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Selected Characteristics for a Decade of June Graduating Classes at Western Washington University: 1981 to 1991

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Report 1992-02: Selected Characteristics for a Decade of June Graduating Classes at Western Washington University: 1981-1991

The Office of Institutional Assessment and Testing (OIAT) has published reports on the June graduating class for the years 1990 and 1991. These reports led to the production of the present report, which looks back over WWU's June graduates from the years 1981 through 1991. Information for this report was obtained from the Registrar's Office, through the Student Tracking System, maintained by the Registrar's Office and supplemented by the OIAT. Data was analyzed using fundamental descriptive statistics.

Unlike the OIAT reports on graduates in 1990 and 1991, this report mainly consists of an array of tables. Interpretation of the tabular data is left to the discretion of the reader. A good deal of data was prepared, but for a variety of reasons some was left out. For anyone wishing to conduct a more detailed and thorough analysis, the complete data file is available.

In some respects, it may have been more fruitful to have profiled June graduates in three- or five-year increments; however, since the OIAT's statistical analyses must necessarily be done through the media of computer and software packages, only the data entered into the Student Tracking System could be accessed, with 1981 being the back cut-off date for such information. In truth, as the project progressed, even some of early 1980's data proved to be unreliable, or nonexistent.

The data tables have been organized into four sections: 1) general demographics; 2) academic preparation, university performance, degree granted, and college of graduation; 3) total college credits earned, and quarters attended at WWU; and 4) an ethnicity report.

Section One is straight forward, profiling general university demographics--how many males and females, transfers and natives, etc.-
-graduated from WWU during the springs of the years 1981 to 1991.

Section Two delineates such concerns as high school GPA and pre-college test scores, transfer GPA, WWU GPA, JWE scores, honors granted, degree granted, college of graduation, and other concerns. This data is analyzed by four subcategories: gender, admit status, age category, and veteran status.

Section Three is concerned with the issue of length of time needed by WWU graduates to obtain their degrees. Two data sets--total college credits earned and quarters attended at WWU--were analyzed, with focused attention paid to the following cohorts: graduates with native admit status and no transfer credits, and graduates with transfer admit status and AA degrees. These particular groups provide the highest degree of statistical accuracy when analyzing length of time needed to graduate.

Section Four is the ethnicity report, and comes with an important caveat: the numbers of American, non-Caucasian WWU graduates over the past eleven years has never been more than 56. Even if international students were included into the picture (and they should properly not be, since the designation "international" or "foreign" does not accurately reflect ethnicity--Canadians, for instance, could be, and probably are, of as many ethnic backgrounds as Americans), the highest number of non-Caucasians graduating in any one year from WWU is 73.

Because of the low numbers of ethnic-minority graduates, statistical analysis of significance between ethnic groups was not conducted. Raw percentages and numbers are presented for whatever interest they may have, but the sometimes enormous swings or vast differences in percentages or points between ethnic groups is undoubtedly due to the fact that quite often information on only one or two graduates is being presented.