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# Institutional Assessment at Western Washington University for the 1991-1993 Biennium: Final Report, April 30, 1993

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Institutional Assessment at  
Western Washington University  
for the 1991-1993 Biennium:  
Final Report  
April 30, 1993

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## Foreword and Overview

The following report is a final summary of Western Washington University's institutional assessment plan for the 1991-1993 biennium. The projects and activities listed on the separate sheets are completed or are very near completion. In addition, many of the office's activities and projects are on-going and continuous. It should be pointed out that results from some of Western's Office of Institutional Assessment and Testing's (OIAT's) projects stimulated ideas that led to follow-up research and evaluation; therefore, the OIAT continues to expect some of its anticipated findings to lead to additional research which will become part of the plan in the next biennium. Nonetheless, the OIAT, through discussions with WWU's faculty, staff, and administration, is identifying and discussing expedient and feasible areas of exploration in the assessment area.

Over the course of the 1991-93 biennium, assessment and evaluation projects included: 1) the conduct of surveys dealing with alumni and employer satisfaction with the Western educational experience; 2) the development of an "end-of-program" interview and evaluation procedure, including an inventory of departmental- and unit-level assessment practices; 3) the compilation of baseline data concerning freshmen persistence and retention, attitudes and perceptions, level of academic preparation, and proficiency measures concerning basic academic subjects (writing, quantitative skills, etc.); 4) the development of a methodological procedure to evaluate changes in writing skills as they occur across the curriculum and the course of a student's academic career; and 5) the identification of procedures to assess intermediate levels of knowledge and skill development occurring at the departmental- and unit-level involving the use of quantitative- and qualitative-based analytic techniques.

Along with the development of assessment-related procedures and policies, over the past two years WWU's assessment office was central in generating a database from which the strategic planning effort could be built. Results from OIAT alumni and employer satisfaction surveys formed the basis for institution-wide and unit-level planning--for critical assessment of both curriculum and program content. In addition, OIAT analysis led to identification of survey procedures for evaluating alumni and employers at a more subtle level of specificity. For example, the Psychology Department now surveys graduates of the clinical/counseling graduate program and uses the results to revise curriculum, add appropriate faculty, and modify internship experiences.

Additionally, results generated from OIAT's participation in the ACT Freshmen Persistence and Retention Survey, and UCLA's Cooperative Institutional Research Program led to the administration of a survey among WWU ethnic-minority students, which polled

both educational needs and avenues of procedure that could be implemented to enhance retention. Data generated by such assessment efforts are routinely shared with appropriate program heads to improve program efficiency, to encourage further study, and to meet the demands of the employment sector.

Since the OIAT's October, 1992, biannual project report, significant activities occurred that were driven and guided by the results and outcomes of several projects--especially survey data provided through alumni, former students, currently enrolled students, and admitted students who chose to enroll elsewhere. Among those activities were various workshops, retreats, and meetings attended by the staff and directors of the Advising Center, Career Services Center, and Admissions Office, along with representatives from the Office of Student Services. At these gatherings, assessment and survey outcome data were the central source of discussion. Indeed, findings from certain OIAT reports--one a campus-wide look at students' experiences, the other a look at the reasons why admitted students chose not to enroll--prompted the Advising Center to ask for, and receive assistance from the OIAT to plumb more in-depth the reasons why students do or do not use academic advising services, and when they do, which areas of advisement are strong and which need improvement.

Similarly, WWU's Provost, with the assistance of the OIAT, sponsored a day-long workshop for departmental chairs and college Deans in the fall of 1992 where the sole topic was the role of assessment in promoting and influencing change. Several faculty made presentations concerning their unit-level assessment efforts. In addition, chairs and Deans were given the opportunity to identify procedures where they can share the results of assessment efforts with each other in a forum-like setting.

Moreover, during the past two years assessment-related information in the form of survey results, data generated from the Student Tracking System, and analyses of existing assessment data files was used to guide two *major* University-wide activities. In March, 1993, Western submitted its Fifth Year Interim Report to the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges. Assessment information was used extensively in preparing various sections of the report. In February, 1992, the Board of Trustees at Western adopted strategic action guidelines for the University. Implementation of the guidelines has been strongly influenced by assessment information; and such information will continue to be provided to the University to assist in implementing action strategies. What follows is a list of selected strategic principles specifically influenced by assessment-generated findings found in the guidelines and the actions taken in the past year.

- Continuing improvement in quality will be an imperative for each of the University's on-going activities. Programs are expected to achieve quality levels that are consistent with those of a first-class university. In professional areas that usually will mean professional accreditation. In other areas, effective program reviews by peers serve as a significant measure of quality.

- The Geography/Regional Planning curriculum in Huxley College will be evaluated by external reviewers during Fall quarter, 1993, with the goal to

strengthen relationships between existing Geography/Regional Planning programs and Environmental Studies.

○ The School Counseling and Mental Health Program in Psychology has completed an initial on-site accreditation review by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs, and received a favorable report. The program will be the first one in the country to receive accreditation in the mental health concentration.

● Continuous improvement requires constant attention to outcomes. The quality of the degree granted by the University will be high and will be demonstrated by the characteristics, abilities, and skills of its graduates.

○ The Faculty Senate's Academic Coordinating Commission has approved several curricular thrusts of an interdisciplinary nature and worked with the College of Arts and Sciences to design alternatives for students to fulfill their General University Requirements (GUR's) while strengthening their liberal arts backgrounds.

○ Passage of the intermediate-level Junior Writing Examination is now mandatory and the Writing Center has been expanded to provide more writing instruction to students.

○ A Math Center has been established, similar to the Writing Center, to provide students with enhanced tutorial assistance in mathematics.

○ Fairhaven College is currently designing a new Core Curriculum which will be interdisciplinary in nature and problem oriented. The college also completed a research project using narrative student self-assessments.

○ An on-going College of Business and Economics assessment project involves both pre- and post-testing of students and provides faculty with solid information regarding the effectiveness of instructional techniques and an external validation of the course content.

○ Huxley College is working to revamp its curriculum to place greater emphasis on communication and critical thinking; 1994 course requirements will include courses emphasizing writing and oral communication skills.

