

To: Members of the Western Illinois University Board of Trustees
Carolyn Ehlert Fuller, Chair Todd Lester
Justin Brown Yvonne Savala
Roger Clawson

From: Joe Rives, Senior Vice President, Strategic Planning and Initiatives

Date: March 25, 2019

Re: March 2019 Strategic Plan Update

This month's *Strategic Plan Update* follows a process started in the *January 2019 Strategic Plan Update*. Specifically, I am seeking your feedback on items needed for inclusion in Criterion 4 in the University's Self-Study for reaffirmation of accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC).

Background

As you will recall, the 2019-2020 Strategic Plan Supplement will focus on areas that WIU needs to address as we prepare for the April 2021 HLC accreditation site visit. The 2020-2021 Strategic Plan Supplement will focus on planned actions in relation to accreditation data trends. This two-year approach shows we meet and exceed accreditation criteria and have empirically-based plans to address challenges and sustain progress.

To date, the Social Responsibility (University Planning) Task Force has affirmed the University's *Vision, Mission, and Values*, completed an initial review of all five accreditation criteria, and shared results of Criteria 1-3 in the January and February *Strategic Plan Updates*.

Methodology

The operative question for the 2019-2020 Strategic Plan Supplement is, Does Western have sufficient data to demonstrate that it meets and exceeds each of the five accreditation criteria? Using Criterion 4 as an example, we must provide evidence to show that we meet Core Components 4A-4C. If we do not meet any of these Core Components, then we do not meet Criterion 4.

In order to meet a Core Component, we must meet each of its subcomponents. For example, in order to meet Core Component 4A, we must provide evidence that we meet subcomponents 4A1-4A6. Failure to meet any subcomponent means WIU fails to meet the Core Component and the related Criterion.

Implications

Failure to meet one or more of the five accreditation criteria jeopardizes an institution's accreditation status, along with the ability to administer federal financial assistance, and the transfer of credit hours and degrees to other regionally-accredited institutions of higher education.

Results

After review, we believe that there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that Western meets Criterion 4 and all related Core Components and Subcomponents. However, there are recommended improvement actions to ensure that our analysis is correct. The first seven items were discussed in previous Strategic Plan Updates in relation to Criteria 1-3, and the last two items are new, and in relation to Criterion 4.

1. With our commitment to shared governance (documented in Criterion 1) and reaffirmation of the priorities *Higher Values in Higher Education 2017-2027*, the Senior Vice President for Strategic Planning and Initiatives will report on the status of University *Strategic Plan* goals and priorities at the October and December 2019 Board of Trustees meetings.

2. The Board of Trustees indicated that it will participate in additional Open Meetings Act training in cooperation with the Illinois Attorney General Public Access Counselor.
3. Some university policies in the *University Policy Manual* have not been reviewed in the last three to five years. Therefore, we recommend that President's Leadership Team form a standing working group that in consultation with the related subject matter experts review and suggest updates, where appropriate, to university policies contained in the *University Policy Manual*.
4. The working group should also prepare and follow a three-year policy review rotation, using the process described above, for maintaining currency in policies contained in the *University Policy Manual*.
5. The Higher Learning Commission's expectation on *Control* require that institutions designate their status (public/private) in mission documents. Therefore, we recommend add the clause indicated in bold text to the History of Western Illinois University as documented in *Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs* and other sources (e.g., *Higher Values in Higher Education*).

Specifically, we recommend amendment of the History and Heritage of Western Illinois University to State, "Founded in 1899, the Western Illinois State Normal School was established **as an Illinois public institution** to address teacher preparation in the state's grammar schools...

6. Add analyses of student persistence, completion, and time-to-degree rates to program review self-studies.
7. Continue to address challenges identified in the Self-Study related to:
 - A. Increasing International student and WESL enrollment.
 - B. Receiving state funding for deferred maintenance.
 - C. Achieving release of frozen state funding for the Center for Performing Arts and Western Illinois University-Quad Cities Phase III.
8. Following best practices, demonstrating institutional commitment, and exercising transparency to current and prospective students with regard to the assessment of student learning, include intended learning outcomes for all minor, degree, and certificate programs in Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs. Examples of this display are available from [Truman State University](#), [University of Illinois-Springfield](#), the [University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire](#).
9. Complete a review to ensure that all academic support and student service departments assess student learning outcomes and use the data to sustain and enhance service quality. Publications by the [Association of Institutional Research](#) and [Council for the Advancement of Standards](#) provide frameworks for assessing co-curricular learning and evaluating service delivery. Examples at the institutional Minnesota State University-Moorhead having each unit develop at least one student learning outcome and relating it to a university goal, value, or program. Youngstown State University has similar codified processes in its *Cocurricular Assessment Handbook*. Additionally, the University of Central Arkansas' cocurricular assessment templates and rubrics are available [online](#). Each of these institutions recommend use of between three and five learning outcomes for areas conducting assessment.

