

WESTERN EDUCATIONAL
LONGITUDINAL STUDY:
SPRING 2004 FOLLOW-UP OF
FRESHMEN ENTERING FALL, 2003

(REPORT 2004-01)

Pamela Jull
Linda Clark
Gary McKinney

October, 2004

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND.....	1
RESEARCH METHODS	2
FINDINGS	2
WELS SURVEY FINDINGS: FREQUENCIES	3
APPENDIX A: WELS GOALS AND OBJECTIVES	28
APPENDIX B: SURVEY ADMINISTRATION PROCEDURES	30
APPENDIX C: DATA QUALITY	32
APPENDIX D: OPEN-ENDED QUESTION 2B	34
APPENDIX E: OPEN-ENDED QUESTION 3D	36
APPENDIX F: OPEN-ENDED QUESTION 7B	38
APPENDIX G: OPEN-ENDED QUESTION 11C	40
APPENDIX H: OPEN-ENDED QUESTION 12E	42
APPENDIX I: OPEN-ENDED QUESTION 18	44
APPENDIX J: OPEN-ENDED QUESTION 30C	46

Western Educational Longitudinal Study (WELS)

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Western Educational Longitudinal Study (WELS) was conceived as a process to obtain data more relevant to Western and its mission than survey data had been able to obtain previously. Rather than continuing to rely on outside survey forms, many of which were pricey and often only partially useful, researchers developed a Western-specific survey form. This development process began about three years ago with researchers sitting down with dozens of individuals, departments and offices and asking them what their survey data needs were. From these conversations general areas of interest (expectations, pre-college experiences, college preparedness, etc.) were outlined and specific questions logged. Along the way, WELS researchers also noted where data was already being collected so that doubling up on survey questions was minimized.

The final survey form was considered by all participants to be as thorough and Western-specific as everyone thought it could be. The survey covered a student's high school experiences and activities (both academic and personal), their expectations for college, and their family and personal background. In the development of the WELS survey, careful attention was paid to both national and local surveys administered in the past. Nationally, surveys used as guides included: the freshmen and senior surveys (known at Western as the CIRP and CSS surveys) developed by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI); the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), and the College Student Expectation and Experience Questionnaire (CSXQ/CSEQ). Locally, guides included the following Western surveys: Close-in, Alumni, and Non-Returning Student.¹

Researchers also concluded that yearly survey administrations would be replaced by a six-year survey cycle, with a new cycle beginning every three years. The initial survey of incoming freshmen was administered in the summer, 2003; the next survey cycle will begin in the summer, 2006. In the inaugural WELS survey, 1580 in-coming 2003 freshmen participated. From this data a baseline report was generated: *Western Educational Longitudinal Study (OIART report 2003-02)*.

¹Yet as thorough as the survey finally became, researchers did not and do not consider it written in stone. Indeed, one of the benefits of developing a Western-specific survey is that it can, and should, have flexibility. While researchers are confident that the WELS contains a core of high performing items that will help track progress and change, before the next administration of the WELS (in the summer of 2006) the usefulness of the information gathered in the 2003 administration will be evaluated (specifically: did the questions measure what they were intended to); moreover, researchers will reevaluate the university's priorities (and thus its survey data needs).

WELS researchers felt that a truly effective survey process should be designed to respond relatively quickly to administrative concerns. From the large initial pool of WELS survey participants (the baseline), random samples of students (as few as 200) could be contacted for future surveys. The first such survey was conducted near the end of the fall quarter, 2003. From the data collected on 613 respondents a report was generated on the transition issues faced by first-time, in-coming freshmen: *Western Educational Longitudinal Study: Fall 2003 Freshmen Transition Survey. (OIART Focus Summary, issue 8, volume 4.)*

The third WELS survey was conducted during the spring quarter, 2004. This report presents the basic frequencies from that survey. Future reports will make use the longitudinal aspect of the study, but interested parties can actually begin making comparisons immediately simply by accessing both reports, either by contacting Gary McKinney for a hard copy (email: gary.mckinney@wwu.edu; telephone: 360-650-3409) or via the web at:

http://west.wwu.edu/institutional_research/

RESEARCH METHODS

Students were chosen randomly from among all students who enrolled at Western as freshmen in the Fall of 2003. Of 1,309 eligible students, 714 completed a 22-minute survey by telephone. The response rate for this survey is 55%. Ultimately 629 cases provided complete data for analysis. The margin of error for this survey is +/- 3.3%. Survey respondents strongly resemble the freshman class overall on a variety of measured characteristics. (See the demographics table in Appendix C.) When coupled with random selection and a relatively high response rate, these findings can be considered representative of entering freshman in the fall of 2003 overall.