○ The Faculty Senate's Academic Coordinating Commission established a standing sub-committee on assessment, charged with advising the administration and the Director of Institutional Assessment on all issues of academic assessment.

- The University will improve library holdings and access to library resources.
  - The Faculty Senate has implemented a new Library Committee which is charged with the development of a campus-wide program in library literacy/information retrieval skills.
  
- Western recognizes that the truly educated person must have an understanding of, and experiences with, diversity. The University's approach to diversity will include people, policies and programs, and will embrace issues related to special talent and ability; race, gender, ethnicity; sexual orientation; International Studies; and Ethnic/Cultural Studies.
  - Fairhaven, Arts and Sciences, and Woodring Colleges have all made progress on including issues of race, class, and gender in their curricula. Offerings through the American Cultural Studies program have been increased and it is being developed to serve a key role in the Northwestern Minority portion of the GUR.
  - Woodring College established the Center for Educational Pluralism to provide all education students with a generic experience regarding diversity in the Schools, and a resource for faculty as they prepare course materials, etc.
  - Wilson Library produced four new research guides to materials in the library, to help students find information about African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, and Native-Americans.
  - Shannon Point's Minorities in Marine Science Program has enhanced the ethnic diversity of the biology undergraduate student population. It serves as a model program both on campus and nation-wide.
  
- The University will promote professional development as a key ingredient in recruiting and retaining an active, exciting and vital faculty, staff, and administration.
  - The Faculty Senate continues to examine the possibility of a clearer, more unified approach to faculty evaluation across campus. The Senate's Committee on Faculty Development and the Enhancement of Teaching has drafted recommendations on policy for granting of Faculty Development Grants and plans to examine policies governing all forms of financial support for faculty development in both teaching and research.
  
- Structural reorganization will be used selectively to achieve improved positioning or to develop greater academic and/or administrative synergy. In each case, faculty and staff morale, university history, national developments in the affected fields, disciplinary affinities, resource utilization, and opportunities for external funding will be considered.

- The Student Support Services Office has been established through reorganizations in Student and Academic Affairs. The change will connect academic advising more closely with Academic Affairs, provide a central access point for students, and create more efficient delivery of services to students.
- The Center for Geography and Regional Planning has been transferred to Huxley. Subsequent internal reorganization resulted in a restructuring of the College into two curricular cores: Center for Environmental Sciences, and Center for Geography and Social Environmental Sciences.
- International programs have been reorganized to for a new Center for International Studies.
- The University will adopt enrollment management policies and procedures that reflect its commitment to an appropriate upper/lower division mix, student demand for courses and majors, and academic program goals.
  - All areas of the University are working to improve advising and orientation services available to transfer students. Beginning the summer of 1993, the Summerstart program will be expanded to include transfers.
  - Establishment of an Enrollment Management Group that works with the Colleges, Admissions, and the Registrar to better monitor and predict enrollment trends. The Group also serves to enhance the coordination of access to majors and progress towards degree completion.

Enrollment access is, indeed, an essential component of the University's mission. In April, 1993, the Enrollment Management Group submitted five short-term recommendations to the Provost. The formation of each recommendation was strongly influenced by assessment findings. The recommendations include:

1) Majors will be declared only through the college or department, which then notifies the Registrar. Students will be required to declare a major by the time they have completed 110 credits. If a student is not eligible for admission to the preferred major at the time of application, he/she will be declared as a pre-major and informed of the criteria for admission, or can choose another major.

Communications with native and transfer students will be improved regarding the criteria for admission to majors, procedures for application, and number of credits required for completion. A task force, created by the Provost, will identify and recommend specific actions to improve the advisement process.

2) All transfer applicants will be informed by the Admissions office of the departments and programs which have their own admissions criteria and procedures. The Admissions office will provide departments with lists of all applicants by

intended majors. Departments with their own admission requirements will send materials to all transfer applicants, including information regarding criteria and procedures for admission.

3) All community college transfer applicants will be considered as a single pool. This action would enable transfer students to make more timely progress toward the degree and provide more access.

4) Additional fees will be charged for registration beyond 20% of the number of credits required for completion of the degree. This action will help to encourage students to focus upon their intended major and to free space for other students that is currently occupied by students who take many credits beyond those required for the degree.

5) Other degree alternatives such as Social Sciences, Humanities, and General Sciences will be developed. (This item is not recommended for immediate implementation; however, the Enrollment Management Group recommends that the Academic Coordinating Committee convene the proper forum for consideration of these and other degree alternatives. These options may provide alternatives for students who prefer a broader generic degree to specialization in a single discipline, and also provide an option for students who may be denied access to the major of their choice because of limited space, but who still wish to continue their study in the broad disciplinary areas.)

During the most recent months of the 1991-93 biennium, the OIAT developed a new medium for reporting thematic summaries of assessment findings, one that has proven popular with many varied offices, departments, and committees. The Info-Fact combined the talents of OIAT personnel, Woodring College of Education's publications graphic artist, plus the in-input of seven different Western administrative offices. The result was a one-sheet hand-out of succinct, but valuable summaries of data that has drawn praise from sources as varied as the Athletic Department and the Faculty Senate's Legislative Committee. An Info-Fact was even included in the University's Fifth Year Interim Report. After receiving almost instant and universal approval, the OIAT plans to publish the Info-Fact series on a regular basis. (See Appendix A.)

Finally, the OIAT compiled a number of projects since the beginning of the 1991-1993 biennium. A list of the completed projects can be found in Appendix B. The list, however, does not reflect a number of small-scale project undertaken and completed by OIAT staff. For example, staff compiled unit-level analysis using the Student Tracking System for several departments, prepared a comprehensive sampling frame for one of Western's programs, conducted an extensive analysis of Western's persistence and retention rates for ethnic-minorities, and provided a series of data memoranda to the University's Enrollment Management Group.



BASELINE STUDENT DATA

## Maintenance of the Student Tracking System

### *Activities Completed:*

Brief description of activities: WWU's Registrar's Office compiles all academic-based information concerning student admissions and progress. This database is supplemented by others collected and/or generated by the OIAT.