University Feedback

The Social Responsibility Task Force asks that you read the summary of Criterion 4 (below). This is our determination of where data shows that WIU meets the Core Components and Subcomponents for HLC Criterion 4. Keep in mind that we are not addressing trends at this point. Only do we have sufficient

evidence presented. In providing your feedback, please recall that this is institutional accreditation. Responses need to focus on university, campus, or other actions that extend across multiple departments and/or units, or impact a wide array of students, faculty, and/or staff.

There are places in the document where you will see items highlighted in yellow. This is a placeholder for data that is currently being collected, and will be included in the next draft of the Criteria.

We also seek your suggestion if you feel that there are institutional actions that need to be taken to successfully address core subcomponents, components, and criteria. This was the basis for our nine recommendations stated above.

Thank you for your continued engagement and support of university planning. Please contact me if you have any questions about the material in this *Update*, and/or feedback with regard to the continue successful implementation of *Higher Values in Higher Education*. Similar analyses for HLC Criterion 5 will be presented in April 2019 Strategic Plan Update.

cc: President Thomas CSEC President Whan SGA President Ramos
 Interim Provost Clow COAP President Adamson Associate Provost Mossman
 Vice President Bainter Faculty Council Ch. Porter Associate Provost Morgan
 Vice President Williams Faculty Senate Chair Pynes Planning, Budget, and IR Staff
 Interim Vice President Polley SGA President Reed President's Office

Criterion 4 Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

Core Components

4A. Western demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

(4A1) WIU maintains a practice of regular program reviews

- WIU follows Illinois Board of Higher Education protocol for program reviews. Faculty, departments, deans, and the Provost's Office engage in the program review process that includes new program progress reports, program reviews for established programs, and unit/center reviews. These reviews, unless circumstances require more frequent reviews, are conducted on three, eight, and five-year rotations, respectively.
- Program reviews utilize expertise of program faculty and an external reviewer, and include quantitative and qualitative data analyses. Institutional Research and Planning's [Program Review website](#) provides supporting data, as participants evaluate and enhance programmatic quality and viability.
- The next draft will provide examples of changes resulting from the three types of program reviews.
- Program reviews have also been used to provide one-year progress reports on low enrolled programs. Seven degree programs were required to submit progress reports in academic year 2018-2019. A complete [program review calendar](#) is available from the accreditation website.
- It is also important for external reviewers to note that the Academic Program Review process (described above) and the Academic Program Elimination Review Committee are different entities with different functions. Program Reviews are conducted by academic departments, schools, and units for the express purpose of continuous improvement. The sole purpose of the APER Committee, an elected faculty committee, is to provide the Provost with recommendations concerning academic programs being considered for elimination, when such layoffs would result in the layoffs of employee(s). The Program Review process occurs annually. The APER Committee was convened twice during the period of this self-study: AYs 2015-16 and 2018-19.

(4A2) WIU evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties

Credit Evaluation

- All attempted academic credit is placed on the student's transcript and expressed in semester hours. Honor points are assigned to letter grades and are used to determine the academic standing of the student according to a [plus/minus grading scale](#) for undergraduate students. There is no plus/minus distinction at the graduate level.
- WIU courses numbered through 499 are undergraduate courses. Courses numbered 500 and above are graduate courses. Only those advanced undergraduate courses at the 400-level listed in *Graduate Catalog* may be taken for graduate credit.
- All forms of undergraduate and graduate experiential learning (e.g., internships, student teaching, clinical placements) have an assigned WIU faculty member who is the instructor of record for the course. Grades are assigned by the instructor of record and include feedback from the site supervisor.

Credit for Prior Learning

- Up to one-fourth of the credit (30 semester hours) required for a baccalaureate degree may be earned through external testing and/or military credit. Responsibility for evaluating/articulating prior learning credit resides with Admissions in collaboration with academic departments and/or faculty governance groups, as described in the [Policy on Articulating Credit for Advanced Placement and External Examinations](#).
- WIU accepts transfer credits from regionally accredited institutions across the nation. Credits transfer is determined by existing course articulation agreements and school/departmental review.
- In order to assist transfer students, WIU provides students with access to [Transferology](#). This tool allows students to see how their courses will transfer to WIU.
- Additionally, the Admissions website provides students with transfer information related to [Published transfer guides](#), [2+2 articulation agreements](#), and the [Illinois Articulation Initiative \(IAI\)](#).

Credit for Undergraduate Transfer Credit for International Classes

- Courses are evaluated on a course by course basis. Students requesting credit for specific courses must submit detailed course descriptions or a syllabus for each course. If materials are not in English, an idiomatic translation is required.

