

Assurance Argument

Western Illinois University - IL

Review date: 3/29/2021

1 - Mission

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

1.A - Core Component 1.A

The institution's mission is articulated publicly and operationalized throughout the institution.

1. The mission was developed through a process suited to the context of the institution.
2. The mission and related statements are current and reference the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission and related statements identify the nature, scope and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services the institution provides.
4. The institution's academic offerings, student support services and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
5. The institution clearly articulates its mission through public information, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans or institutional priorities.

Argument

1.A.1: The Western Illinois University statement of mission, vision, and core values was originally approved by the WIU Board of Trustees (BOT) in June 2004 as part of the [2004 Higher Values in Higher Education](#) strategic plan after an 18-month writing and development process led by a representative group of 38 faculty, administrators, staff, and students from the Macomb and Quad Cities campuses. The mission was subsequently revised, as discussed in Core Component 1.A.2.

1.A.2: Western's mission and related statements are current. The University strategic plan and associated mission and vision have been updated three times ([2008-18](#); [2012-22](#); [2017-27](#)) and reflect Western's commitment to continuous improvement. The mission, vision, and core values incorporated in the [University's 10-year strategic plans](#) are formally reviewed and updated every five years, most recently in [2017-18](#) by the [Social Responsibility Task Force](#) comprised of faculty, administrators, staff, and community members.

[Western's mission statement](#) reflects emphases in instruction; scholarship, research, and creative work; clinical and public service; economic development; and cultural purpose, as follows:

“Western Illinois University empowers students, faculty, and staff to lead dynamic and diverse communities. We provide student-centered undergraduate and graduate programs characterized by innovative teaching, research, and service, grounded in interdisciplinary, regional, and global

perspectives. We engage our students in educational opportunities guided by a professional and diverse faculty and staff in collaboration with alumni and community partners.”

Together, the mission, vision, and core values statements define the long-term goals (vision), daily operations (mission), and educational experience (values) provided by Western and inform the University’s strategic planning. Western’s [four core values](#) (academic excellence, educational opportunity, personal growth, and social responsibility) serve as the organizational framework for mission-specific goals and priorities expressed in our strategic plans. For example, within [Higher Values in Higher Education 2017-2027](#), the University community has developed a strategic action plan organized around the following goals:

- Enrich Academic Excellence
- Advance Educational Opportunity
- Support Personal Growth
- Promote Social Responsibility

1.A.3: Western clearly articulates its commitment to serve the region. The nature and scope of educational offerings at Western range from its [original commitment in 1899 to teacher preparation](#) for grammar schools to [current innovative programming](#) in the fine arts, humanities, social and natural sciences, business, technology, human services, agriculture, and other professional and pre-professional programs. The numbers of undergraduate majors, minors, graduate programs, and certificates are discussed in Core Components 1.A.4 and 3.A.3. These programs align with the mission to empower “students, faculty, and staff to lead dynamic and diverse communities” through innovative programs “grounded in interdisciplinary, regional, and global perspectives.”

As stated in our educational opportunity core value, Western is “committed to providing accessible, high quality educational programs and financial support for our students.” We serve traditional and post-traditional students from Illinois, the United States, and around the world in a variety of on-campus, online, and hybrid formats. In Fall 2020, approximately 84% of enrolled students were from Illinois and 3.4% were international. According to [IBHE calculations](#), 61.1% of our undergraduates come from urban areas and 26.3% come from rural areas. WIU provides higher education [access to at-risk populations](#) in school districts defined by the U.S. Department of Education as “rural,” “rural distant,” and “rural remote” through specialized [dual enrollment programming](#).

Western identifies and serves constituents through constant evaluation, revision, and evolution of our admissions requirements for both undergraduate and graduate students. These requirements are clearly stated in their respective catalogs: [Undergraduate Catalog](#) and [Graduate Catalog](#). For undergraduate students who do not meet all published requirements, but who meet some admissions requirements that indicate potential for success, the [Reach program](#) (formerly called OAS for the Office of Academic Services) offered through the [Office of Academic Services](#) allows an alternative admission opportunity. Between 2011-2020, 2,718 students were admitted to Western through this program. For more information on our admissions criteria and acceptance rates, see Core Component 5.A.2.

We also serve veterans and active-duty military; in Fall 2019, [Military Times](#) magazine selected Western as a “[Best for Vets College](#)” for the 10th consecutive year, and ranked the University number one for veterans among Illinois public and private colleges.