Results: Demographic information supplied by the database enables the OIAT to track the academic progress of students in all academic units, and enhance analyses of student responses to questionnaires, interviews, standardized assessment instruments, and opinion surveys.

### *Works in Progress:*

Brief description: The STS supports nearly all aspects of assessment activities at WWU. The STS continues to be expanded and fine-tuned. The OIAT makes frequent use of the STS in support of data requests, report writing, and other assessment-related activities.

Projected availability of results: Not applicable.

### *Related Institutional Processes and Decisions:*

All program and academic units require detailed information concerning the characteristics and progress of selected cohorts of the student population. The information becomes part of the planning process and subsequently influences goal-directed activities, decision making, allocation of resources, and program planning.

### *Changes to Assessment Plans:*

Brief description of changes: Revised to accommodate state-level requests.

Budget adjustments made or projected: Increased allocation (to \$60,000 from \$48,000).

*Expenditure of Appropriated Assessment Funds to Date:* \$38,500

## **CIRP Administration**

### *Activities Completed:*

Brief description of activities: The Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Questionnaire is administered to all entering freshmen classes at WWU to assist enrollment management and admissions office policy, as well as policy changes in academic advisement and tutorial centers, and to enhance understanding of entering students and to facilitate student responses and developments which emerge from future studies by compiling information concerning academic and vocational goals, perceived academic competencies, values, demographic characteristics, factors which influence higher education goals and related topics.

Results: Data from the 1991 CIRP administration was received, entered into the Student Tracking System (STS), collated and analyzed; a report was written.

### *Works in Progress:*

Brief description: Analysis of data from the 1992 administration of the CIRP has been completed.

Projected availability of results: Results of the 1991 CIRP survey are available; results of the 1992 CIRP survey will be available in late spring of early summer of 1993.

### *Related Institutional Processes and Decisions:*

Results generated from the CIRP are distributed widely throughout the campus. Workshops, meetings, and retreats have been and will continue to be scheduled so that the data can enhance and facilitate decision making and program planning.

### *Changes to Assessment Plans:*

Brief description of changes: Shift to administering the CIRP on an annual basis.

Budget adjustments made or projected: None.

*Expenditure of Appropriated Assessment Funds to Date: \$6,500*

## Twenty-year CIRP Report

### *Activities Completed:*

Brief description of activities: The Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Questionnaire was administered to entering WWU freshmen during their orientation session prior to the Fall Quarter since 1971 in five- to two-year increments. The chance to compare and contrast a twenty-year period of detailed response patterns of entering freshmen in regards to their attitudes and abilities offers a unique opportunity to enhance the potential of numerous offices and committees to respond appropriately to WWU's goal to improve the quality of its undergraduate educational experience.

Results: A collated statistical package for the six CIRP surveys administered at WWU from 1971 to 1991 were obtained from CIRP administrative offices for analysis.

### *Works in Progress:*

Brief description: The data received from the CIRP program has been entered into the Student Tracking System (STS). The first half of the report--the analysis of the overall cohort--has been first-drafted and is currently being edited. The second half of the analysis, a concentrated look at gender differences, is in the drafting progress.

Projected availability of results: May, 1993.

### *Related Institutional Processes and Decisions:*

In order to stay current with the rapidly changing demographics of the entering freshmen class at WWU, the CIRP questionnaire will be administered yearly in the projected future. Results generated from this report will be distributed widely throughout the campus, and will most assuredly facilitate decision making and program planning.

### *Changes to Assessment Plans:*

Brief description of changes: None.

Budget adjustments made or projected: None at this time.

*Expenditure of Appropriated Assessment Funds to Date: \$7,200*

## Minority/Non-Minority Retention Survey

### *Activities Completed:*

Brief description of activities: To examine the retention rates, perceptions of WWU, and WWU's diversity climate in a matched sample of minority and non-minority students. Results should inform evaluations and planning for every academic unit and for appropriate student life offices.

Results: Because WWU enrolls a small proportion of minority students, all 575 African- American, Hispanic, and Native American students who had enrolled at WWU at any time between the Fall Quarter of 1986 and the Fall Quarter of 1989 were sampled. A parallel sample of non-minority students was selected at random, after matching date of entry to WWU. After correction for individuals who never arrived at WWU, or whose ethnicity was ambiguous, the final sample was 1123. After mailings, extensive tracking, and telephone follow-up, interviews with 59.2% of the individuals was completed.

### *Works in Progress:*

Brief description: Initial phase completed.

Projected availability of results: Periodic reports.

### *Related Institutional Processes and Decisions:*

Addresses policies concerning retention and concerning issues of ethnic diversity and the climate of diversity in the student body.

### *Changes to Assessment Plans:*

Brief description of changes: Activity shifted to on-going basis.

Budget adjustments made or projected: None.

*Expenditure of Appropriated Assessment Funds to Date: \$6,870*

INTERMEDIATE ASSESSMENT OF QUANTITATIVE  
and WRITING SKILLS & OTHER APPROPRIATE  
INTERMEDIATE ASSESSMENT

## Math Placement Test

### *Activities Completed:*

Brief description of activities: Students are sent an MPT registration form with their admissions packets prior to entry. Math tests are given throughout the state in a coordinated program among the four-year institutions, and through the Testing Center on Western's campus. With certain exceptions (high pre-college test scores, performance on the Math Achievement Test), students cannot enroll in 100-level and certain 200-level courses in mathematics without having taken the MPT.

Results: Students are, as critically as possible, placed into mathematics courses appropriate to their skill level.

### *Works in Progress:*

Brief description: Administration of the MPT is an on-going project.

Projected availability of results: Not applicable.

### *Related Institutional Processes and Decisions:*

The Math Placement Test (MPT) is consistent with the attempt to maximize the educational experience of students by assisting in accurate course placement. It also allows better instruction by making the classes more homogeneous and by letting the instructors assume certain prerequisites.

### *Changes to Assessment Plans:*

Brief description of changes: None.

Budget adjustments made or projected: None.