Credit for Previous Honors Courses

- Centennial Honors College has seven agreements with Illinois and Iowa community colleges that allow students to transfer in lower division honors course work used to support or achieve General (lower-division) Honors.

Credit in the Bachelors of Art in General Studies (BGS) Degree Program

- The BGS degree program provides non-traditional students with opportunities to earn an undergraduate degree in a manner compatible with their educational needs and lifestyles. The BGS degree has [five admissions options](#) following WIU's value of educational opportunity.
- The BGS degree is a 120-semester hour program, requiring 30 hours to be earned at WIU in order to satisfy residency requirements. All other credit hours for the degree can be fulfilled through WIU courses and/or a combination of the following options: [Transfer Courses](#), [Military Courses/Training](#), [Non-Collegiate Training](#), [Proficiency Exams](#) and [Prior Learning Portfolio](#).

Graduate School Admission

- Applicants for admission to the School of Graduate Studies must hold a bachelor's degree from a regionally-accredited postsecondary institution.

(4A3) In addition to participation in the Illinois Articulation Initiative and the maintenance of nine Compact Agreements for articulation of general education coursework, WIU follows five policies to assure the quality of credit accepted through transfer and proficiency examinations. Each policy is designed to assure that the quality and expectations of the students work upholds university standards and expectations through the:

- [Policy on Articulating Credit for Advanced Placement and External Examinations](#).
- [BGS Degree Completion Options for Earning University Credit](#).
- [Policies Regarding WIU Academic Departmental Proficiency Examinations](#)
- [Policy on Undergraduate Transfer Credit for International Classes](#)

- [Graduate Admission](#)

These five policies are supplemented by 10 *Regulations and Guidelines* on [Course Credits](#), [Evaluation of Transferable General Education Credit](#), [Illinois Articulation Initiative General Education Core Curriculum](#), [Evaluation of Baccalaureate Major Transfer Credit](#), [International Transfer Evaluation Process and Guidelines](#), [Proficiency Examinations](#), [Repeatable Courses](#), [Repeating a Course for Grade Replacement](#), [University General Education Requirements](#), and [Variable Credit Courses](#).

(4A4) WIU maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum

Courses, Rigor, and Expectations for Student Learning

- Faculty own the curriculum, set course prerequisites and corequisites, and maintain academic rigor in all courses, degrees, options, concentrations, and certificate programs. Faculty are responsible for establishing and assessing student learning outcomes in General Education and all degree programs.
- All courses taught in the high school dual enrollment program are WIU courses taught by WIU faculty members, following WIU assessment processes described above. The University does not have different courses adjusted to dual enrollment students. Participating high school students are graded on their performance on college-level work.

Access to Learning Resources

- On-campus student services include 10 Student Service departments, academic advising, University Libraries, and Writing Centers. Additional examples of WIU's academic support services include: the [Center for International Studies](#), [Distance Learning](#), [Math Help Centers](#), [Office of the Registrar](#) facilitating [GradTrac](#), [Office of Study Abroad and Outreach](#), [School of Global Education and Outreach](#), and the [University Advising and Academic Service Center](#), and [University Technology](#).
- Each of academic support units (discussed above) provide online student services. Additionally, students have access to [career exploration tools](#), [survey of student readiness to take online courses](#), [online tutorials from the Writing Center](#), [mathematical tutoring](#), access to [mathematica software](#), and [Western's Knowledgebase](#) (computing self-help).

Faculty Qualifications and Dual Enrollment

- Academic departments and schools are responsible for setting qualifications, and conducting searches approved by Equal Opportunity and Access for faculty members in the discipline. WIU upholds Commission policies and expectations with regard to faculty qualifications. WIU instructors are appropriately qualified, including those teaching in the University's dual enrollment program. WIU's dual enrollment classes are WIU classes taught by WIU faculty hired by departments and schools.

(4A5) WIU maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes

- WIU maintains discipline-specific accreditation with [17 agencies](#) where academic programs have determined accreditation is appropriate to the discipline. This is in addition to accreditations for

Beu Health Center and the University Counseling Center, and NCAA Division I certification. No regional, specialized, or national accrediting agency has ever placed WIU under negative status or action.

(4A6) The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

WIU evaluates the potential success for student inclusion in the workforce before they graduate. This includes:

- Students receive feedback on their workforce preparation and participation in student teaching, clinical placements, internships, research and creative activities with faculty.
- The Career Development Center provides mock interviews for students to practice engagement with prospective employers. Professional attire is available to those who do not have these means readily available.
- Additional formative evaluative processes include, the University's use of 21 advisory boards to help ensure curricular relevance.

WIU also has summative evaluation measures for the success of its graduates.

