

# WESTERN'S GLOBAL PATHWAY

## ACADEMIC WORKING GROUP

**Date:** Tuesday 23 January 2018

**Time:** 10:30 – 11:50 PST

**Location:** MH 223C + ~~Skype 4 B~~

### Academic Working Group participants:

On campus: Marc Geisler, Vicki Hamblin, Ricardo Lopez, Ed Love, Mike Mana, Paul Mart, Kris Moore

On campus guests: Maggie Barklind, ~~John Lund~~, Mark Staton

StudyGroup via Skype: ~~Paul Busceni, Lauren McConatha~~

### Agenda:

1. Review revised GPP proposal in preparation for ACC meeting (23 January 2018)

Reviewed ACC concerns and GPP documents in preparation for meeting.

The Admissions Office provided the following responses to questions raised at the ACC meeting:

**1. The overall goal of 5% international students. The question is: 5% of what? With no net growth? With net growth?**

I've been advised that we're aiming for international students to constitute roughly 5% of the student body; we're not setting a numeric goal, but a share of the total student population.

**2. How are GPA equivalencies being determined for admissions purposes?**

Western requires international applicants to obtain a course-by-course evaluation of college credit from an approved credential evaluation service whenever we are unable to interpret an applicant's academic credentials. Students applying through Study Group will obtain this evaluation from Study Group's professionally trained international credentials evaluators. Calculation of each applicant's GPA will be based on the grade scale equivalencies established by the Admissions Working Group. Grade scale equivalencies were developed using information which has been researched and compiled from a variety of industry recognized sources including: AACRAO EDGE, NCAA guidelines, ENIC/NARIC databases and the NAFSA

Guide to Education Systems. Students whose educational systems do not lend themselves to GPA calculation (IB Diploma program, Cambridge International, Global Assessment Completion Certificate) will be reviewed based on guidelines established by the Admissions Working Group.

**3. Is there a differential admissions standard for GPP vs. WA-state students? If so, will the lower admissions standard be available to non-international students with equivalent TOEFL scores?**

The adjustment of the admission guideline for international students had the goal of extending a wider net for greater number of students to enroll at Western. It is important to note that the previous guideline of 3.0 was not a minimum. Over the years, we have received applications from, admitted and enrolled international and domestic students whose GPAs and exam scores were below stated averages or listed guidelines. For instance, the average high school GPA for the Fall 2017 freshman class (including all students) was 3.44, with the mid-50-per-cent range between 3.20-3.72, a low of 2.11, and high of 4.00.

From 2003 through 2017—a 15-year span—Western enrolled a mere 95 freshmen international students (an average of about 6 per year). Of those 95, there were 14 who enrolled with GPA below 3.0, 42 with GPA above 3.0, and 39 without a high school GPA (due to variances in grading scales in the country of origin). Unfortunately, any kind of longitudinal analysis is particularly difficult with such small numbers.

Going forward, for international students with a GPA between 2.3 and 2.49, their applications will go through this holistic review process (more on this process below) by our very own Western admission staff, and the final decision will rest with us at Western. Applications with a GPA of 2.5 and above will go through the review and admission process with GPP, counting on the expertise and knowledge and agreed upon guidelines referenced in question #2.

Applicants from the State of Washington must meet minimum college admission standards which include a cumulative 2.00 GPA and the completion of courses that meet College Academic Distribution Requirements (CADRs) established by the Washington Student Achievement Council. However, admission decisions are made by individual institutions, and meeting these minimums does not guarantee admission at any one of the state's publically controlled institutions. In those instances when an applicant may be deemed as underprepared or borderline for admission consideration, the application goes through a holistic review process that considers level and rigor of courses taken, grade trend, involvement in school activities, community service, employment status, special talents and abilities, strength of character, and other personal circumstances and factors.

This holistic review is consistent with the best practices in the admissions profession, and its approach resonates strongly with our institutional commitment to provide students who may not look especially strong on paper, quantitatively speaking, to tell us more about their circumstances and for us to glean more information about their preparation to engage with college coursework.

In summary, admission guidelines for GPP students will not in any way affect our longstanding practice of reviewing applications from students whose level of preparation may appear to be sub-optimal, and any final decisions on those applications will remain with the professional staff at Western Washington University.

(from Clara Capron, AVP for Enrollment & Student Services; Cezar Mesquita, Director of Admissions; Jeanne Gaffney, Associate Director of Admissions)

2. Report from Mark S, Vicki, and Ricardo on visit to James Madison University (19 January 2018)

Members discussed their full day of meetings with JMU administrators, staff and faculty: general impression was that both SG and JMU see this as a beneficial partnership. SG knows how to recruit; the pathway students are successful. While numbers are not as high as JMU wants, they prefer having qualified students who succeed rather than high numbers with less student success. JMU and SG coordinate to make the student experience as seamless as possible. The Operating committee meets monthly; faculty teaching in the pathway have regular meetings and participate in training sessions; faculty liaisons are paid by JMU; campus services have created specialized positions within Academic Advising and in Learning Centers (Writing Center, English Language Learning Center, etc.) to promote success for all students. Rather than creating inequities, JMU's partnership has created more opportunities for all students. Consensus from members was that Western will have to develop an infrastructure and the expertise to make this partnership succeed.