*Expenditure of Appropriated Assessment Funds to Date:* \$2,900

## **Math Placement Test Analysis and Follow-up**

### *Activities Completed:*

Brief description of activities: To follow up a 1991 report, in April, 1992, analyses were conducted into the relationship of the three levels of the MPT (Basic Algebra, Intermediate Algebra, and Pre-Calculus) with mathematics course selection and final mathematics course grade.

Results: The report discovered that the changes in cut-off score requirements for entrance into mathematics courses facilitated by the 1991 report had in most cases brought into better alignment the relationship between MPT score and the chance of receiving a C- or better in the mathematics course enrolled in.

### *Works in Progress:*

Brief description: 1993 report on MPT cut-off score efficiency will begin in Spring.

Projected availability of results: The initial 1991 report, and the 1992 report are both currently available.

### *Related Institutional Processes and Decisions:*

The 1991 report discovered that cut-off scores on the Intermediate Algebra Test may have been too low. Students who enrolled with scores below, at, or slightly above these cut-offs had, in many cases, only a slim chance of passing the course. While conversely, cut-off scores on the Pre-Calculus Test for admission to many courses may have been too high. Students who had a reasonable chance of passing these courses would be denied admission.

The report suggested that MPT scores be re-evaluated and new cut-off scores be established. The Mathematics Department took the recommendations into consideration, implementing new cut-off scores during the Fall Quarter of 1991. In light of the better efficiency indicated by the 1992 MPT cut-off score report, it seems imperative to continue to monitor the MPT through yearly analysis.

### *Changes to Assessment Plans:*

Brief description of changes: None.

Budget adjustments made or projected: None.

*Expenditure of Appropriated Assessment Funds to Date:* \$6,250



## Analysis of Writing Skills

### *Activities Completed:*

Brief description of activities: During the 1990-91 academic year, ACT's CAAP Essay Test was administered to a cohort of English 100 and English 101 students. The CAAP Essay Test was administered again during the 1991-92 academic year.

Results: The report helped to change admission policies to English 101 courses: students in English 100 are now encouraged to enroll in English 101 in the following quarter by having spaces reserved for them. Analysis of the CAAP data, which quantified the ability to write analytically at the Freshmen English level has given the English Composition Program a point of reference, which could, in conjunction with other factors, influence many curricula changes. As well, the value of English 100 to performance levels in English 101 was quantified. Finally, by comparing national and local scoring of the same instrument, the CAAP Essay Test became (and have become) an important basis of the Composition Program's staff development and a way of directing attention to the larger, rhetorical concerns of WWU's students' writing.

### *Works in Progress:*

Brief description: The CAAP Essay Test will be given once per biennium.

Projected availability of results: Report available as of August, 1991.

### *Related Institutional Processes and Decisions:*

The CAAP Essay Test established a data-based vocabulary to assist decisions regarding direction of writing skills programs. Results help the Expository Writing Committee reach planning decisions for writing at WWU. Results will aid in understanding student success in the required Junior Writing Exam.

### *Changes to Assessment Plans:*

Brief description of changes: None.

Budget adjustments made or projected: None.

*Expenditure of Appropriated Assessment Funds to Date:* \$6,500

## Fairhaven College Student Portfolio Analysis

### *Activities Completed:*

Brief description of activities: A stratified sample of 125 former Fairhaven students dating back to 1980 was drawn. Samples of the students' writing were drawn from their record files. A selection of three sets of self-assessments from the students first year in their program were compared with samples taken two years later. Writing samples were analyzed using Perry's scheme for assessing intellectual development.

Results: Preliminary results were useful in expanding the services of Western's Writing Center. In addition, results will be useful in predicting Fairhaven College's student success on their intermediate level Junior Writing Exam, which all students must pass before they can graduate.

### *Works in Progress:*

Brief description: Data analysis is complete and the principal investigators are preparing a technical report.

Projected availability of results: A final report will be completed by May, 1993.

### *Related Institutional Processes and Decisions:*

WWU is committed to providing and creating academic experiences that promote writing competency. Fairhaven College relies heavily on writing activities for the assessment of student growth and development, instructor effectiveness, and curriculum matters.

### *Changes to Assessment Plans:*

Brief description of changes: Extension of project deadline to allow for more detailed analysis.

Budget adjustments made or projected: None.

*Expenditure of Appropriated Assessment Funds to Date:* \$2,650

## Academic Advising Report

### *Activities Completed:*

Brief description of activities: A growing set of surveys of WWU students and alumni has found satisfaction with advising to be lower than satisfaction with other aspects of WWU. To address this issue, both findings from previous surveys and findings from a special set of questions focusing on advising included in the 1992 alumni survey were combined. It was decided to utilize responses only from those students who had used advising services, since the issue of encouraging the use of such services was an entirely different study.

Results: Preliminary findings suggest that the specificity of a student's inquiry had much to do with how much or little a student is satisfied with advising. The more specific the line of questioning--for instance, issues of graduation or GUR requirements--the more satisfied with the advising received. The less specific the line of questioning--for instance, issues of career or major choice--the less satisfied with advising received.

### *Works in Progress:*

Brief description: A preliminary report is being edited.

Projected availability of results: May, 1993.

### *Related Institutional Processes and Decisions:*

WWU is committed to constant improvement of all departments, majors and units. As reports indicate potential areas where improvement can be facilitated by further study, the OIAT responds to requests for that assistance in as timely a fashion as is possible. Targeting specific areas of improvement from general reports is part and parcel of the work of assessment.

### *Changes to Assessment Plans:*

Brief description of changes: No changes, only to continue to utilize existing reports and on-going data analysis to create more focused attempts at implementing the university's strategic plan.

Budget adjustments made or projected: None.

*Expenditure of Appropriated Assessment Funds to Date:* \$3,110

ALUMNI and STUDENT SATISFACTION SURVEYS

## Graduating Class Profiles for 1990, 1991, and 1992

### *Activities Completed:*

Brief description of activities: Using the Student Tracking System, data on the June graduating classes was generated and provided to the OIAT, which in turn analyzed the data using statistical routines provided by SPSS-X software.