FINDINGS

Like the previous WELS report noted above, the WELS Spring 2004 survey data provide the most comprehensive, appropriate and complete information WWU has ever gathered on its incoming students. The following pages provide the exact wording of each question the students responded to, with the distribution of responses for each item. Also included in this report are appendices of summary findings from the open-ended questions included in the survey. Future analysis of these data will follow upon the requests of those who participated in the construction of the items, as well as units that see value in exploring the findings in greater detail. For more information please contact the Office of Institutional Assessment, Research and Testing (OIART).

WELS SURVEY FINDINGS: FREQUENCIES

Western's Educational Longitudinal Study (WELS):
Survey of Fall 2003 Freshmen in Spring 2004

1	How influential was each of the following items in the process of making your course selections this year.	Extremely	Very	Somewhat	A little	Not at all
	Course catalog information (n=627)	6.7%	35.4%	38.8%	13.6%	5.6%
	Your academic advisor (n=627)	2.4%	10.0%	21.9%	26.0%	39.7%
	Your friends (n=629)	3.3%	15.3%	36.2%	22.9%	22.3%
	Members of your family (n=629)	2.7%	12.4%	27.7%	23.5%	33.7%
	Information from the online Class Finder (n=627)	13.4%	33.8%	23.8%	14.4%	14.7%
	Information from the academic department in which you plan to major (n=605)	7.6%	17.4%	23.8%	17.4%	33.9%
	Information from academic departments generally (n=627)	2.1%	8.0%	34.3%	26.6%	29.0%

2A When you found that courses you wanted or needed to take were full, how often did you...

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Try repeatedly to register (n=584)	19.5%	28.9%	24.5%	15.1%	12.0%
Give up and find a different class (n=579)	12.6%	30.2%	33.5%	14.2%	9.5%
Make sure to get on the course's waiting list (n=581)	8.3%	8.6%	10.8%	12.2%	60.1%
Get an override code from the course professor (n=581)	5.7%	7.4%	17.4%	12.0%	57.5%

2B Were there any other methods you used when you found courses you wanted or needed were full? (n=629)

Yes	13.7%
No	79.5%
Never encountered full classes / problems	6.8%

NOTE: 2B open-ended responses can be found in Appendix D

2C Of the methods you used, which one provided the most consistent success for you? (Only one response from 2A or 2B.) (n=559)

Trying repeatedly to register	34.5%
Giving up and finding a different class	38.3%
Making sure to get on the course's waiting list	5.5%
Getting an override code from the course professor	12.9%
Other method (from 2B)	8.8%

3A When you started at Western, did you have a major field of interest or were you undecided? (n=628)

Had an interest (go to 3B)	51.1%
Was undecided (go to 3C)	48.9%

3B If *had an interest*: Since starting at Western, have you changed your mind about your potential major field of interest? (n=316)

Yes (go to 3E)	29.4%
No (go to 4)	70.6%

3C If *undecided*: Do you have a potential major interest now? (n=305)

Yes (go to 3D)	55.1%
No (go to 4)	44.9%

3D If *yes to 3C*: What's your current interest?

NOTE: 3D open-ended responses can be found in Appendix E

3E If *yes to 3B*: How many times have you changed your mind? (N=93)

Once	59.1%
Twice	20.4%
Three times or more	20.4%

3F If *yes* to 3B: to what extent did each of the following influence your current interest.

	Entirely	A great deal	Some	A little	Not at all
Requirements for your previous major interest were too demanding (n=93)	1.1%	24.7%	25.8%	14.0%	34.4%
Your advisor discussed a new major or requirements for your previous major with you (n=93)	0.0%	5.4%	8.6%	8.6%	77.4%
A course you took drew your interest more than your previous major interest (n=93)	28.0%	25.8%	17.2%	5.4%	23.7%
A course or professor you took in your previous major interest turned you off of the major (n=93)	6.5%	16.1%	17.2%	4.3%	55.9%
The requirements in your current major interest are less demanding (n=88)	5.7%	5.7%	20.5%	6.8%	61.4%

4 Is your academic advisor in the Academic Advising Center or a faculty member from one of Western's departments? (n=629)

Academic Advising Center (go to 6A-C)	31.5%
Faculty Member (go to 6A-C)	43.6%
Don't know (go to 5)	24.5%
Not applicable / don't have advisor	<1%

5 If "don't know": Do you know who your academic advisor is? (n=154)

Yes	32.5%
No (go to 7A)	67.5%

6A How many times have you received email from your (faculty) academic advisor this year, if at all? (n=395)

Median = 4 Mean = 5.97

6B How many times have you received paper mail from your (faculty) academic advisor this year, if at all? (n=318)

Median = 2 Mean = 2.39

6C How many times have you received a phone call from your (faculty) academic advisor this year, if at all? (n=76)

Median = 1 Mean = 2.03

NOTE: Contact from the Academic Advising Center (listserv, etc.) qualified as contact from the student's academic advisor.