As defined in our social responsibility core value, “The University serves as a resource for and stimulus to economic, educational, cultural, environmental, and community development in our region and well beyond.” The University received the [Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching Community Engagement Classification](#) in academic years 2010-11 and 2019-20. This classification recognizes Western’s alignment of our University mission, culture, leadership, resources, and practices that support dynamic and noteworthy community engagement. Western’s [Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs](#) works directly with regional communities to facilitate economic development, expand higher education opportunities, and increase basic and sorely needed public services.

1.A.4: Western has aligned its academic offerings and student support services with its stated mission and the needs of its constituents and has developed and retained an enrollment profile consistent with its mission to serve diverse communities and the region.

Academic Offerings

As noted above, academic programs at Western have built on the original mission of teacher preparation and have expanded to serve the needs of the region with programs across the humanities, fine arts, social and natural sciences, agriculture, human services, business, and technology. [Western offers](#) 62 undergraduate degree programs (plus 118 minors), 40 integrated programs (including 2 programs with institutions external to Western—St. Ambrose College and Wartburg College), 6 pre-professional programs, 4 dual programs, 15 post-baccalaureate certificate programs, 37 master’s programs, 2 specialist’s programs, and 2 doctoral programs. See Core Component 3.A.3 for a discussion of academic offerings.

Western strives to meet the evolving needs of students who are active in the military or who complete their degree while working full-time through an expanding number of programs that can be completed online or through other alternative formats. A [Military Advisory Committee](#) identifies evolving needs of [veteran students](#); programs are developed as needs are identified. The institution also has a comprehensive portfolio of [2+2 agreements](#), [integrated degree programming](#), [transfer compact agreements](#), and [dual credit/dual enrollment programming](#) in place to serve constituents’ needs for opportunity and access.

Student Support Services

[Student support services](#) provide learning opportunities inside and outside the classroom throughout students’ educational experience and advance our mission of “engaging students in educational opportunities.” At the onset of a student’s educational experience, they are encouraged to participate in the [First Year Experience program](#), receive support from [academic advisors](#) and [Building Connections](#) mentors, and are given the opportunity to live in one of nine [Living-Learning Communities](#) on the [Macomb Campus](#).

[Financial Aid](#) and [scholarship opportunities](#) enhance accessibility and improve affordability for students. For example, in 2019, approximately 80% of undergraduate students received some form of financial assistance, as noted in the [2019-2020 WIU Factbook](#). The percentage of our students who receive Pell grants is [consistently around 49%](#). For more on financial support for our students, see Core Component 4.C.3.

Educational and student support services are in place to provide resources to the international student population at Western. The Center for Global Studies provides [programs and services](#) to international students from more than 50 countries. Resources are provided through an [orientation program](#), access to [Western's English as a Second Language \(WESL\) Institute](#), and student organizations such as the [International Friendship Club](#).

Enrollment Profile

Western's enrollment profile coheres with our mission and other related statements to [support diversity](#) and advanced educational opportunity and personal growth. In Fall 2020, approximately 12.8% of Western's 7,490 students were out-of-state, 3.4% were international, and 35% identified as minority. Fall 2020 enrollment included 1,057 new freshmen (55% identified as minority and 42% identified as first generation), 721 new transfer students, and 569 new graduate students. See Core Components 4.C.1 and 4.C.2 as well as the [WIU Factbook](#) for more information on enrolled students.

1.A.5: Western articulates its mission to the University community and general public by sharing its vision, mission, core values, and strategic planning in a variety of public documents and online. The undergraduate and graduate catalogs include Western's vision, mission, and values. The [Office for University Relations](#) regularly posts [news](#) on the University website and shares press releases with regional media related to new initiatives, opportunities, and accomplishments. To reach alumni, University Relations also publishes a seasonal [magazine](#) with many of these same items. Offices and organizations across the University, including the [Office of the President](#), maintain active social media accounts, which are listed in Western's [social networking](#) directory.

The [Office of Assessment, Accreditation, and Strategic Planning](#) was created in Fall 2020 to centralize and better connect assessment, accreditation, and strategic planning efforts and reporting. Examples of publicly available planning and reporting documents related to the University's mission include the following:

- [Annual Strategic Plan Updates](#)
- [Annual Performance Reports](#) comparing Key Performance Indicators (KPI) with expressed goals and to KPI of peer institutions
- [Quarterly Strategic Plan Updates](#)
- [Strategic Plan PowerPoint presentations presented to the BOT](#)
- [Student Learning Assessment](#) and Program Performance Data
- [Financial Composite Indices](#) for Western

Additionally, the University Technology web page provides access to the [2017-2022 IT Strategic Plan](#); the [Equal Opportunity and Access](#) web page contains the [Affirmative Action Plan Update](#); and the [Athletics](#) web page contains the [Report on Athletic Program Participation & Financial Support Data](#). All administrative units and academic departments/schools completed [Consolidated Annual Reports](#) during fiscal years 2011-2019. The reports and presentations, available online, document unit accomplishments, goals, reallocations, reductions, and budget requests in relation to University goals and priorities. As we look to the future, the Consolidated Annual Reporting process is being revised for FY21 in order to identify and implement streamlining opportunities.