Results: The full reports on WWU's June, 1990 and 1991, graduating classes were sent to the administrators, Deans, student services offices, certain unit and program area heads, and the Assessment Committee of the HEC Board. Summaries of the reports were published in FAST, WWU's faculty and staff newsletter.

### *Works in Progress:*

Brief description: This is an on-going, annual project.

Projected availability of results: Both reports are currently published and available.

### *Related Institutional Processes and Decisions:*

WWU has identified the improvement of the quality of its undergraduate educational experience as one of its top priorities. Establishing a database of characteristics of its graduating classes provides the university community with a continuing analysis of demographic and academic trends vital to decision making and program planning.

### *Changes to Assessment Plans:*

Brief description of changes: Analysis has shifted to include all students who graduated during the calendar year. Previous analysis was limited to June graduates.

Budget adjustments made or projected: None.

*Expenditure of Appropriated Assessment Funds to Date: \$7,450*

## Graduating Class Profile: 1981 through 1991

### *Activities Completed:*

Brief description of activities: Using the Student Tracking System, data on the June graduating classes for the years 1981 through 1991 was generated and provided to the OIAT, which in turn analyzed the data using statistical routines provided by SPSS-X software.

Results: The full report was sent to the administrators, Deans, student services offices, certain unit and program area heads, and the Assessment Committee of the HEC Board. A summary of the report is published in FAST, WWU's faculty and staff newsletter. Data from this report have been utilized in the preparation of other OIAT reports.

### *Works in Progress:*

Brief description: As data become more accessible through the up-grading of database systems, more in-depth longitudinal analyses will be forthcoming.

Projected availability of results: Available as of April, 1992.

### *Related Institutional Processes and Decisions:*

WWU has identified the improvement of the quality of its undergraduate educational experience as one of its top priorities. Establishing a database of characteristics of its graduating classes provides the university community with a continuing analysis of demographic and academic trends vital to decision making and program planning.

### *Changes to Assessment Plans:*

Brief description of changes: None.

Budget adjustments made or projected: None.

*Expenditure of Appropriated Assessment Funds to Date: \$3,850*

## **Alumni Attitudes and Perceptions: 1987 & 1989**

### *Activities Completed:*

Brief description of activities: By combining the results obtained from two previous surveys--the 1990 survey of 1989 graduates, and the 1987 senior class surveyed in 1987 then again in 1991--a data base sufficiently large to generate reports down to all but the smallest of academic units was created.

Results: The data were analyzed, and individualized reports germane to each and every academic unit at WWU were written, published, and distributed.

### *Works in Progress:*

Brief description: Project completed.

Projected availability of results: Available as of June, 1992.

### *Related Institutional Processes and Decisions:*

Partially as a result of input from this and other alumni surveys, and other assessment reports, a workshop series was initiated for Deans and Department Chairs emphasizing different procedures, strategies, and programs to improve academic quality. Results also have an impact on other administrative decision making, and on policy and planning activities, and are relevant to department and unit self-evaluations, and to evaluations of General University Requirements (GURs), student life services, facilities, advising, instructional quality, etc. For example, the Office of Academic Advising Services used some of the results to restructure and reorganize the nature of their services.

### *Changes to Assessment Plans:*

Brief description of changes: None.

Budget adjustments made or projected: None.

*Expenditure of Appropriated Assessment Funds to Date:* \$25,000

## 1990 Alumni Survey of the Class of 1989

### *Activities Completed:*

Brief description of activities: All individuals graduating with a bachelor's degree between the Summer Quarter of 1988 and the Spring Quarter of 1989 were sampled. After two mailings and a period of intense tracking and phone interviewing, we completed interviews with 73.6% of the sample, well above average quality standards for this type of survey.

Results: Preliminary results have been presented at several on-campus seminars, retreats, and workshops. Survey data are merged with the Student Tracking System to allow the most flexible and thorough analysis. In addition, selected data elements from other survey's are identical to elements in this survey, allowing us to compile data, building a large enough number of interviews to provide meaningful data to department-level units.

### *Works in Progress:*

Brief description: Data analysis was completed and report writing has begun.

Projected availability of results: The report should be completed by June, 1993.

### *Related Institutional Processes and Decisions:*

Major departments, as well as Deans and the Provost, are given systematic information on employment, life quality, and perceptions of WWU among students graduating with each major and for all students. These data are relevant to all departmental self-evaluations, and to evaluations of General University Requirements (GURs), student life services, facilities, advising, instructional quality, etc. In addition, this particular survey asked a special set of questions assessing each specific area of our GURs, and questions concerning the university's stated goals of increasing expectations of students and increasing diversity.

### *Changes to Assessment Plans:*

Brief description of changes: Extension of deadline.

Budget adjustments made or projected:

*Expenditure of Appropriated Assessment Funds to Date: \$15,600*



## 1992 Alumni Survey of the Class of 1991

### *Activities Completed:*

Brief description of activities: All individuals graduating with a bachelor's degree between the Summer Quarter of 1990, and the Spring Quarter of 1991 will be sampled. Surveys will be mailed, followed by reminders to the entire sample. Intensive tracking efforts will be conducted before the remaining sample is contacted for telephone interviews. A 70% completed rate was achieved.

Results: Preliminary results have been presented at several on-campus seminars, retreats, and workshops. Survey data are merged with the Student Tracking System to allow the most flexible and thorough analysis.

### *Works in Progress:*

Brief description: The project coordinator is currently preparing the final report.

Projected availability of results: June, 1993.

### *Related Institutional Processes and Decisions:*

These data are relevant to all departmental self-evaluations, and to evaluations of General University Requirements (GURs), student life services, facilities, advising, instructional quality, etc. Survey data are merged with the Student Tracking System to allow the most flexible and thorough analysis. In addition, a large portion of this survey will be identical to questions on the parallel alumni survey of 1990, and some are also repeated in our surveys of 1987 seniors. This will allow the compilation of a combined dataset with ever-increasing numbers of cases offering evaluations of departments and of selected aspects of the entire university. The large sample will allow meaningful feedback to small units.

### *Changes to Assessment Plans:*

Brief description of changes: Extension of project deadline.