- Student outcomes and outputs are required in discipline-specific accreditations.
- Academic program reviews evaluate measures of curricular effectiveness, including student/employer satisfaction, results of national certification and licensure examinations, and placement results. These and other quality measures are benchmarked against peer institutions.
- Surveys conducted [one, five, and nine years after graduation](#) track the number of graduates in the workforce, employment as related to the student's major, and the number of students pursuing additional education since graduating from the University.

Secondary sources also provide evidence to WIU on the success of its graduates.

- For example, WIU offers 27 programs for students interested in an undergraduate or post-graduate degree in an education field. Each of which may lead to a license/endorsement in teaching, educational administration, school counseling, school psychology, school speech pathology, or instructional technology. The Illinois State Board of Education produces an annual report on licensure/certification pass rates of students to the respective institutions.
- WIU submits enrollment and graduation data to the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), which has a data-sharing partnership with the Illinois Department of Employment Security and the Illinois Student Assistance Commission to populate the [Illinois College2Career data system](#). This data system allows perspective students to review four-year graduation rates, net price, student debt, average earnings, predicted earning growth by discipline and/or institution. It also informs other reporting conducted by the IBHE, including its [Enrollments and Degrees System](#).

4B. Western demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning

(4B1) WIU has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals

- Clearly stating student learning outcomes for General Education and all undergraduates and graduate degree and certificate programs are discussed below. Discussions regarding specific assessment processes, based on best practices, with results and continuous improvements follow.
- The [Philosophy and Six Goals of the University's General Education Program](#) are documented in the *Undergraduate Catalog*. The overall goal of WIU's General Education Program is to provide a foundation for future learning at Western and beyond.
- The [Undergraduate Catalog](#) includes descriptions of the educational (major and minor) and career opportunities associated with every academic program. Successful attainment of discipline-specific employment and/or continued graduate and professional study after earning a baccalaureate degree is the ultimate goal of all undergraduate programs.
- The [Graduate Catalog](#) includes program descriptions with goals for all degree and certificate programs. Successful attainment of discipline-specific employment and/or continued graduate or professional study is the ultimate goal of all graduate programs.

(4B2) WIU assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.

Curricular Assessment

- For more than a decade, Western's General Education program and all undergraduate and graduate degree and certificate programs have followed a four-step model to: (1) Operationally define intended student learning outcomes, (2) collect and analyze data, (3) report findings, and (4) engage in empirically-driven, continuous improvement.

General Education Assessment

- Departmental faculty develop learning outcomes that represent two general education goals and create forms of measurement (embedded within the instructional methods used in each class) that provide actionable data on the assessment of student learning.
- Faculty who teach the general education courses carry out the measurement in those courses. Departments continually compile the results of the measurements, analyze the findings, and report assessment activities and results, including an annual Impact Report outlining how data was used to improve student learning. The Associate Provost for Undergraduate and Graduate Studies shares the information with the Council on General Education to inform their ongoing review of general education.

Program-Specific Assessment

- Annual assessment of undergraduate and graduate student learning in all degree programs follow the University's four-step model, with final submission to the Provost's Office. Approval of program assessment plans rests with the Provost's Office.

University Support for Assessment

The [Student Learning Assessment Committee](#) provides oversight and coordination of assessment activities by identifying issues/concerns that require Faculty Senate, Graduate Council, college, and/or departmental attention; supporting assessment initiatives; and sharing information about assessment activities across the University.

Co-Curricular Assessment

- Documentation of the assessment of student learning in Student Services is evident in accreditation self-studies for the Beu Health Center from the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care and the University Counseling Center from the International Association of Counseling Services (IACS).

Additional evidence of co-curricular assessment occurring across the University includes:

- The Alcohol and Other Drugs Center assessing student learning in prevention programs.
- Financial Aid offering programs and services to increase student financial literacy and planning.
- Intercollegiate Athletics providing workshops on academic success, career development, resume writing, time management, and the job search process.
- The Career Development Center offering two courses for academic credit. Career Development 200 is a one-credit hour course introduces the concept of career exploration and lifelong career development. Career Exploration 390 is a second one-credit hour course that assist students in developing tools and skills to effectively market and transition themselves into the workforce.

Ten other examples show evaluation of co-curricular programs and student needs leads to programming and resources necessary for students to be successful in their academic pursuits.