Sources

- 2 plus 2 Articulation Agreements
- 2016-17 Strategic Plan Supplement
- 2017-18 Strategic Plan Supplement
- Academic Advising
- Academic Programs
- Affirmative Action Plan Update
- Assessing Student Learning
- Assessment Accreditation and Strategic Planning
- Athletics
- Best for Vets Press Release
- Building Connections Mentor Program
- Carnegie Foundation for Advancement of Teaching Community Engagement
- Center for Global Studies
- Common Data Sets
- Compact Agreement
- Consolidated Annual Reports
- Core Values
- Equal Opportunity and Access
- Fact Book
- FactBook 2019
- FactBook 2019 (page number 114)
- Finance Dashboard
- Financial Aid
- First Year Experience
- Graduate Catalog
- Graduate Programs
- High School Dual Enrollment Program
- History of WIU
- HVHE 2008-2018
- HVHE Strategic Plan Page_php
- HVHE-2012-2022

- HVHE-2017-2027
- Illinois Institute For Rural Affairs
- Integrated Degree Programming
- International Friendship Club
- International Student Orientation
- IT Strategic Plan
- Living Learning Communities
- Macomb Campus
- Military Advisory Committee
- Military Times Rankings
- Office of Academic Services
- Office of the President
- Performance Reports
- Quarterly Strategic Planning Updates
- Reach Program
- Report on Athletic Program Participation Rates and Financial Support Data
- Rural High School Students Participate in Dual Enrollment
- Scholarships
- Social Networking
- Social Responsibility Task Force
- Strategic Plan 2004
- Strategic Plan Supplements
- Strategic Plan Updates
- Strategic Planning Presentations
- Student Services
- Undergraduate Catalog
- Undergraduate Degree Programs
- University Relations
- Veterans Resource Center
- Western Magazine for Alumni
- Westerns English as a Second Language WESL
- WIU Big Picture-Budget Presentation
- WIU Big Picture-Budget Presentation (page number 13)
- WIU Diversity Equity and Inclusion
- WIU Mission
- WIU News
- WIU Receives Diversity Access Award

1.B - Core Component 1.B

The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

1. The institution's actions and decisions demonstrate that its educational role is to serve the public, not solely the institution or any superordinate entity.
2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its external constituencies and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Argument

1.B.1 Western's actions and decisions demonstrate that its educational role is to serve the public. As a regional, public, comprehensive institution, Western is committed to serving the western Illinois region's needs in the areas of academic excellence, educational opportunity, personal growth, and social responsibility. Our actions in this regard have resulted in recognition twice in the past 10 years for [excellence in community engagement](#). This recognition, as well as our constituents and the services Western provides, are also discussed in Core Component 1.A.3.

Western is committed to accountability and transparency in serving the public and providing educational opportunities marked by quality, affordability, and accessibility. The University's superordinate entity is the [Illinois Board of Higher Education](#) (IBHE). The University is governed by the [WIU Board of Trustees](#) (BOT), which was established by the Illinois General Assembly in 1995, and consists of eight members. The governor of Illinois appoints seven members and one student; the student appointee is elected by the students.

[The Bylaws](#) that guide the BOT acknowledge a philosophical commitment to the principle of shared governance. The Regulations state: "As the final institutional authority, the Board entrusts the coordination and management of the University to the President with the understanding that provisions shall be made for advisory participation by the faculty, staff, and students in University decision-making."

In regards to its educational role and responsibilities, Western requires schools/departments to complete [feasibility studies](#) for all new educational programs, and to adhere to a regular [program review](#) process on a pre-established cycle, as well as to conduct annual assessments of student learning outcomes in all programs, including [general education](#). Details on the program review and assessment policies, procedures, and impacts can be found in Core Components 3.A.1 and 4.B.1-3.