Budget adjustments made or projected: None.

*Expenditure of Appropriated Assessment Funds to Date:* \$14,100

## Human Services Program Off-Campus Alumni Survey

### *Activities Completed:*

Brief description of activities: To identify and describe the perceptions and attitudes of graduates of WWU's HSP located in Everett, Washington. After a year of development, all of the Everett-based alumni of the Human Services Program (HSP) were sent copies of the specialized alumni survey.

Results: A final sample was obtained, the data entered into the Student Tracking System (STS), and statistically analyzed.

### *Works in Progress:*

Brief description: The project was completed.

Projected availability of results: Results were released in February, 1993, and are available through OIAT.

### *Related Institutional Processes and Decisions:*

The offering of extension and off-campus courses are a vital part of WWU's mission, as is the assessment of the effectiveness and relevance of those programs. With the positive influence of such OIAT reports as the HEC Board-mandated biannual alumni reports, WWU's self-generated alumni report of 1989 grads and 1987 seniors, and department-generated alumni reports such as the Everett HSP survey, the OIAT hopes and expects other academic units to pursue as part of their overall assessment plan the polling of their graduates.

### *Changes to Assessment Plans:*

Brief description of changes: Extension of deadline

Budget adjustments made or projected: None.

*Expenditure of Appropriated Assessment Funds to Date: \$2,275*

## Student Experience Survey

### *Activities Completed:*

Brief description of activities: A version of a survey originally developed and used by Princeton University was modified for use at WWU. The instrument was administered to a random sample of 800 students enrolled at WWU during the Spring Quarter, 1991. The survey polled attitudes of the overall student population, as well as examined gender differences in some detail.

Results: Data were collected and entered into the Student Tracking System (STS), then analyzed; a report was written and published.

### *Works in Progress:*

Brief description: Project completed.

Projected availability of results: Available as of July, 1992.

### *Related Institutional Processes and Decisions:*

Along with other assessment reports (notably the Student Non-enrollment Survey), impelled other offices to instigate assessment plans, including surveys and reports, that would facilitate their efficiency. One of these plans will include direct input from survey respondents of the Western Experience Survey. As well as becoming part of WWU's overall strategic planning activities, results have also led to the planning of a retreat sponsored by the Student Services Offices. Two of the student services offices are now conducting focus group activities to identify specific problem areas and recommendations for improvement.

### *Changes to Assessment Plans:*

Brief description of changes: None.

Budget adjustments made or projected: None.

*Expenditure of Appropriated Assessment Funds to Date: \$1,650*

## Student Non-Enrollment Survey

### *Activities Completed:*

Brief description of activities: A list of WWU applicants who were admitted but did not enroll was obtained from admissions office. A random sample of 2000 possible freshmen and transfers was drawn; all of the ethnic-minority applicants were included in the sample. An ACT developed questionnaire, the Survey of Current Activities and Plans, was mailed to the sample. Three follow-up reminders were sent; there was a 49.1% return rate. The data was processed and analyzed; a report was written and published.

Results: The report led to the implementation by the Admissions Office of 50 or more discrete changes in policy.

### *Works in Progress:*

Brief description: Project completed.

Projected availability of results: October, 1992.

### *Related Institutional Processes and Decisions:*

Results became part of the accelerated planning and policy analysis, and of decision making activities at WWU. Besides assisting the Admissions Office, the report impelled related offices (Career Planning and Placement, Academic Advising, and others) to instigate assessment plans, including surveys and reports, that would help facilitate their efficiency.

### *Changes to Assessment Plans:*

Brief description of changes: To continue to produce reports of an edifying and facilitating nature.

Budget adjustments made or projected: None.

*Expenditure of Appropriated Assessment Funds to Date: \$4,800*

## **Ethnic-Minority Student Opinion Survey**

### *Activities Completed:*

Brief description of activities: A proportional sample of ethnic-minority undergraduate students was drawn from the Registrar's list of currently enrolled students. The projected sample of 150 students will complete a questionnaire intended to provide information about the University's services, academic environment, and instructional practices.

Results: Survey results will be used to guide policy and planning in all facets of the academic and student service areas.

### *Works in Progress:*

Brief description: Project was completed.

Projected availability of results: Available through the Multicultural Services Center.

### *Related Institutional Processes and Decisions:*

One of WWU's principal goals is to actively recruit and retain ethnic-minority students. Along with developing an intensive recruiting campaign, the University is committed to strengthening existing student support services and curricular offerings to meet ethnic-minority student needs.

### *Changes to Assessment Plans:*

Brief description of changes: None.

Budget adjustments made or projected: None.

*Expenditure of Appropriated Assessment Funds to Date:* \$950

## **Assessment of Student Health Attitudes and Behaviors**

### *Activities Completed:*

Brief description of activities: To identify and estimate WWU student attitudes and behaviors concerning their orientations to physical and mental health, a comprehensive questionnaire was developed and field tested on a small sample of students. Results will focus attention on the health and mental health needs of WWU students, and will be used to assist the development of a Wellness Program, as well as enhance health-related seminars, workshops, and activities such as may occur through the Substance Abuse Prevention Center, and the Outreach and Patient Education Office of the Health Center. During the 1990-91 academic year,

Results: Preliminary results have already spun off a separate survey questionnaire developed to assess student attitudes towards drug and alcohol use. The survey is sponsored by WWU's Wellness Center.

### *Works in Progress:*

Brief description: Results are being analyzed and a report is under development.

Projected availability of results: June, 1993.

### *Related Institutional Processes and Decisions:*

WWU holds the position that health and wellness attitudes and corresponding behavior can and do affect academic persistence and progress in and out of the classroom. WWU intends to create an atmosphere which meets the full complement of needs to enhance the student experience.

### *Changes to Assessment Plans:*

Brief description of changes: Extension of deadline.

Budget adjustments made or projected: None.