- Casa Latina Cultural Center promotes a holistic learning experience, allowing students to explore ethnic identity development, engage in social justice, community outreach, cultural expression, and social and professional networking.
- Disability Resource Center facilitates inclusion and ensures accessibility by providing accommodations, including alternative testing arrangements, sign language interpreters, text conversion (i.e., Braille, electronic, enlarged), and note-taking assistance.
- Gwendolyn Brooks Cultural Center provides support services for Black American and African American students to encourage cultural awareness, academic achievement, and social advocacy.
- Intercollegiate Athletics requires student-athletes who are not in good academic standing (a gpa less than 2.0) to have weekly meetings with academic advisors/athletic mentors to help the student achieve a higher level of academic success.
- The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans*, Queer/Questioning, Asexual/Ally (LGBT*QA) Resource Center in Macomb and Quad Cities Affirming Diversity provides resources, support, education, programming, and advocacy.
- Student Activities in Macomb and Quad Cities Student Services support WIU's student organizations that meet the diverse, cultural, intellectual, and social interests of students.
- The Student Development Office provides programs, services, and support to enhance student success, learning, and personal development, focusing specifically on the college transition.
- University Housing and Dining Services provides safe, clean, comfortable residence halls and apartment facilities; a nutritious, well-balanced food service program; and programs that support academic goals.
- Veterans Resource Centers in Macomb and the Quad Cities provide access to centralized academic support to students who have served or are currently serving in the U.S. military and their family members.

- The Women's Center focuses on student development, and advocates for gender equity through examinations of feminisms, sexism, patriarchy, and misogyny. The Center implements various educational opportunities throughout the year.

(4B3) WIU uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.

Examples of assessment data improving student learning is evident at all levels of the students educational experience, and changes have occurred inside and outside the classroom. For example:

- Examples resulting from General Education assessment will be included in the next draft and it will also note the reaffirmation of the program's *Philosophy and Goals* in 2018.
- Examples from discipline-specific assessment at the undergraduate level will be included in the next draft.
- Examples from discipline-specific assessment at the graduate level will be included in the next draft.
- Examples from cocurricular assessment and evaluation include student-athletes achieving the second highest grade point average in the program's history, opening of the LGBT*QA Center, continuing expansion of the University's Living-Learning Communities, and establishing the Learning Assistants Program (peer-based mathematics tutoring) on the Quad Cities campus.
- University Libraries maintains a Library Liaison program with each academic department and school to ensure that its collections, holdings, and services address disciplinary needs for students, faculty, and staff.

(4B4) WIU's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members

- WIU's four-step assessment model (4B2) lead by faculty for academic programs and staff for cocurricular assessment is based on best practices learned in the Commission's Assessment Academy. This assessment protocol extends equally across instructional modalities. WIU does not differentiate learning goals or assessment processes between on campus and distance education students.
- To affirm that the University upholds to best practices in assessment with online students, WIU completed a *Study-Study* to ensure full compliance with *State Authorization Reciprocity Act* and *Interregional Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education Programs*. Results were presented to the Western Illinois University Board of Trustees in December 2015.
- The Associate Provost for Undergraduate and Graduate Studies is responsible for ensuring that WIU's assessment processes continue to reflect best practices. The Senior Vice President for Strategic Planning keeps the Associate Provost and Vice President for Student Services informed on Commission publications, announcements, and professional development opportunities related to the assessment of student learning. Faculty and the Provost's office also continue to monitor and implement discipline-specific accreditation agencies expectations for the assessment of student learning.

4C. Western demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

(4C1) WIU has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.

- All academic departments and schools develop and evaluate annual *Recruitment and Retention Plans*. Copies are available upon request from the Provost's Office. These efforts complement the University's short- and long-term goals for retention, persistence and completion.
- The University's short-term objective has been to stabilize enrollment by increasing the number of new students and the institutional retention rate. Recent evidence demonstrates progress in these areas.
 - Total fall 2018 enrolment was 8,502 compared to a spring 2018 projection of 8,000 students. Total spring 2019 enrollment was 7,893 students.
 - Fall-to-spring retention for new 2018 full-time freshmen was 86.3%, compared to 82.5% in fall 2017.
 - Total undergraduates retained in spring 2019 was 89.7%, compared to 88.9% in spring 2018.
- WIU has a short-term goal to restore six-year graduation rates above 50%. The fall 2012 six-year graduation rate of first-time, full-time freshmen was 46.2%. This is the first time that WIU's six-year graduation rate fell under the 50% threshold during the period of accreditation self-study. Six-year graduation rates were 53.1% and 50.4% for the fall 2010 and 2011 cohorts of first-time, freshmen, respectively. The next graduating cohort will determine if this data is an anomaly or an emerging trend.
- WIU's mid- and long-term goals are to restore enrollment at 10,000 students and to achieve retention and graduation rates that place the University at the top 25% of its [peer institutions](#) for the Macomb and Quad Cities campuses.
- Student persistence and completion is a key to enrollment growth. WIU is aware that student recruitment in Illinois and the Midwest will be a challenge, and this underscores the importance of raising retention rates and attracting more online students and graduate students to meet enrollment goals.

