty – value shared governance – but it needs attention – vigilance – time – continue to recognize and support shared governance – part of what makes us successful – highly involved in curriculum
- Understand what it means – faculty voice – could disappear – attention and respect from the institution – We have the deeper understanding
- Investment and ownership – faculty, staff, and students. Make it work well – all work well together

- Physical environment and quality make students want to come – but nervous about the future – it took 15-20 years – to build – sustaining – top faculty and top students – long term – how can we best serve – access – without the best high schools – economic factors??
- Western is known as a good employer in the area, in the region. The job brought me here. I stay because it is a good employer – good benefits, reasonable pay now because of the union.
- One of the major reasons was the union, after having been in a non-union job.
- Both because of location, but institutionally I came to Fairhaven, not to Western. I was thinking about Fairhaven specifically.
- Comparative affordability. Something that needs to be retained. Difference between tuition at UW, makes a huge difference on who can actually attend college.
- I actually came to Western because of Huxley – that was the part of Western I knew, from looking at Environmental studies programs. But I stayed because of Fairhaven. Fairhaven and Huxley are the smaller and more targeted colleges, distinct for a university of our size.
- I would say the union is one. Also the relationship between Western and Fairhaven.
- I came here specifically for Fairhaven. The few times I toyed with the idea of working on main campus, I was not thrilled. People have changed since then but staying here has been about Fairhaven. And as much as I love to work with students, that's why I stay here, the down side is that so much of my energy is taken by teaching that I'm not able to publish and I can't leave.
- I wanted to reiterate the union part – when I interviewed, I told everyone it feels like Santa Cruz in the 80s, not trying to be a big tech school or something – the interdisciplinary, we have the flexibility to do those things. So many universities now are just trying to be mini Harvard or whatever. We have the capacity to fill that niche and maintain the priorities. That's part of why I stay.
- What is unique about Western is it can allow for a college like Fairhaven to exist.
- I came here 20 years ago, came for Fairhaven, but I would not have come for the ... department. It was an opportunity to be interdisciplinary. I stay because of the students and because of Bellingham. When I think about going other places I think it won't be Bellingham. I've become more attached in a physical way than I thought.
- I came for the Law Diversity Program specifically, getting to teach law at the undergrad level. And the combination of no letter grades and letter grades.
- Santa Cruz – the hidden gem of undergrad education – Western reflects that as well. One of the challenges will be keeping that when budgets are in crisis. And Fairhaven is part of that also.
- Its family friendly. My partner got a job here, my son is like right over there (CDC), and in other universities that wouldn't be okay. It's been not only a great town to live, but a great institution to raise a family.

- The union is a game changer. Huge difference coming from a job without one. Western is that middle ground, doesn't feel like a large scale industrial university, we have a place like Fairhaven – not many public universities would support a place like Fairhaven so that's something to be protective of.
- Union is viewed as an equal partner with the university. I came out of grad school where the students were trying to unionize and that has been opposed at that university. I came here right after the union has formed and I knew that was a contentious process, now it's great to feel that both sides can quickly agree on what needs to be there in the contracts and work towards it.
- I came from an institution with a stronger union, but the reason that I know it is stronger is because it is so contentious, people were striking there. It's nice to come here and not feel that the union is pushing around the administration. Who knows, maybe if the admin was more hostile that would happen. But it's not always an us vs. them situation.
- In the current political climate, the gap between what students receive at a private institution and a public university is huge, students are able to have small classes here...there is something deeply important about saying that these students deserve to not be in a class of 400. Especially students with marginalized identities when the institution is difficult on them.
- A sense of community, small class sizes
- The quality of the education
- The location/geography
- The history of training teachers in Woodring—the rest of the colleges have stepped up to that level
- The liberal arts base
- Western is always trying to get better
- How Western adapts to changes in the world—remaining forward looking
 - “Are we leading in this?” Do we want to be a leader in this?
 - It's very important to pick peers that are ahead of us
- Commitment to sustainability & location – awareness of the environment and sense of place
- Small class sizes
- Education programs (Woodring)
- Faculty who balance teaching and research – able to maintain close relations with students, while allowing them to be at the top of their fields; student access to faculty
- Unique programs, like archives and records management (student would not have come here otherwise); wanted to work with a particular faculty member
- Received funding for grad study
- Ashoka changemaker university status

- “Right sized” as a university, and as a community
- Reputation of Huxley college for interdisciplinary focus,
- Wide diversity of disciplines balance of teaching and research
- Joint faculty/student research emphasized in Unit Evaluation Plan
- Location for environmental scientists
- Faculty used to come because of personal ties, but now are recruited nationally
- Bellingham; Bellingham’s ‘uniqueness’;
- Western’s strong student focus;
- Western is a smaller, regional public university (not too big, not too small);
- The social environment – both on campus and in the community;
- Faculty and students’ passion for their work;
- Focus on social justice & diversity;
- Western ‘magic’;
- Close interaction between faculty and students;
- It’s a ‘learning lab’ – especially Huxley, Canada/American, Asian Rim.
- Liked the night classes option, there’s an interesting mix of folks, non-traditional students, exciting to teach those students, they come from different professions and backgrounds, there’s a lot of motivation. WWU offers students the ability to change careers and be flexible with their schedule.
- The teaching program, the reputation that the program has, close proximity to husband’s work.
- Western’s focus on students not research, tailoring to our students. Came from traditional college set up where students didn’t have many obligations outside of school. WWU offers distance learning as well as face to face so there are more opportunities.
- Students are often aged 30-60, they’re career changers, or newly graduated with bachelor’s degrees and want more, they’re students with kids, or working full time, have parent responsibilities, students with disabilities. They are different types of students too given that it’s located in Everett. Ability to recruit from all of Washington given the structure of the program.
- Quality undergraduate education. At other institutions, you have to be an upperclassman to have access to faculty. Here, there is a lot of face-to-face contact. Western is just big enough to offer all you could ever want but small enough to provide meaningful interaction.
- Heartfelt sense that the instructors and people that work here want to do something more than make a living.

