

To: Members of the Western Illinois University Board of Trustees
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From: Joe Rives, Vice President, Quad Cities and Planning

Date: September 31, 2016

Re: September 2016 Strategic Plan Update

This month's *Strategic Plan Update* begins a series that will take a closer look at the University's continued advancement in national ranking systems. This month's *Update* will specifically look at data from *US News and World Report*, *the Princeton Review*, and *OnlineColleges.Com*. Additional data from these and other sources will be presented during the course of the academic year.

Student achievements and faculty and staff actions continue Western's successful advancement in achieving the vision of *Higher Values in Higher Education*. We demonstrate leadership in quality, opportunity, and affordability. This fall, Western was named:

- The 9th "Best Public Midwestern Regional Institution" and a "Best Regional University" for the 12th consecutive year by *U.S. News and World Report*.
- In the top 25% of the "Nation's Best 2,500 Four-Year Colleges and Universities" for the 13th consecutive year by the *Princeton Review*.
- In the top 20% of "Top Online Colleges" nationwide by *Onlinecolleges.com*.

Methodology

Reporting will follow a two-step process. First, Western's performance will be compared to the population used in external comparisons (i.e., national or Midwestern comparisons). Second, institutional performance will be compared to Western Illinois University Benchmark Institutions. The Board of Trustees approved the following institutions for non-salary benchmark comparisons in June 2015.

| Western Illinois University Benchmark Institutions | |
|--|--|
| <u>Macomb Campus</u> | <u>Quad Cities Campus</u> |
| Appalachian State University | Auburn University-Montgomery |
| Central Washington University | Augustana College |
| Eastern Illinois University | Indiana University-East |
| Grand Valley State University | Indiana University-Kokomo |
| James Madison University | Louisiana State University-Shreveport |
| Montclair State University | Montana Technological University |
| Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville | Pennsylvania State University-Harrisburg |
| Truman State University | Saint Ambrose University |
| University of Central Missouri | University of Illinois-Springfield |
| University of Nebraska at Kearney | University of Texas-Permian Basin |
| University of Northern Iowa | |
| University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse | |
| University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point | |
| University of Wisconsin-Whitewater | |
| William Paterson University | |

Reporting will not be differentiated by campus. National ranking systems compare aggregate institutional data. Additionally, Saint Ambrose University and Augustana College will be excluded from analyses. These institutions were approved for local Quad Cities comparisons, which is not applicable in this context.

Results and Discussion

U.S. News and World Report named Western a “Best Regional University” for the 12th consecutive year. The University also advanced to the 9th “Best Public Midwestern Regional Institution,” up from 11th place last year. Only 37 of the top 122 Midwestern Universities (30%) were public institutions.

U.S. News and World Report forms its rankings based on a composite score. This score is based on the following variables and weightings: Peer assessments of excellence (22.5%), institutional graduation and retention rates (22.5%), faculty resources (20%), student selectivity (12.5%), financial resources (10%), graduation rate performance (7.5%), and alumni giving rates (5%).

Results show that Western Illinois University benchmarks itself against a strong set of peer institutions. Seven of the University’s benchmark institutions are in the top ten listing of the “Best Public Midwestern Regional Institutions” (Midwestern Public Rankings). And all of these institutions are also ranked in the top 50 Best Regional Universities for public and private institutions combined (Regional Rankings).

| <u>Institution</u> | <u>Composite Score</u> | <u>Midwestern Public Ranking</u> | <u>Regional Ranking</u> |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Truman State | 82 | 1 | 8 |
| Northern Iowa | 73 | 2 | 20 |
| Grand Valley | 69 | 3 | 27 |
| Wisconsin La Crosse | 67 | 4 | 31 |
| Eastern Illinois | 63 | 6 | 40 |
| Western Illinois | 60 | 9 | 49 |
| Wisconsin Stevens Point | 60 | 9 | 49 |
| Wisconsin Whitewater | 60 | 9 | 49 |
| Nebraska Kearney | 59 | 12 | 56 |
| Southern Illinois Edwardsville | 58 | 13 | 63 |
| Illinois Springfield | 58 | 13 | 63 |
| Central Missouri | 53 | 21 | 86 |
| Indiana East | NR | NR | NR |
| Indiana Kokomo | NR | NR | NR |