(4C2) WIU collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs

- Degrees conferred, retention, persistence and completion data is collected and analyzed as part of program review and discipline-specific accreditation. Annual [Fact Books](#) provide retention and time-to-degree by major to assist in program evaluation.
- Annual [Fact Books](#) also contain longitudinal displays of new freshmen retention and graduation rates by gender, ethnicity, major, admission type, and time-to-degree. The *Fact Books* also display the same information for new transfer students by gender, ethnicity, class, and associate's degree status. All of this data informs retention planning and implementation of strategies designed to increase student persistence and completion rates .

- Annual [Performance Reports](#) presented to the Board of Trustees compare university performance to stated goals and [benchmark institutions](#) to determine if WIU is successfully achieving its goals. Data from the *FY19 Performance Report* shows that WIU’s overall university retention rate decreased 2.5% in the last year. However, the WIU-QC retention rate was constant.
- The University graduation rate decreased 4.2% in the last year. Six-year graduation rates are not available for WIU-QC. Western did not begin admitting first-time, full-time freshmen to the Quad Cities until fall 2013. WIU is currently involved in many strategies designed to improve retention and graduation rates (4C3).

Western Illinois University First Year Retention and Six-Year Graduation Rates

	Cohort				
	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>
Freshmen Retention Rates-University					
All Students	72.1%	67.7%	69.2%	67.8%	65.3%
Minority Students	64.5%	60.0%	62.4%	59.7%	54.6%
Pell Grant Recipients	67.5%	66.4%	65.9%	64.0%	60.2%
Freshmen Retention Rates-Quad Cities					
All Students	76.9	82.6%	64.7%	66.7%	66.7%
Minority Students	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Pell Grant Recipients	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Six-Year Graduation Rates-University	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
All Students	54.3%	52.8%	53.1%	50.4%	46.2%
Minority Students	48.5%	41.5%	38.4%	39.3%	32.8%
Pell Grant Recipients	56.5%	50.7%	49.8%	45.9%	40.1%

Cells marked NA are based on counts of five or fewer students in the cohort.

First-Year Retention Rate and Graduation Rates¹

	<u>WIU</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>High</u>
Illinois Public Universities Subset ¹				
First-Year Retention	69%	69%	75%	81%
Six-Year Graduation Rates	53%	47%	56%	72%
All Illinois Public Universities				
First-Year Retention	69%	56%	73%	93%
Six-Year Graduation Rates	53%	15%	51%	85%
Illinois public university subset includes Western Illinois, Eastern Illinois, Illinois State, Illinois-Springfield, and Southern Illinois-Edwardsville. These are the competitor institutions for enrollment.				

- WIU tends to perform lower on national comparisons of retention and graduation rates. Such performance is not unexpected. Unlike peer institutions, Western admits up to 25% of its freshmen class who do not meet published admissions standards but show a desire and willingness to work towards shared goals, following the institutional value of educational opportunity.
- Standardized test scores are correlates of student persistence and completion. However, as shown below, WIU’s commitment to academic excellence, the individual learner, and a supportive environment inside and outside the classroom results in the achievement of nationally recognized

¹ The graduation rate indicates the average proportion of fall 2008 through fall 2011 freshmen graduating within six years; and freshman retention is based on the average of the 2013 through fall 2016 cohorts.

graduation rates that exceed projections based on entering student characteristics (ACT/SAT scores and high school grade point averages).

First-Year Retention Rates Macomb Benchmarks		Six-Year Graduation Rates Macomb Benchmarks		First-Year Retention Rates Quad Cities Benchmarks	
James Madison	90%	James Madison	83%	Penn State-Harrisburg	87%
Appalachian State	88%	Truman State	75%	Augustana	86%
Truman State	87%	Appalachian State	72%	Northern Iowa	82%
Wisconsin-La Crosse	85%	Wisconsin-La Crosse	70%	Saint Ambrose	78%
Grand Valley State	83%	Grand Valley State	67%	Montana Technological	73%
Montclair State	83%	Northern Iowa	66%	Western Illinois-Quad Cities	70%
Northern Iowa	83%	Montclair State	64%	Texas-Permian Basin	69%
Wisconsin-Whitewater	80%	Wisconsin-Stevens Point	63%	Auburn-Montgomery	66%
Nebraska-Kearney	79%	Wisconsin-Whitewater	59%	Indiana University-East	66%
William Paterson	76%	Nebraska-Kearney	58%	Louisiana State-Shreveport	65%
Central Washington	76%	Eastern Illinois	58%	Indiana-Kokomo	63%
Wisconsin-Stevens Point	76%	Central Missouri	56%		
Eastern Illinois	75%	Central Washington	54%		
SIU-Edwardsville	73%	Western Illinois	53%		
Central Missouri	71%	William Paterson	51%		
Western Illinois	69%	SIU-Edwardsville	49%		