7A Did you visit the Tutorial Center in Old Main at all this year? (n=629)

Yes	49.0%
No (skip to 8)	51.0%

7B If yes: What did you use the Tutorial Center for?

NOTE: 7B open-ended responses can be found in Appendix F

7C How would you rate the effectiveness of the Tutorial Center staff in helping you with what you needed? (n=300)

Excellent	31.0%
Good	47.3%
Fair	17.0%
Poor	2.7%
Very Poor	2.0%

8 How often, if at all, have you used your WWU email account to send or receive email this year? (n=629)	
Never	9.5%
One to three times a quarter	8.3%
Two to three times a month	9.2%
Once a week, or	11.1%
More than once a week but not daily	22.9%
Every day	39.0%
9 Do you have a separate email account that you use in addition to or instead of your WWU email? (n=628)	
Yes	84.7%
No (go to 12)	15.3%
10 How often do you use that/those accounts? (n=532)	
Never	0.8%
One to three times a quarter	2.4%
Two to three times a month	3.9%
Once a week, or	9.2%
More than once a week but not daily	18.8%
Every day	64.8%

11A Have you set up your WWU email to be forwarded automatically to your separate account?
(n=530)

Yes (go to 12)	15.7%
No	84.3%

11B If *No*: Were you aware that you could use options on the My Western website to automatically forward your email to a separate account? (n=449)

Yes	51.4%
No (go to 12)	48.6%

11C If *Yes*: What's the primary reason you haven't set up your WWU email to be forwarded to that account?

NOTE: 11C open-ended responses can be found in Appendix G

12A When you started at WWU, did you transfer any AP, IB or Running Start credits? (n=629)

Yes	52.5%
No (go to 13)	47.5%

12B Were all your credits accepted? (n=330)

Yes	89.4%
No	8.8%
Don't know	0.2%

12C What GUR areas were partly or fully covered by your credits? (Check all that apply.)

Communications	23.5%
Mathematics	16.5%
Humanities	25.1%
Social Sciences	14.5%
Comparative Gender and Multicultural Studies	4.1%
Natural Sciences	11.1%
Don't know	3.2%
None	2.2%
Not applicable (if not, why?)	0.1%

NOTE: 12C open-ended responses can be found in Appendix H

12D Have those credits helped or hindered your progress toward your degree? (n=325)

Helped	88.3%
Hindered	2.8%
Neither	8.0%
Both	0.9%

12E Would you tell me more about that?

NOTE: 12E open-ended responses can be found in Appendix I

13 How many times this year, if at all, have you...		Never	Once	2-3 times	4-5 times	> 5 times
Personally contributed to a classroom discussion (n=628)		0.8%	2.5%	14.0%	13.1%	69.6%
Written a substantial essay of 5 pages or more (n=628)		9.2%	8.0%	34.2%	24.5%	24.0%
Written a substantial research paper of 5 pages or more (n=628)		42.2%	33.8%	20.7%	2.1%	1.3%
Volunteered in the community as a part of coursework in a class (n=628)		71.8%	14.0%	9.4%	2.4%	2.4%
Formally collaborated with others to complete coursework (group projects) (n=628)		15.6%	18.3%	40.8%	12.7%	12.6%
Presented information in front of your class (n=627)		22.3%	25.4%	27.6%	11.2%	13.6%
Helped lead a class discussion (n=627)		56.5%	17.5%	19.0%	3.8%	3.2%
Attended learning events on campus as a part of your coursework (n=627)		54.4%	18.0%	19.6%	4.0%	4.0%
Used tutoring services for help (n=628)		55.7%	11.3%	13.9%	4.0%	15.1%
Talked to an advisor about your courses (n=628)		44.1%	24.5%	21.8%	5.1%	4.5%
Talked to a professor outside of class (n=628)		10.4%	5.6%	29.6%	22.6%	31.8%