Institutions immediately ahead of the University in the Top Midwestern Public category are the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire (ranked 5th), University Of Michigan-Dearborn (ranked 6th), and the University of Minnesota-Duluth (ranked 8th).

Peer assessments of excellence and institutional retention and graduation rates account for 45% of the ranking weights. Western continues to improve on these measures. This occurred despite the fact that the assessment of excellence (reputation ratings), which drive a large component of the rankings, came out at the time the historic and unprecedented state budget impasse was at its peak. While we were successfully addressing externally imposed fiscal challenges, Midwestern institutions across a 12 state region recognized our commitments to student success and academic excellence.

The Princeton Review placed Western Illinois University in the top 25% of the nation's best 2,500 four-year colleges and universities for the 13th consecutive year. As one of the top 649 “Regional Best”

institutions in the country, Western joined 156 universities from a 12 state region (Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin) in the “Best Midwestern Colleges” category.

The Princeton Review does not publish overall institution rankings and composite scores. However, individual information is available with regard to academics, admissions selectivity, financial aid, fire safety, quality of life, and sustainable practices from its website. The Fiscal Year 2017 Master Plan Update, presented to the Board of Trustees in December, will use information from this site to compare the University’s sustainable practices against benchmark institutions.

Onlinecolleges.com named Western Illinois University in the top 20% of “Top Online Colleges” nationwide. Western ranked 375th out of 1,902 four-year public institutions based on comparisons of affordability, student services, and the availability of online programs. To form these rankings, each institution received a composite score based on the variables and ranking weights shown below.

1. Number of programs offered via distance education: 25%
2. Percentage of students participating in distance education classes: 7%
3. Average in-state tuition for undergraduate and, if applicable, graduate students: 17%
4. Average out-of-state tuition for undergraduate and, if applicable, graduate students: 7%
5. Total electronic library collections, including digital books, databases and media: 7%
6. Availability of academic/ career counseling services: 9.5%
7. Availability of job placement services for graduates: 9.5%
8. Offers dual credit: 4.5%
9. Offers credit for life experience: 4.5%
10. Offers advanced placement (AP) credit: 4.5%
11. Offers credit for military training: 4.5%

Published data displayed at www.onlinecolleges.com/top-colleges-tool.html shows that Western Illinois University ranks:

- 8th highest in its peer group and 375th nationally in its composite score.
- 10th highest in its peer group with regard to the percent of students enrolled in distance education.
- 17th lowest in its peer group with regard to in-state tuition.

| Onlinecolleges.com Rankings Published in Fall 2016 | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------|-----------------------|------------------|----------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| | Composite Score | Peer Group Rank | National Rank | | Students Enrolled in Distance Education | Peer Group Rank |
| Illinois Springfield | 93.12 | 1 | 79 | Texas Permian Basin | 73.0% | 1 |
| Central Missouri | 89.01 | 2 | 120 | Illinois Springfield | 63.2% | 2 |
| Appalachian State | 82.42 | 3 | 182 | Wisconsin LaCrosse | 55.1% | 3 |
| Texas Permian Basin | 77.25 | 4 | 238 | Indiana East | 54.8% | 4 |
| Louisiana State Shreveport | 74.99 | 5 | 257 | Louisiana State Shreveport | 48.3% | 5 |
| Wisconsin Whitewater | 69.79 | 6 | 333 | Nebraska at Kearney | 45.9% | 6 |
| James Madison | 67.52 | 7 | 362 | Auburn Montgomery | 40.6% | 7 |
| Western Illinois | 66.48 | 8 | 375 | Central Missouri | 37.9% | 8 |
| Wisconsin Stevens Point | 63.86 | 9 | 417 | Central Washington | 29.4% | 9 |
| Auburn Montgomery | 63.48 | 10 | 425 | Western Illinois | 24.1% | 10 |
| Southern Illinois Edwardsville | 61.98 | 11 | 454 | Wisconsin Whitewater | 22.6% | 11 |
| Northern Iowa | 56.92 | 12 | 541 | William Paterson | 22.5% | 12 |
| Nebraska at Kearney | 55.14 | 13 | 574 | Northern Iowa | 20.5% | 13 |