Difference between Predicted and Actual Six-Year Graduation Rates
At Illinois Public Universities and Western Illinois University Benchmark Institutions

Illinois Public Universities			
	Actual Graduation Rate	Predicted Graduation Rate	Difference
Illinois State	72%	62%	10%
Eastern Illinois	58%	51%	7%
Illinois-Urbana Champagne	85%	80%	5%
Western Illinois	53%	49%	4%
Illinois-Chicago	59%	57%	2%
Northern Illinois	48%	51%	(3%)
Southern Illinois-Carbondale	43%	50%	(7%)
Southern Illinois-Edwardsville	49%	56%	(7%)
Illinois-Springfield	49%	61%	(12%)
Chicago State	14%	33%	(19%)
Northeastern Illinois	23%	46%	(23%)
Governors State	N/A	N/A	N/A

Governors State did not report information

- Differences shown above are for the Illinois public universities because WIU primarily competes with these institutions for new student enrollment. Western has a tradition of meeting and exceeding projected graduation rates as documented in US News and World Report (2011-2018).
- However, WIU recognizes that students admitted to Western through Special Admissions (SA) have lower persistence and completion rates than Regularly Admitted (RA) students, and it is taking corrective actions to help improve these rates.

Student Persistence and Completion Rates by Admissions Type Fall 2010-Fall 2014							
		Number Enrolled	Continued to 2nd Yr	Continued to 3rd Yr	Graduated in 4 years	Graduated in 5 years	Graduated in 6 years
2010	RA	1,414	74.2%	65.9%	34.1%	52.7%	56.4%
	SA	327	59.1%	49.1%	15.9%	34.5%	38.8%
	Total	<u>1,741</u>	<u>71.4%</u>	<u>62.7%</u>	<u>30.6%</u>	<u>49.2%</u>	<u>53.1%</u>
2011	RA	1,427	71.3%	62.1%	34.7%	52.5%	55.2%
	SA	480	57.5%	48.3%	15.2%	31.0%	36.2%
	Total	1,907	67.7%	58.5%	29.7%	47.1%	50.4%
2012	RA	1,286	68.3%	60.2%	33.0%	49.0%	51.5%
	SA	438	48.5%	41.9%	13.7%	28.9%	30.8%
	Total	1,724	63.3%	55.6%	28.1%	43.9%	46.2%
2013	RA	1,270	76.2%	66.5%	38.1%	53.9%	
	SA	338	55.8%	39.5%	15.7%	24.6%	
	Total	1,608	72.1%	60.8%	33.4%	47.8%	
2014	RA	1,263	69.7%	57.9%	34.6%		
	SA	315	59.7%	44.8%	12.6%		
	Total	1,578	67.7%	55.2%	30.2%		

- WIU reinstated interviews as part of fall 2019 Office of Academic Services (OAS) admissions to help identify academic commitment. To create academic urgency, OAS students will enter Western under Academic Warning. As such, they may enroll for no more than 16 hours in a regular semester and no more than six hours in a Summer term. Furthermore, they will be suspended if their semester grade point average falls below 1.0.
- The table below presents four-year transfer graduation rates since six-year graduation rates cannot be compared on the Quad Cities campus. The 67.4% rate for the Macomb campus is equal to last year's rate and up 3.0% percent from two years ago, with the campus experiencing continuing increases in graduation rates of minority students.
- The 69.7% rate for the Quad Cities campus is down 3.8% from last year. Rates for minority students are down but percentages are based on small sample sizes less than 20. With a larger base, the graduation rate of Pell grant recipients is on a three-year improvement trend.

Four-Year New Transfer Student Graduation Rates
Fall 2009-Fall 2013 Cohorts

	2009		2010		2011		2012		2013	
	<u>N</u>	<u>Pct</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Pct</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Pct</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Pct</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Pct</u>
Macomb										
All Students	678	63.9%	722	67.8%	670	64.4%	748	67.4%	712	67.4%
Minority Students	88	52.1%	113	55.9%	100	51.0%	112	48.9%	142	57.5%
Pell Grant Recipients	294	60.0%	364	63.1%	331	60.5%	377	63.8%	383	66.8%
Quad Cities										
All Students	92	80.4%	82	82.8%	60	68.2%	89	73.5%	122	69.7%
Minority Students	17	82.2	14	77.8%	8	61.5%	11	64.7%	18	54.5%
Pell Grant Recipients	37	75.5%	37	82.2%	38	69.0%	50	73.5%	76	73.7%

(4C3) WIU uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data

One of WIU's four goals in its Quality Initiative addressed improving retention, persistence, and completion rates, and demonstrates how the University makes improvements in areas warranted by the data.