16 Please state your level of agreement with the following statements about General University Requirements (GURs).

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Taking GUR courses gives me useful skills and ideas (n=607)	22.7%	62.1%	5.1%	7.2%	2.8%
GUR course requirements interferes with my taking courses that really interest me (n=606)	14.7%	43.6%	12.4%	21.8%	7.6%
I use GURs as a key source for exploring potential majors (n=605)	27.1%	37.5%	10.1%	16.0%	9.3%
Completing courses in a broad range of disciplines is something I would choose to do myself even if it were not required (n=612)	28.1%	38.9%	10.0%	18.6%	4.4%
My GUR courses have really broadened my perspective on the world (n=607)	20.4%	37.9%	17.5%	17.5%	6.8%
My GUR courses are teaching me a lot about cultural diversity (n=606)	20.3%	39.9%	12.9%	20.1%	6.8%

17 Overall how satisfied are you with the courses you took this year? (n=626)

Extremely	9.7%
Very	50.5%
Somewhat	34.0%
A little	5.1%
Not at all	0.6%

18 What GUR courses have had the greatest impact on your world view, if any?

NOTE: 18 open-ended responses can be found in Appendix J

19 How comfortable are you with your ability to...

	Extremely	Very	Somewhat	A little	Not at all
Use computers (n=628)	33.1%	43.3%	20.9%	2.5%	0.2%
Planning, implementing and organizing research (n=628)	11.8%	38.7%	42.0%	5.7%	1.8%
Using library resources for research (n=622)	6.8%	28.1%	47.4%	13.3%	4.3%
Citing references for research papers, for example, creating a bibliography (n=627)	13.2%	43.2%	37.2%	5.1%	1.3%
Understanding how to avoid plagiarism in your writing (n=628)	26.6%	53.2%	17.5%	2.4%	0.3%

20 How often, if at all, have you used the campus library's facilities—that is, their materials and services either online or in person for coursework and not just for study space? (n=628)

Never	8.6%
Rarely	28.7%
Sometimes	34.2%
Often	18.5%
Very Often	10.0%

21 How much experience do you have using computers for...

	A great deal	Quite a bit	Some	A little	None
Email (n=628)	70.1%	24.2%	3.8%	1.4%	0.5%
Finding information on the Internet (n=628)	64.3%	27.2%	7.2%	1.3%	0.0%
Finding information using library databases like Proquest or Ebsco (n=627)	16.9%	15.6%	35.2%	21.9%	10.4%
Creating documents (n=626)	50.5%	26.7%	14.7%	6.1%	2.1%

22 For each item note your comfort with your ability.

	Extremely	Very	Somewhat	A little	Not at all
a Writing effectively (n=627)	19.9%	39.7%	33.7%	4.8%	1.9%
b Speaking effectively (n=627)	13.6%	34.8%	38.8%	10.2%	2.7%
c Critically analyzing written information (n=627)	13.2%	38.0%	37.6%	10.0%	1.1%
d Defining and solving problems (n=627)	13.7%	45.0%	37.3%	3.8%	0.2%
e Working and/or learning independently (n=627)	26.6%	53.9%	18.5%	0.6%	0.3%
f Working cooperatively in a group (n=626)	18.4%	54.8%	24.6%	1.6%	0.3%
g Understanding and applying scientific principles and methods (n=626)	10.1%	25.7%	49.8%	11.5%	2.9%
h Understanding and applying quantitative principles and methods (n=627)	7.5%	23.1%	50.1%	15.6%	3.7%
I Understanding and appreciating differing philosophies/ cultures (n=625)	20.8%	48.3%	25.9%	3.8%	1.1%
j Understanding the interaction of society and the environment (n=625)	15.0%	45.8%	33.8%	4.8%	0.6%
k Working effectively with technology, especially computers (n=626)	21.1%	41.5%	30.7%	6.7%	0.0%
l Using management/leadership capabilities (n=626)	14.4%	34.7%	41.9%	7.8%	1.3%
m Understanding organizations and how people behave in them (n=626)	11.5%	37.7%	43.0%	7.0%	0.8%

25 How well do you think your high school prepared you for college coursework. (n=625)

Extremely	16.3%
Very	28.0%
Somewhat	31.7%
A little	18.5%
Not at all	5.6%

26 For each of the following activities indicate how much time you spent on it during this academic year

	A great deal	Quite a bit	Some	A little	None
Student government (n=626)	3.4%	1.1%	1.8%	6.9%	56.9%
Socializing with friends (n=626)	60.5%	28.4%	8.0%	2.9%	0.2%
Sports, exercise or other recreational activities (n=626)	38.7%	30.2%	19.5%	9.9%	1.8%
Performing or fine arts activities (n=626)	8.0%	8.5%	13.3%	19.6%	50.6%
Academic, political, ethnic, religious or social clubs (n=626)	9.6%	8.3%	11.7%	17.4%	53.0%
Community service, volunteer work or service learning projects (n=626)	6.9%	3.5%	14.7%	27.5%	47.4%

