

To: Members of the Western Illinois University Board of Trustees
Mike Houston, Chairperson Carolyn Ehlert Fuller
Chris Bronson Bill Griffin
Bill Epperly Steve Nelson

From: Joe Rives, Vice President, Quad Cities, Planning and Technology

Date: August 27, 2010

Re: August 2010 Strategic Plan Update

Higher Values in Higher Education 2008-2018 contains the *Vision Statement* that Western Illinois University will be the leader in educational quality, opportunity, and affordability among its peers. This month's *Strategic Plan Update* summarizes data from national ranking systems to show how the University is progressing on achieving its *Vision Statement*.

For the sixth consecutive year, Western Illinois University is ranked among the top tier of best regional universities and is one of only two Illinois public universities ranked among the top 50, according to U.S. News and World Report's Annual College Rankings 2011 edition. Western is ranked 11th as a top public school among Midwestern Regional Universities. In addition, for the sixth consecutive year, the Princeton Review has named Western a "Best Midwestern College."

Western is one of 37 public universities included among the 107 Midwestern colleges and universities recognized as top tier "Best Regional Universities" by U.S. News and World Report. Only one Illinois public institution (the University of Illinois-Springfield) is ranked ahead of WIU.

More specifically, Western is listed 49th of 107 public and private schools on the top tier list of "Best Regional Universities." The institutions appearing on the "Best Regional Universities" list provide a full range of undergraduate majors and masters programs, but offer few, if any, doctoral programs. The rankings are based on several measures: peer assessment (25 percent); graduation/retention rates (25 percent); faculty resources (20 percent); student selectivity (15 percent); financial resources (10 percent); and alumni giving (5 percent).

The *Fiscal Year 2011 Performance Report* presented at your December 2010 Western Illinois University Board of Trustees meeting will compare Western's performance to peer institutions and the Illinois public universities. For now, it should be noted that our overall ranking surpassed competitor institutions of Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville and Eastern Illinois University.

In addition to the top tier ranking, Western is also recognized as a "best" institution by U.S. News and World Report for graduation rates, freshman retention rates, least debt (class of 2009), highest proportion of classes under 20, most international students, economic diversity, and racial diversity.

Forbes Magazine also recently listed Western among the best of 610 institutions in the country. According to Forbes, whether a school is in the top 10 or near the end of the list, all 610 schools in the Forbes ranking count among the best in the country. Only nine percent of the 6,600 accredited post-secondary institutions in the U.S. are reviewed, and Western was the only Illinois public university among its regional peer institutions

included in the Forbes list. The other Illinois public universities included are national doctoral universities (Illinois State University, Northern Illinois University, and Southern Illinois University-Carbondale).

Western's commitments to opportunity, access and student success are well documented.

- The University was designated for a second consecutive year as a "Military Friendly School" by G.I. Jobs Magazine and is featured in the 2011 "Guide to Military Friendly Schools." This honor ranks Western in the top 15 percent of all colleges, universities and trade schools nationwide that are doing the most to assist America's veterans as students.
- For the second consecutive year, the Center for Student Opportunity's (CSO) "College Access and Opportunity Guide" recognized Western as one of only three Illinois public universities for its retention rates of first-generation and low-income students.
- Western was cited as one 15 national "best practice" model institutions for retention and graduation rates by the Southern Regional Educational Board.
- Western is the only Midwestern public university cited among 20 other U.S. public institutions by The Education Trust for successful graduation rates for Hispanic students.

The successful advancement of the University in achieving its vision is based on the collaborative actions of students, faculty, staff, and alumni from both campuses advancing institutional priorities and goals. In addition to the data presented in this *Update*, information presented at your September 24, 2010, Western Illinois University Board of Trustees meeting will include the *Annual Strategic Plan Update*, which provides a qualitative summary of University accomplishments during the past year.

As the data continue to show, the faculty, staff and alumni of Western Illinois University are committed to student success, and collectively these actions are recognized regionally and nationally. Please contact me if you have any questions about the data presented in *Strategic Plan Update*, and/or if you have additional feedback for the continued successful implementation of *Higher Values in Higher Education*.

cc: President Goldfarb COAP President Tibbitts Alumni Council Chair Clawson
 Provost Thomas Faculty Council Chair Rowson Associate Provosts Dallinger and Hawkinson
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