- Administrative Information Management Systems, Institutional Research and Planning, and Office of the University Registrar developed a distributed database that uses data to support programs and interventions designed to increase student persistence and completion. The database includes 16 freshman and transfer fall cohorts, 80 filters enabling customized analysis by financial aid status, demographics, academic information such as major and course placement, and 29 measures including course deficiencies, retention and graduation.

The database supports use of the Predictive Analytic Framework by Institutional Research and Planning to identify students at risk of attrition. Analyses are completed each term and forwarded to offices and committees (including the Student Success Coaches in Macomb and the Director of Student Services and Retention Committee Chairperson in the Quad Cities) to inform planning, implementation, and evaluation. The information is available as early as 10th day, making intervention much more effective because it occurs early in the semester.

- Based on the cost-sensitivity of WIU students and the need for them to work in order to support educational studies, the University continues to expand its distance learning portfolio to prevent attrition by adding additional flexibility with online [student success tools](#).
 - WIU had five online degrees during the last accreditation site visit. The University now supports National Fire Academy Curricular (certification) for Fire Fighters General Education, 11 bachelor's degrees, five post baccalaureate certificates, and seven master's degrees online.
 - New master's degree hybrid programs were launched in Business Administration, College Student Personnel, and Community and Economic Development.
 - Fourteen live streaming course sections were offered in academic year 2018-2019.
- In Macomb, an inventory of student support services was created, the predictive analytic framework was deployed for new freshmen, two new student success coaches were appointed to work with at-risk students, student Living-Living Communities were expanded, and planning for a new Retention Center was initiated on the Macomb campus.

New discipline-specific mentoring opportunities were added. For example, Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics connects female students in the College of Arts and

Sciences majoring in Biology, Clinical Laboratory Science, Chemistry, Forensic Chemistry, Geology, Mathematics, Meteorology and Physics with research advisors and faculty mentors to foster personal and professional development in STEM disciplines.

- In the Quad Cities, an inventory of current retention efforts and courses with high percentages of D/F/W rates were completed, the predictive analytic framework was initiated, a campus retention committee was established, and a three-year pilot of a peer tutoring program in mathematics and physics was started. The latter includes day and late-night tutoring sessions to accommodate student schedules.
- For distance learning, an inventory of electronic student services and faculty and student surveys were conducted. New software (Respondus Monitor) was deployed that enables students to complete graded assignments on their computer rather than having to travel to a Western campus or approved testing location to complete these requirements.

HLC's February 2019 *Open Pathway Quality Initiative Report* indicated, "The University put forth much effort during this time period to invest in these four initiatives, some of which resulted in permanent, structural changes to the University and its programs." WIU will follow the Review Panel's "encouragement to continue monitoring these efforts so that the decrease in retention of students might be mitigated."

(4C4) WIU's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice

- The data discussed above focused on traditional census day reporting used by colleges and universities nationally to analyze retention, persistence, and completion rates. WIU also uses other means to analyze persistence, completion, and retention rates. The BGS program does not have a limit on time-to-degree. Therefore, it tracks student persistence and completion regardless if a student has stopped out. Using this model, the School of Global Education and Outreach, and designated offices on the Macomb and Quad Cities campuses contact students who have stopped out to encourage continued studies at the University.
- WIU continues to learn new and innovative ways to promote persistence, completion, and retention. The Office of the Senior Vice President for Strategic Planning and Initiatives formed a Data Sharing Consortium in 2018 that consists of representatives from Antioch University, Azusa Pacific University, Capella University, College for Financial Planning, Colorado Technical University, DeVry University, Los Angeles Pacific University, National American University, Southwest Indian Polytechnic Institute, and Western Illinois University.

The Consortium has shared uses of the predictive analytic framework and ways to monitor and report persistence and completion rates for populations of students where traditional measures such as IPEDS that use consecutive enrollment understate actual graduation rates.

WIU has learned two enrollment management lessons from the Consortium. First, analysis of persistence rates applies to the admissions funnel. Therefore, the Admissions Office began in 2018 contacting accepted students who did not enroll at a college or university to encourage WIU enrollment. Second, students may not be aware of all of the educational opportunities available at the institution. In response, the Associate Provost for Undergraduate and Graduate Studies and the Senior Vice President for Strategic Planning and Initiatives began contacting currently enrolled, academically qualified students to encourage enrollment in integrated degree programs and all other post-baccalaureate certificate and master's degrees at WIU.

New retention initiatives will continue. For example, WIU-QC will evaluate Learning Assistants program, prepare a Trio Grant application to expand student services, and work with Institutional Research and Planning in extending use of the Predictive Analytic Framework to new transfer students.