27A Have you worked at a job on a regular basis for pay or work study since the start of this quarter?
(n=629)

Yes: regular job	24.0%
Yes: work study	4.6%
Yes: both a regular job and work study	1.6%
No: Skip to 28	69.8%

27B How many hours a week have you typically worked this quarter? (n=185)

Less than 10 hours / week	36.2%
10-19 hours / week	34.1%
20-29 hours / week	22.2%
30 or more hours / week	7.6%

28 Please tell me to what degree you agree with the each of these statements:

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I expect to be a very successful student at Western (n=623)	58.3%	39.0%	1.8%	0.6%	0.3%
I feel comfortable talking to professors after class and during office hours (n=624)	44.6%	47.1%	3.8%	3.7%	0.8%
My long-term education plans are very clear to me (n=624)	26.3%	39.1%	9.5%	18.9%	6.3%
I have the study skills I need to be a successful student (n=624)	34.3%	51.0%	6.6%	6.7%	1.4%
I feel I am a part of the university community (n=624)	35.4%	47.0%	10.3%	5.9%	1.4%
I am very certain of my major field of interest (n=624)	30.0%	30.6%	8.8%	18.8%	11.9%
I have important, new friendships with other Western Students (n=624)	72.1%	22.1%	2.6%	2.6%	0.6%
Concern for my family has interfered with my academic work (n=624)	7.2%	12.8%	9.0%	23.1%	47.9%
I feel Western's campus is a safe place to live (n=609)	56.3%	34.6%	4.6%	4.1%	0.3%

29A Please indicate how difficult each item has been for you this past academic year.

	Extremely	Very	Somewhat	A little	Not at all
Managing your time effectively (n=624)	7.7%	18.3%	47.6%	19.9%	6.6%
Managing your coursework (n=624)	3.5%	13.1%	52.1%	21.8%	9.5%
Paying attention in large lecture classes (n=622)	7.7%	19.5%	37.0%	19.5%	16.4%
Preparing for and presenting your work in front of a class (n=575)	3.5%	7.5%	36.7%	24.7%	27.7%
Sharing with other students in a discussion group (n=621)	1.8%	4.8%	24.8%	21.7%	46.9%
Getting to class consistently (n=624)	3.5%	5.9%	20.8%	16.5%	53.2%
Completing reading and coursework on time (n=624)	4.0%	9.3%	36.2%	20.4%	30.1%
Doing well on multiple choice tests (n=621)	4.3%	7.6%	35.1%	23.5%	29.5%
Writing papers as part of your coursework (n=616)	4.2%	7.6%	36.9%	23.1%	28.2%
Balancing your coursework with social life (n=624)	5.8%	12.8%	42.6%	21.0%	17.8%
Balancing your coursework with personal activities (n=624)	3.7%	10.6%	43.4%	23.6%	18.8%
Balancing your coursework with family or community obligations (n=621)	2.9%	3.5%	22.2%	22.4%	49.0%
Getting access to courses you need to prepare for your major (n=606)	4.6%	10.1%	32.5%	22.3%	30.5%

29B How difficult has each of the following personal experiences been this year?

	Extremely	Very	Somewhat	A little	Not at all
Managing your finances (n=624)	5.0%	11.5%	31.1%	19.7%	32.7%
Managing your physical and emotional health (n=624)	3.2%	7.7%	29.8%	22.3%	37.0%
Getting the emotional support you need to do well in school (n=624)	2.4%	4.2%	15.2%	22.4%	55.8%
Dealing with homesickness (n=616)	2.8%	2.6%	12.0%	23.1%	59.6%
Managing stress (n=624)	4.6%	11.2%	33.5%	26.9%	23.7%
Getting enough sleep (n=624)	7.5%	23.6%	34.9%	21.0%	13.0%
Handling the use of alcohol and drugs (n=621)	1.6%	1.9%	13.7%	15.9%	66.8%
Fitting in with others at WWU (n=623)	2.4%	2.2%	15.9%	21.8%	57.6%
Meeting your family's expectations (n=622)	2.7%	6.4%	19.9%	18.8%	52.1%
Getting the financial support you need (N=624)	4.3%	5.6%	17.6%	16.5%	55.9%
Finding people you get along with, making friends (n=624)	1.9%	2.9%	15.4%	19.7%	60.1%
Being able to maintain your spiritual or religious values (n=611)	2.1%	2.1%	8.7%	11.9%	75.1%

30A Over the next few years, how likely are you to Transfer to another university? (n=615)

Definitely will	7.8%
Probably will	14.6%
Probably won't	48.9%
Definitely won't	28.6%

30B Over the next few years, how likely are you to Transfer to a two-year college? (n=624)

Definitely will (go to 30C)	1.9%
Probably will (go to 30C)	1.1%
Probably won't (go to 31)	22.3%
Definitely won't (go to 31)	74.7%

30C Why will you transfer?