| Onlinecolleges.com Rankings Published in Fall 2016 -continued- | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| | Composite <u>Score</u> | Peer Group <u>Rank</u> | National <u>Rank</u> | | Students Enrolled in Distance <u>Education</u> | Peer Group <u>Rank</u> |
| Wisconsin LaCrosse | 54.62 | 14 | 586 | Montana Tech | 18.7% | 14 |
| Montana Tech | 54.06 | 15 | 596 | Eastern Illinois | 17.7% | 15 |
| Truman State | 50.78 | 16 | 659 | Indiana Kokomo | 17.2% | 16 |
| Central Washington | 49.52 | 17 | 686 | Appalachian State | 14.8% | 17 |
| William Paterson | 44.15 | 18 | 795 | Montclair State | 13.3% | 18 |
| Indiana East | 41.47 | 19 | 855 | Wisconsin Stevens Point | 12.2% | 19 |
| Grand Valley | 41.43 | 20 | 856 | James Madison | 11.1% | 20 |
| Indiana Kokomo | 38.68 | 21 | 924 | Southern Illinois Edwardsville | 9.4% | 21 |
| Montclair State | 36.62 | 22 | 977 | Truman State | 9.4% | 21 |
| Eastern Illinois | 32.15 | 23 | 1090 | Grand Valley | 4.5% | 23 |
| Pennsylvania State Harrisburg | NR | -- | NR | Pennsylvania State Harrisburg | NR | -- |

| Onlinecolleges.com Rankings Published in Fall 2016 -continued- | | |
|--|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| | In-State <u>Tuition</u> | Peer Group <u>Rank</u> |
| Texas Permian Basin | \$3,526 | 1 |
| Appalachian State | \$4,038 | 2 |
| Montana Tech | \$4,765 | 3 |
| Louisiana State Shreveport | \$5,086 | 4 |
| Nebraska at Kearney | \$5,216 | 5 |
| Indiana East | \$6,231 | 6 |
| Indiana Kokomo | \$6,243 | 7 |
| Southern Illinois Edwardsville | \$6,262 | 8 |
| Central Missouri | \$6,513 | 9 |
| Wisconsin Whitewater | \$7,080 | 10 |
| Wisconsin Stevens Point | \$7,088 | 11 |
| Northern Iowa | \$7,280 | 12 |
| Auburn Montgomery | \$7,347 | 13 |
| James Madison | \$7,378 | 14 |
| Eastern Illinois | \$7,576 | 15 |
| Truman State | \$7,608 | 16 |
| Western Illinois | \$7,845 | 17 |
| Illinois Springfield | \$8,524 | 18 |
| Central Washington | \$8,599 | 19 |
| Montclair State | \$9,153 | 20 |
| William Paterson | \$9,312 | 21 |
| Grand Valley | \$12,951 | 22 |
| Wisconsin La Crosse | \$14,040 | 23 |
| Pennsylvania State Harrisburg | NR | -- |

As the data in this month's *Strategic Plan Update* shows, Western Illinois University continues to make progress in becoming the leader in quality, opportunity, and affordability. Please contact me if you have any questions about the materials presented in this month's *Update* and/or feedback for the continued successful advancement of *Higher Values in Higher Education*.

cc: President Thomas
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