*Expenditure of Appropriated Assessment Funds to Date:* \$2,250

END-OF-PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

## CIRP College Student Survey Administration

### *Activities Completed:*

Brief description of activities: The Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) College Student Survey is the follow-up questionnaire to the CIRP entering freshmen questionnaire. Its purpose is to track and quantify the changes in attitudes and perceptions of students after a proscribed period of time, usually two or four years after taking the CIRP freshmen survey. Results will help administrators, faculty and staff better understand the nature of change wrought by the academic and social structure of WWU, and should assist all offices, departments and units in a myriad of administrative decisions.

### *Works in Progress:*

Brief description: Survey forms were ordered from the Higher Education Research Institute. A list of students who had taken the CIRP freshmen survey in 1989 was compiled from OIAT records, and admit status was ascertain. From the original cohort, nearly 500 current students were identified. Survey forms were received in April and mailed to them, along with cover letters.

Projected availability of results: Survey forms will be sent for computations by the end of May. Analysis of the data will begin in July. Report writing will begin thereafter, with a final report available by mid-Fall, 1993.

### *Related Institutional Processes and Decisions:*

Results from CIRP freshmen surveys have been detailed, summarized, and of considerable use to many offices, departments and units at WWU. It is anticipated that an extension of the kind of knowledge generated by the CIRP freshmen survey will continue with this new project. Not only will interested parties have a profile of WWU students as they enter the university, quantifiable data will be available that speaks to how WWU has changed the attitudes and perceptions of those students.

### *Changes to Assessment Plans:*

Brief description of changes: Potentially will be administered, like the CIRP freshmen survey, on an annual basis. Added to tasks to extend knowledge about institutional changes.

Budget adjustments made or projected: None.

*Expenditure of Appropriated Assessment Funds to Date:* \$1,560



APPENDIX A: Info-Fact

# InfoFact 1993

## WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

### Facts and Profile

WWU, a comprehensive liberal arts university in northwest Washington state, is a highly regarded academic institution set between the North Cascades National Park and the San Juan Islands. WWU is the third largest institution of higher education in the state, with 10,150 students. This is one of a series of profiles of the past, present, and future students of Western.

#### GENERAL POPULATION

- Over 93% of students expressed satisfaction with their overall Western experience, 85% with the quality of instruction they were receiving, and 85% with their academic experience.
- During the 1991-92 academic year, over \$1.3 million in scholarships were awarded to WWU students, a 25% increase over 1990-91.
- WWU employs 445 full-time equivalent faculty, 88% of whom have full or terminal degrees. The student-faculty ratio is 18:1.
- The one-year fall-to-fall retention rate for entering freshmen at WWU has averaged over 77% since 1985. A study finds that a major factor in the strong freshmen retention rate is the beauty of the campus and surrounding area.
- The two-year fall-to-fall retention for entering freshmen has averaged over 64.5% since 1985, and has risen steadily from 1985 through 1990.
- Of students who entered WWU as freshmen, the percentage of those graduating within five years has risen from 35.8% of the 1985 class, to 41.3% of the 1987 class - competitive with national averages.

#### STATISTICS

Western has received nearly 30,000 applications over the past five years for roughly 7,000 open admission spots.

Reasons why 1992 WWU freshmen chose WWU

- Size 56.0%
- Academic reputation 52.1%
- Low Tuition 27.5%
- Grads get good jobs 24.5%

The estimated parental income of the 1992 freshmen class

- Less than 14,999 4.4%
- 15,000 to 29,999 10.4%
- 30,000 to 49,999 25.8%
- 50,000 to 74,999 34.9%
- 75,000 or more 24.5%

#### WESTERN ATHLETICS

In 1992-93, over 380 students participated in 16 varsity sports for Western. Eight sports are offered each for men and women, and 41% of the participating athletes are women, highest among all Washington universities. Athletes in 8 sports achieved All-American honors in 1992. The average GPA for Western's athletes was 3.12.

#### GRADUATES & ALUMNI

- Of the over 37,000 alumni that still live in Washington State, 52% live in the metropolitan Snohomish, King, and Pierce County area, and 25% live in Whatcom and Skagit Counties.
- Over three-quarters (79.6%) of WWU alumni were "very satisfied" or "mostly satisfied" with the quality of instruction within their majors.
- Similarly, over 80% of employers of WWU graduates were "very satisfied" with their job performance overall.

- When asked how well graduates were prepared for the job they were hired to do in relation to expectations, employers rated WWU grads as much or a little better in math skills (68.6%), broad educational background (66.7%), and specific job skills required (66.4%).
- For 1989, 1990, and 1991 graduates who entered WWU as freshmen, graduation rates reflected the national average of four-and-one-half years.

• InfoFact 01-93 •

#### 1992 FRESHMEN

- WWU was the first college of choice for 77.4% of entering 1992 freshmen.
- When asked the highest degree they planned to earn (anywhere), 76.5% said a master's or better.
- During fall quarter 1992, 91.0% of entering freshmen lived in dorms, compared to 32.6% of the total student population.
- A BA degree or better had been earned by 62.2% of the fathers and 52.2% of the mothers of 1992 freshmen.
- Ethnic-minority students comprised 13.8% of WWU's 1992 freshmen class, the most ethnically diverse ever.
- The average high school GPA for 1992 freshmen was 3.46, with a middle 50% GPA range of 3.28 to 3.77, making them the most academically prepared freshmen class to date.
- The 1992 freshmen class included ten National Merit finalists, 8 Washington State scholars, 26 students with a high school GPA of 4.0, and 123 students with a high school GPA of 3.9 or better.
- This incoming class met or exceeded the recommended years of high school study as follows: English (4 years), 98.2%; mathematics (3), 97.6%; and physical or biological sciences (2), 97.4%.
- The 1992 freshmen benefitted from a new, automated review and awarding system implemented by the Student Financial Resources Office. Awards or estimated awards were sent to 58.7% of the class, compared to 13.0% the year before.

- For those same years, graduates earned an average of 203 credits. Most degree programs require 180 credits.
- Again for those years, graduation rates for transfers with AA degrees also reflected the national average.
- A 1991 Career Service Center report on 1989-90 graduates found that 89% of WWU grads were working in Washington State; and that the average wage for those with BA degrees was \$23,000 for those in non-education jobs, and \$20,000 for those in education.