NOTE: 30C open-ended responses can be found in Appendix K

31 How likely are you to take a quarter or more other than summer off from college over the next three years? (n=619)	
Definitely will	4.4%
Probably will	12.1%
Probably won't	43.5%
Definitely won't	40.1%
32 How likely are you to Graduate from WWU? (n=613)	
Definitely will	43.7%
Probably will	40.6%
Probably won't	11.6%
Definitely won't	4.1%
33 How long do you think it will take for you to finish your bachelor's degree? (n=614)	
less than 4 years	9.4%
4 years	33.7%
4-5 years, or	55.2%
More than 5 years	1.6%

APPENDIX A:
WELS GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

NOTE: THIS DOCUMENT WAS LAST UPDATED IN JANUARY, 2002.

WELS: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Currently the Office of Institutional Assessment and Testing administers three major surveys whose instruments are generated by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI). These include the CIRP (Freshmen), YFCY (Freshmen Follow-up), and CSS (Senior) surveys, which offer valuable overall data tied into national norms. The CSS is administered every quarter, the CIRP every summer, and the YFCY each fall. Additionally, the Office of Survey Research administers an Alumni survey every even-numbered year, and the Close-in survey of first-time freshmen and transfers is administered every odd-numbered year. Moreover, both offices respond to additional survey research projects fielded from colleges, departments, and offices on an ad-hoc basis.

The strength of the current method is that HERI surveys link Western findings to national norms, and the data is robust enough to fulfill the needs of many departments and to inform administrative offices and outside agencies. The weakness of the current method is that only cross-sections of data are generated, so student progress can't be carefully tracked and evaluated for predictive markers of trouble and success; additionally, current survey data has limited coverage, with some colleges, departments, and offices feeling unserved. And finally, these nationally-linked, mail-out surveys simply cannot generate well a truly representational cohort.

WELS is a longitudinal survey program that would take a step in the direction of more fully responding to Western's data needs. Without overburdening respondents with repeated surveys from a variety of sources, WELS would provide an annual vehicle that would aid departments, offices, colleges and organizations in exploring issues that are particularly timely and relevant. WELS would enable issues of retention and graduation efficiency to be more carefully explored; WELS would also provide data that could be more directly used for program evaluation and improvement. Moreover, WELS would introduce a flexibility that would allow unserved parties more readily into the data loop. We believe that WELS would not only be a more efficient use of staff time and financial resources, but would also provide more useful, higher quality data than in the past.

WELS: PURPOSE AND METHOD

THE PURPOSE OF THE WELS SURVEY PROGRAM is to more efficiently serve the Western community and the organizations it supplies with information (the Washington State Legislature, the Higher Education Coordinating Board, the Office of Presidents, etc.).

THE METHOD FOR ACCOMPLISHING THIS GOAL is to stream-line current survey methodology, and at the same time expand the kinds of surveys being administered, thus increasing the variety and usefulness of data that are being collected.

APPENDIX B:
SURVEY ADMINISTRATION PROCEDURES

Students were chosen randomly from among all students who enrolled at WWU as freshmen in the fall of 2003. Of 1,309 eligible students, 714 completed a 22 minute survey by telephone. The response rate for this survey is 55%. Ultimately 629 cases provided complete data for analysis. The margin of error for this survey is +/- 3.3%.

WELS Spring Survey: Final Dispositions

Completed	714
Refused	85
Ineligible	77
Incomplete	510
Total	1386
Response rate	55%

APPENDIX C: DATA QUALITY

Survey respondents strongly resemble the freshman class overall on a variety of measured characteristics. When coupled with random selection and a relatively high response rate, these findings can be considered representative of entering freshman in fall, 2003, overall.

