

To: Members of the Western Illinois University Board of Trustees
Bill Epperly, Chair Carolyn Ehlert Fuller
Lyneir Cole Phil Hare
Bill Griffin Mike Houston
Cathy Early D'angelo Taylor

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

Date: January 31, 2013

Re: January 2013 Strategic Plan Update

This month's *Strategic Plan Update* provides you with an update on the team analyzing trends in higher education and recommended actions for Western Illinois University in the near-, five-, and 20-year time frames.

Actions to Date

The team has completed six meetings (October 22, 2012; November 6 and 7; December 4 and 5; and January 15, 2013) and now turns attention from external challenges and opportunities for higher education to challenges and opportunities for Western Illinois University.

Your *December 2012 Strategic Plan Update* indicated that the team identified four critical areas that have implications and opportunities for Illinois higher education. These areas relate to academic identity, collaborative partnerships, finance and infrastructure, and the costs of higher education. For Western Illinois University the challenges and opportunities were further refined to issues relating to quality, opportunity, and affordability (discussed below). When reading the materials below, the team asks that you note that the following.

1. Using Quality as an example, you will see text in italics. This represents team conversations and will be the basis for specific recommendations.
2. The regular text and table represent the beginnings of our recommendations. These are preliminary and the team will continue to refine recommendations during the spring semester with feedback from the team, campus and external communities.
3. On the table you will see columns for:
 - a. Goal/Action. These are suggested actions to achieve our goals. For example, the goal of identity will be achieved, in part, by distinguishing Western Illinois University from other Illinois public and competitor institutions.
 - b. Strategic Plan Items(s). We will be looking to see if *Higher Values in Higher Education* and its implementation are addressing our recommendations. For example, does the University's *Strategic Plan* have implementation strategies for distinguishing Western Illinois University from other Illinois public and competitor institutions?
 - c. Innovation and Elimination. As we complete item b (above), we will also make recommendations, where appropriate, for innovation and elimination. For example, are there innovative means or are there things that should be reduced or eliminated as Western Illinois University

distinguishes itself from other Illinois public and competitor institutions?

4. Evaluating the *Strategic Plan* (as described above) and recommending opportunities for innovation and/or elimination follows the Association of Governing Boards (AGB) model discussed in previous *Strategic Plan Updates*.
5. Following the AGB model, recommendations will ultimately include elements of temporal (short, mid-, and long-term) consideration.
6. The role of the team is to make recommendations. Evaluation and implementation of the recommendations when the report is submitted will follow the University's established decision making and shared governance processes.
7. Our recommendations will be strengthened by review and feedback from all members of the campus community. Later in this spring session we will host campus feedback sessions and we will encourage additional feedback through monthly strategic plan updates.

Current Team Draft

1. **Quality is identity and experience.**

Western Illinois University must continue to provide high-quality programs and services to support enrollment and external funding. The University serves both urban and rural locations in preparing students for the workforce and/or advanced study. However, a future cannot be assumed. Competition for students continues to intensify. There are demographic constraints (a smaller state and national recruitment pool), escalating costs, and aggressive competition for fewer applicants, coupled with more on-line options. Therefore, the University must afford an educational experience that students not only value but also eagerly pursue if we are to sustain our future.

Identity focuses on distinguishing Western Illinois University from other Illinois public and competitor institutions, articulating the University's mission and focuses (similarities and uniqueness between our two campuses), identifying niche programs and opportunities, clarifying the role of distance education, achieving enrollment targets, preparing to serve new populations (changing demographics, internationalization, non traditional students, more transfer students), providing alternative semester lengths, improving retention and graduation rates.

The hallmark of a Western Illinois University education focuses on supporting active and engaged learning, helping students learn how to learn (e.g., requiring a distance education course to teach self-directed learning), maintaining agility in planning new programs, providing high quality, viable and sustainable programs, supporting interdisciplinary inquiry, emphasizing currency (e.g., engaging advisory boards), internationalizing the curriculum, and increasing diversity.