APPENDIX B:  
Annotated Bibliography of  
OIAT Reports

Western Washington University  
Office of Institutional Assessment and Testing  
Technical Report Series  
(1991-1993 Biennium)

Thorndike-Christ, T.K., Andrieu-Parker, J.M., Trimble, J.E. (1991, June). An Addendum to The Math Placement Tests: Relationships to Mathematics Course Performance, Mathematics Course Selection, and Other Predictors of Academic Achievement (Report 1991-06a). Bellingham, WA: Office of Institutional Assessment and Testing, Western Washington University. *Extended the analysis of the above report to include the basic algebra MPT.*

Thorndike-Christ, T.K., Andrieu-Parker, J.M., Trimble, J.E. (1991, June). A Comparative Analysis of the Academic Performance of Native and Transfer Students (Report 1991-07). Bellingham, WA: Office of Institutional Assessment and Testing, Western Washington University. *The second of two reports looking for variance in the academic performance of native (entered WWU as a freshmen) and two-year transfer students; found no effective difference in the academic performance between the two.*

McKinney, G.R., Andrieu-Parker, J.M., Trimble, J.E. (1991, August). Analysis of Student Essay Writing Skills in Entry-Level English Composition Courses at Western Washington University (Report 1991-08). Bellingham, WA: Office of Institutional Assessment and Testing, Western Washington University. *Commissioned by WWU's Composition Program in the Department of English, this report analyzed the results of graded writing samples taken from students in English 100 and 101 classes; like the MPT report, the study resulted in positive internal policy changes.*

McKinney, G.R., Andrieu-Parker, J.M., Trimble, J.E. (1992, January). A Profile of Selected Characteristics of the Spring 1991 Western Washington University Graduating Class (Report 1992-01). Bellingham, WA: Office of Institutional Assessment and Testing, Western Washington University. *Annual report profiling WWU graduates: GPA, major, college of graduation, etc.*

McKinney, G.R., Andrieu-Parker, J.M., Trimble, J.E. (1992, April). Selected Characteristics for a Decade of June Graduating Classes at Western Washington University: 1981 to 1991 (Report 1992-02). Bellingham, WA: Office of Institutional Assessment and Testing, Western Washington University. *Profiled WWU Spring graduating classes 1981 to 1991; included analysis by admit status, ethnicity, age, and gender while looking at GPA, major, college of graduation, quarters and credits taken, etc.*

McKinney, G.R., Andrieu-Parker, J.M., Trimble, J.E. (1992, April). An Analysis of the Effects of a Readjustment of the Math Placement Test Cutoff Scores (Report 1992-03). Bellingham, WA: Office of Institutional Assessment and Testing, Western Washington University. *A follow-up one year later to the MPT analysis; concluded that the new cut-off scores utilized were effective at placing students in mathematics courses appropriate to their skill level.*

Simpson, C., McKinney G.R., Andrieu-Parker, J.M., Trimble, J.E. (1992, June). Western Washington University Alumni Attitudes and Perceptions of Their Undergraduate Experiences--1987 and 1989 (Report 1992-04). Bellingham, WA: Office of Institutional Assessment and Testing, Western Washington University. *A report that combined data from two similar surveys that in addition to an overall analysis, allowed reportage to all but the smallest of academic units at WWU.*

Gould, G.S., McKinney, G.R., Andrieu-Parker, J.M., Trimble, J.E. (1992, July). Western Experience Survey (Report 1992-05). Bellingham, WA: Office of Institutional Assessment and Testing, Western Washington University. *A student experience survey with a particular interest in gender issues; found that overall WWU provided a positive environment for all students, and particularly for females.*

McKinney, G.R., Andrieu-Parker, J.M., Trimble, J.E. (August, 1992). The Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Survey of Western Washington University Freshmen for the 1991 Incoming Class (Report 1992-06). Bellingham, WA: Office of Institutional Assessment and Testing, Western Washington University. *Findings from the 1991 CIRP survey; the survey measures the attitudes and perceptions of first-time, in-coming Freshmen.*

Wharton, D.A., McKinney, G.R., Andrieu-Parker, J.M., Trimble, J.E. (September, 1992). Chose Not to Enroll: Survey Results of Nonenrolled Students Admitted to Western Washington University (Report 1992-07). Bellingham, WA: Office of Institutional Assessment and Testing, Western Washington University. *Commissioned by the Admissions Office, the report analyzed findings from a survey of students admitted to WWU who ultimately chose not to enroll at WWU.*

Hayes, P.E., McKinney, G.R., Andrieu-Parker, J.M., Trimble, J.E. (January, 1993). The Everett Human Services Program: Alumni Attitudes and Perceptions (Report 1993-01). Bellingham, WA: Office of Institutional Assessment and Testing, Western Washington University. *Commissioned by the Everett Human Services Program, this report analyzed the findings from a survey of program graduates. Overall, alumni were well satisfied with their education; moreover, most were working within the local area.*

McKinney, G.R., Andrieu-Parker, J.M. Trimble, J.E., (February, 1993). The Evolving Character of Western Washington University Freshmen: Analyses of Surveys from 1971 through 1991 (Report 1993-02). Bellingham, WA: Office of Institutional Assessment and Testing, Western Washington University. *Using data compiled from six CIRP surveys given at regular intervals between 1971 and 1991, this report tracks the changing attitudes and perceptions of in-coming Freshmen at WWU. Some findings indicated unwavering change; others indicated a cyclic return to previously held values.*

Simpson, C., Gregson, J., Clark, L. (May, 1993). Academic Advising at Western: Some Feedback from Alumni (Report 1993-02). Bellingham, WA: Office of Institutional Assessment and Testing, Western Washington University. *Commissioned by the Academic Advising Office, data from earlier alumni surveys plus data generated by special survey question on the most recent alumni survey was combined to measure the effectiveness of advisement for those students utilizing its services.*

To receive copies of any or all of the above reports, please contact Gary McKinney in the Office of Institutional Assessment and Testing at Western Washington University, 516 High Street, Old Main 120, Bellingham, WA, 98225, or telephone at (206) 650-3080.