Demographics of WELS Spring Survey Respondents

Item	WELS	All Frosh
Female	57.1%	56.2%
First Generation	30.2%	34.1%
Ethnicity		
White	80.6%	81.6%
African American	1.9%	2.0%
Hispanic	3.5%	3.2%
Asian	8.2%	8.2%
American Indian	1.8%	1.8%
Unknown	4.0%	3.2%
High School GPA		
less than 3.2	15.3%	14.6%
3.2 to 3.99	16.5%	17.7%
3.4 to 3.59	22.3%	23.2%
3.6 to 3.79	22.1%	22.6%
3.8 or more	23.7%	21.8%
Domestic Non-resident	8.1%	7.3%
Foreign	3.2%	3.1%
Running Start	14.4%	14.2%
Honors	4.5%	3.9%
Admissions Index Score		
less than 40	3.7%	3.4%
40-60	29.0%	30.0%
61-70	24.3%	24.2%
71-80	17.4%	19.9%
81 or more	24.5%	21.3%
no AI	1.1%	1.5%

APPENDIX D:
OPEN-ENDED QUESTION 2B

Question 2B: Methods used to add classes when needed or wanted courses were full.* (n=85)

	n	%
Spoke with the department, professor, department secretary; emailed the professor, department, department secretary	55	65%
Went to the class on the first day, showed up first day, sat in on the first day	11	13%
Have other students save them a spot in classfinder; hold a course for them (eg people who registered earlier than them)	8	9%
Looked at different options (general): GUR book/ other required classes; talked to a professor/ advisor about other options; looked at Fairhaven course book; classfinder	7	8%
Other	12	14%

*Percent greater than 100 due to multiple responses.

APPENDIX E:
OPEN-ENDED QUESTION 3D

Question 3D: What is your current interest? (n=169*)

	n	%		n	%
Accounting	5	3%	History	4	2%
Anthro, anthropology	4	2%	Resort management (WSU)	1	1%
Archeology	1	1%	Human services	1	1%
Art	3	2%	Humanities	1	1%
Bio, biology	6	4%	Industrial design	2	1%
Biochemistry	1	1%	Industrial tech	1	1%
Biology: botony	1	1%	International business	1	1%
Business	17	10%	Journalism	5	3%
Business: management	3	2%	Literature	1	1%
Business: marketing	1	1%	Marketing	3	2%
Chemistry	3	2%	Mathematics	3	2%
Childhood ed., elementary ed	5	3%	Nursing	2	1%
Climatology	1	1%	Outdoor recreation	1	1%
Communication	8	5%	Philosophy	4	2%
Communication sciences & disorders	1	1%	Physical therapy	1	1%
Computer science	6	4%	Plastics engineering	1	1%
Economics	10	6%	Political Science	15	9%
Education	8	5%	Pre med	1	1%
Education: HS, secondary education	2	1%	Pre-physical therapy	2	1%
Engineering	4	2%	Psychology, psych	9	5%
English	14	8%	Exercise and sports psych	1	1%
Environmental studies	6	4%	Recreation	3	2%
Environmental journalism	3	2%	Sociology	1	1%
Environmental science	3	2%	Sociology: criminology	1	1%
Environmental policy	1	1%	Spanish	6	4%
Exercise science	1	1%	Special Ed. w/ elem. endorsement	1	1%
Finance	3	2%	Sports Medicine	1	1%
Forensic science	1	1%	Sports and exercise science	2	1%
French	1	1%	Structural engineering	1	1%
Geography	1	1%	Science	2	1%
Graphic design	3	2%			

*5 students mentioned 3 areas of study. 32 students metioned 2

APPENDIX F:
OPEN-ENDED QUESTION 7B

Question 7B: Reasons students visited the Tutor Center (OM). (n=310)

Specific courses mentioned	n	%
Math*	229	74%
Philosophy, Logic	23	7%
Economics	23	7%
English	13	4%
Physics	10	3%
Sociology	6	2%
Other courses	8	3%
Services or activities mentioned		
Homework, studying, test taking	15	5%
Writing; writing help; help on papers	12	4%
To obtain info on academic probation	6	2%
Other	5	2%
For general help, calculator help, study skills	4	1%
To visit a professor / staff	4	1%

*Of the 229 students who mentioned math, 79 of them mentioned at least one specific math course: 54% mentioned Math 102; 34% mentioned Math 114 and 11% mentioned Math 115. Another 14% mentioned a variety of other classes.

Note 1: These responses were in response to the question "Did you visit the Tutorial Center in Old Main at all this year?" and "If yes, what did you use the Tutorial Center for?"

Note 2: specific course numbers can be made available on request.