- The technical and support people are very helpful.
- Focus on student welfare. Faculty and staff working together to have students foremost in mind.
- Progressive values. We're values leaders in state democracy. We've had a strong voice at the state level. There's intentionality about the people who are here.
- Employers say that Western students are humble, grounded, and hardworking, which are characteristics that contrast strongly with the often-cited more negative stereotypes of Millennials.
- appeal of student focus, student welcoming environment. made me feel welcome with a personal touch. compared to UW (where no one to talk to, impersonal).
- WWU much more welcoming with one-to-one student-faculty relationship. appeal of being able to work directly with faculty on research and hands-on training and careers.
- opportunities for research
- feels like a much smaller school than it is. people are often surprised by how the intimacy compares to the FTE. looks and feels smaller than it is. not as many classes taught by grad students. compared to research schools where taught by grad students only a few years older.
- all students are directly engaged with faculty with terminal degrees. very different style of learning.
- faculty and staff really care about students. really care about success of students. go extra step to make sure students are taken care of. leading students and taking care of them.
- take care of students in their time here and after.
- not only student-centered and student-governed. student voices really included. strong AS role and student-appointees. leadership of students
- 2011 we stood out for student leadership and student roles across the institutions. change over time where they rank themselves. quality of the faculty and staff is distinctive.
- drive for substantive content, conversation, and research. make the environment for research.
- students have lots of opportunities to change thing
- staff-wise, when people come they stay. not huge turnover. look to further their career here. including alumna/ae
- know people and build relationships across campus that enable work to be done.
- initially attracted by the community, not so much the university.
- now the university is even more appealing, radically better, more acknowledgment of contributions.
- why I like to stay here is that I feel very supported by my colleagues and there is a strong network of support. all those exchanges all come down to the students.

- other campuses might be much smoother and more efficient but the lives of students were not so much discussed. more absent.
- we are a little more loopy but we come to ground on our concern for students.
- lots of opportunities for staff to be involved, like PSO. found really easily. even after 2 years.
- in working with visitors, the aesthetics of campus is breathtaking. some of them are prospective students and they fall in love with the nature.
- Quality Liberal Arts education
- Curriculum which allows flexibility for student choice
- Focus upon undergraduates
- Quality of undergraduate students – culture of environmental and social justice (Peace Corps, service learning)
- Reasonable student faculty/ratio
- Opportunities for faculty to work with students
- Balance of teaching and research
- Teaching and research opportunities which enable faculty to avoid becoming too specialized
- Residential campus enabling one-on-one interactions with students
- A functional faculty union
- Positive trajectory on salaries
- Transparency on T/P
- Fully paid sabbaticals
- Flexibility for unpaid leaves for professional development
- Entrepreneurial spirit—no Greek system or D1 sports, attracts students not looking for conformity
- Ability to work closely with faculty
- Alumni have strong fondness for Western—academic rigor, welcoming culture, incredible teachers (Woodring graduates)
- Desirable employer, employer-of-choice
- Location between Seattle and Vancouver, between the San Juans and the mountains

- Quality university that provides an excellent undergraduate education for most disciplines with the possibility of pursuing a graduate degree
- A quality education at an excellent value, an established university with a long history, culture of caring
- Our outreach programs are up close and personal
- Recognition of excellence across the board; not a hidden gem anymore
- Strength of liberal arts, professional programs
- Quality of undergrad experience: relationships between faculty and students; out of class learning experiences, especially focused on making a difference; internships and research opportunities; lack of Greek system, but presence of a different kind of community spirit; what sets WWU apart is providing that special mix of undergrad experience, but still relatively intimate setting
- Faculty commitment to excellence
- “What is” vs. “what could be” is important to sort out in these strengths
- Not only depth of excellence, but breadth of high quality programs as well – this can also be a challenge in terms of branding and telling our story as well
- Strong community on and off campus, and around the state; highly regarded in local and statewide communities
- Historically regional institutions aren’t usually this high quality – how do we maintain this going forward?
- I like the fact that it is not an R1 school. Allows for Balance in life, family, work, and community.
- Teaching is valued.
- Known for excellent teacher prep programs.
- Great to go out to schools and see our graduates.
- Location is great. I enjoy the people I work with.
- Other people (nationally) mention Huxley and Fairhaven for their excellent programs.
- Fairhaven is on par with Evergreen
- HSP and ED – highly respected across the board. WCE is widely respected