Goal/Action	Strategic Plan Item(s)	Innovation	Elimination
<i>Identity</i>			
Distinguishing WIU from other Illinois public and competitor institutions			
Articulating WIU's mission and focuses (similarities and uniqueness between our two campuses)			
Identifying quality and niche programs and opportunities			
Clarifying the role of distance education			
Achieving enrollment targets			

Preparing to serve new populations (changing demographics, internationalization, non traditional students, more transfer students)			
Providing alternative semester lengths			
Improving retention and graduation rates			
Re-establishing contact with students who have stopped out to complete their degrees			
<i>Experience</i>			
Focusing on active and engaged learning			
Helping students learn how to learn (e.g., requiring a distance education course)			
Maintaining agility in planning new programs			
Providing high quality viable and sustainable programs			
Supporting interdisciplinary inquiry			
Emphasizing currency (e.g., engaging advisory boards)			
Internationalizing the curriculum			
Increasing diversity			

2. **Opportunities** through partnerships are essential to the future of Western Illinois University.

Partnerships within and outside the educational system will promote a sustainable future for recruitment, retention, funding, and economic development if the University increases agility, responds to new windows of opportunity, and emphasizes regional stewardship in serving our host communities and regions.

Forming new and expanded educational partnerships with K-12 education, increasing collaboration with community colleges and other colleges and universities, and developing new forms of articulation agreements beyond 2+2's.

Forming new and expanded external partnerships with the public and private sectors, linking programs and services with corresponding external entities (e.g., LEJA and correctional institutions), supporting economic development of our host communities and regions, identifying new sources of funding given state declines (e.g., federal grants).

Goal/Action	Strategic Plan Item(s)	Innovation	Elimination
<i>Partnerships</i>			
Forming new and expanded educational			

partnerships with K-12 education			
Increasing collaboration with community colleges and other colleges and universities			
Developing new forms of articulation agreements beyond 2+2's			
Forming new and expanded external partnerships with the public and private sectors			
Linking external programs and services with external entities (e.g., LEJA and correctional institutions)			
Supporting economic development of our host communities and regions			
Identifying new sources of funding given state declines (e.g., federal grants)			

3. **Affordability** requires entrepreneurialism, prioritized resource allocation, and an institutional commitment.

We are a public institution founded for the express benefit of the public. Western serves that part of the public least able to afford private education and most in need of the benefits that higher education provides—"the level playing field." However, declining state appropriations, state cash flow issues, shifting costs from appropriations to institutions and students (e.g., insurance, state pensions, deferred maintenance), and eliminating increases in state and federal financial assistance results in the continued privatization of public higher education with clear and concerning implications for the University.

Issues of price sensitivity and elasticity will (and is) causing students to forgo the value of a Western Illinois University education. Privatization is dividing us from our traditional stakeholders and threatening our core mission. Therefore, we must become increasingly fiscally self sufficient by engaging in entrepreneurial activities, prioritizing resource allocation (not being all things to all people), and maintaining affordability to ensure the long-term viability of the University.

Engaging in entrepreneurial activities includes evaluating the appropriateness of differential tuition either by campus and/or program, identifying new sources of revenue, controlling institutional expenditures, and enhancing organizational efficiencies.

Prioritizing resource allocation includes supporting high demand and growing programs, addressing deferred maintenance in facilities, technology, and infrastructure; providing competitive residence halls, and supporting academic and administrative technology.

Maintaining affordability requires increasing need and merit scholarships, adding scholarships beyond the freshman year, implementing new models of financial assistance, expanding paid internships and other forms of experiential education, engaging tuition discounting, and emphasizing the value of a Western Illinois University education.

Goal/Action	Strategic Plan Item(s)	Innovation	Elimination
<i>Entrepreneurial Activities</i>			
Evaluating the			

appropriateness of differential tuition either by campus and/or program			
Identifying new sources of revenue			
Controlling institutional expenditures			
Identifying opportunities for organizational efficiencies.			
<i>Prioritized Resource Allocation</i>			
Supporting high demand and growing programs			
Addressing deferred maintenance in facilities, technology, and infrastructure			
Providing competitive residence halls			
Supporting academic and administrative technology.			
<i>Affordability</i>			
Increasing need and merit scholarships			
Adding scholarships beyond the freshman year			
Implementing new models of financial assistance			
Expanding paid internships and other forms of experiential education			
Engaging tuition discounting			
Emphasizing the value of a Western Illinois University education			

Next Steps

The team will continue its work and meetings scheduled for February 5th and 26th. At the request of Trustee Ehlert Fuller, your March 2013 Western Illinois University Board of Trustees meeting will include a brief power point summary of the quantitative data supporting the opportunities and challenges for higher education and an update on the work of the team.

Should you have questions about the materials in this *Update*, and/or if you have feedback for the continued successful advancement of *Higher Values in Higher Education*, please contact me.

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