APPENDIX G:
OPEN-ENDED QUESTION 11C

**Question 11C: Reasons students aren't linking t
WWU email to their other email accounts. (n=2**

	n	%
Like to have separate accounts	96	42%
Forgot, no time, too lazy, no reason	59	26%
Preference, checks both	23	10%
Not useful: too little email, rarely use WWU account	22	10%
Difficulty using computers / accounts; didn't know how	22	10%
Manage junk mail; avoid junk from one account or the other	17	7%
Rarely or never use other account	13	6%
Limited storage space for email	8	3%

APPENDIX H:
OPEN-ENDED QUESTION 12E

Question 12E: In what way did the transfer credits help or hinder? (n=278)

Helped	n	%
Decreased required/GUR coursework	155	55%
Earlier registration; get into courses they want	81	29%
Increased credits	51	18%
Helps progress to degree if dropping; taking reduced courseload	43	15%
Already has AA degree	20	7%
Helped financially	6	2%
Better prepared for college	6	2%
More flexibility; better access to major	4	1%
Other	11	4%
Hindered/Not helpful		
The credits didn't serve as GUR's; didn't get better course access	22	8%
Not enough credits; wrong courses to make a difference	7	3%
Pressure to make major decision sooner	5	2%
Haven't had many classes to help decide major	4	1%
Other	4	1%

APPENDIX I:
OPEN-ENDED QUESTION 18

Question 18: What GUR courses have had the greatest impact on your view, if any? (n=538)

Alphabetized	n	%	Most Frequent	n	%
All comp. gender / multicult. classes	2	0%	Anthropology	118	22%
All humanities classes	6	1%	Environmental Science	91	17%
All social sciences classes	2	0%	Sociology	86	16%
American Cultural Studies	6	1%	Psychology	79	15%
Anthropology	118	22%	English	76	14%
Art	4	1%	History	69	13%
Art History	5	1%	Liberal Studies	44	8%
Astronomy	6	1%	Political Science	43	8%
Biology	3	1%	Environmental Studies	36	7%
Canadian / American Studies	10	2%	Geography	27	5%
Chemistry	4	1%	Communications	26	5%
Classical Studies	6	1%	Honors	23	4%
Communications	26	5%	Economics	22	4%
East Asian Studies (Asian Studies)	7	1%	Journalism	18	3%
Economics	22	4%	Geology	11	2%
Educational Foundations	4	1%	Other	11	2%
English	76	14%	Canadian / American Studies	10	2%
Environmental Science	91	17%	Music	9	2%
Environmental Studies	36	7%	Philosophy	8	1%
Fairhaven	4	1%	Theatre Arts (Cinema)	7	1%
French	3	1%	Spanish	7	1%
Geography	27	5%	East Asian Studies (Asian Studies)	7	1%
Geology	11	2%	Classical Studies	6	1%
Health Education	1	0%	Astronomy	6	1%
History	69	13%	American Cultural Studies	6	1%
Honors	23	4%	All humanities classes	6	1%
Japanese	3	1%	Art History	5	1%
Journalism	18	3%	Management	4	1%
Liberal Studies	44	8%	Linguistics	4	1%
Linguistics	4	1%	Fairhaven	4	1%
Management	4	1%	Educational Foundations	4	1%
Mathematics	3	1%	Chemistry	4	1%
Music	9	2%	Art	4	1%
Other	11	2%	Womens Studies	3	1%
Philosophy	8	1%	Physical Education	3	1%
Physical Education	3	1%	Mathematics	3	1%
Political Science	43	8%	Japanese	3	1%
Psychology	79	15%	French	3	1%
Sociology	86	16%	Biology	3	1%
Spanish	7	1%	All social sciences classes	2	0%
Theatre Arts (Cinema)	7	1%	All comp. gender / multicult. classes	2	0%
Womens Studies	3	1%	Health Education	1	0%

APPENDIX J:
OPEN-ENDED QUESTION 30C

Question 30C: Reasons students may transfer. (n=136)

	n	%
Interested in course work that Western doesn't offer	65	48%
Wants to relocate, explore other places	22	16%
Wants to be closer to home	15	11%
Financial reasons	14	10%
Not liking Western; not fitting in	8	6%
Always wanted to or planned to go to another college	7	5%
Family wants him/her to go to a different school	5	4%
Studying abroad; may/may not come back to Western	5	4%
Doesn't get wanted classes	4	3%
Doesn't like Bellingham, weather, or Washington	3	2%
Difficulty with faculty/staff	2	1%
Bad grades	2	1%
Wants to get farther away from family	2	1%
To play soccer at a higher division or for athletics	2	1%
Class sizes: wants smaller classes, classes too large	2	1%
Other	2	1%
Didn't know	3	2%