In addition to academic programs, Western offers a number of programs, in partnership with regional and community entities or as institutional initiatives, intended to enrich educational

opportunities for the public. The following list highlights a few examples of the institution's educational programs for the public:

- [WIU's Study Abroad and Outreach Office](#) serves youth and older adults in the region through educational programming. The Office sponsors several [youth summer experience programs](#). It also sponsors LIFE Macomb in collaboration with community partners. [LIFE](#) (Learning Is ForEver), affiliated with the national organization Road Scholar: Elderhostel Institute Network, is dedicated to providing high-quality, low-cost adult educational experiences.
- [Girls Plus Math](#) is a summer program that stimulates interest in mathematics among girls in grades 6-8.
- [Summer Music Institute](#) offers eight camps (including band, strings, percussion, choir, and piano) to children grades 4-12.

1.B.2 Western's educational responsibilities take primacy over all other purposes. As a public university, Western does not have investors or a parent organization, and can only carry forward and use excess funds in accordance with Illinois state statutes. Western has a comprehensive program of [internal auditing](#). The University's [Audit Charter](#) (activities) is annually approved by the President. Audit findings and actions are reviewed by the President's Leadership Team, Board of Trustees' Audit Committee, and the BOT as a whole.

In compliance with state statutes, Western completes annual external compliance and fiscal audits. Implementation, review, and accountability reporting processes follow the same protocol as described above. Copies of external audit results are available from the [State of Illinois, Office of the Attorney General website](#). The [Western Illinois University Foundation](#) is a separate 501(c)3 organization from the University. It follows similar processes of internal and external auditing and makes its [audit reports and IRS 990s](#) publicly available.

Western's [unaudited FY20 financial statements](#) indicate that in FY20, the University devoted 62.2% of operating funds to educational programs (instruction, academic support, student services, and institutional support); 8.2% to scholarships and fellowships; 2.3% to research; and 6.1% to public service. Facilities needs and auxiliary enterprises comprise the remaining 21.2%. Western's FY21 [All Funds budget](#) indicates that the University budgeted 49.0% of operating funds to educational programs (instruction, academic support, student services, and institutional support); 20.0% to scholarships and fellowships; 2.0% to research; 7.0% to public service; and 22.0% to facilities needs and auxiliary enterprises.

1.B.3: With respect to academic programs, Western has structures in place to communicate with external constituencies and communities of interest. Each of the [five colleges](#) has an [advisory board](#) composed of alumni, community leaders, administrators, and faculty. The [Provost's Advisory Committee](#), made up of a student member and administrators, faculty, and staff from across the University, meets regularly to maintain dialogue concerning academic matters as they relate to the entire University community.

In accordance with its mission and within its capacity, Western responds to the needs of its regional citizens and local community members. Some examples of the University's local and regional outreach services include:

- The [Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs](#) (IIRA). The IIRA was created by an Illinois Governor's Executive Order in 1989 to serve as the "State's academic clearinghouse for rural development data and initiatives." It carries out this mission through externally-funded programs focused on rural development research, community planning, business development, teaching, rural transit coordination, and policy formation in collaboration with the [Governor's Rural Affairs Council](#), which is chaired by the Lieutenant Governor. The IIRA has worked in over 500 communities in Illinois, helping these communities to create economic development plans. The IIRA also manages a [Peace Corps Fellows](#) (PCF) program on behalf of Western that directly contributes to workforce development in the region, recently, for example, securing a \$250,000.00 [Google Impact Challenge Award](#) for the city of Mattoon, IL.
- The [School of Engineering](#) requires students to complete a senior design capstone project with one of their industry partners, resulting in a benefit to both the students (who often have a job offer from the company before they graduate) and the industry partner who benefits from the design project.
- [Tri-States Public Radio](#). Western is a licensee of and operates Tri States Public Radio, broadcasting to all or part of 20 counties in Western Illinois, Southeast Iowa, and Northeast Missouri.
- The [Psychology Clinic](#) helps families and individuals improve the quality of their lives by assisting them with personal and interpersonal problems.
- The [Speech-Language Hearing Clinic](#) provides evaluations, therapy, and audiological services.
- [Department of Recreation, Park, and Tourism Administration](#) students assist in writing policy guides for the Macomb Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, work on regional tourism development in [Macomb](#) and the [Quad Cities region](#), and partner with agencies in Macomb and the Quad Cities to coordinate and evaluate community-based programs.
- [WQPT](#). Quad Cities Public Television reaches 24 counties in Illinois and Iowa and has a potential audience of 750,000.
- The [WIU GIS Center](#) serves the McDonough County GIS Consortium, a partnership between the City of Macomb, McDonough County, and Western Illinois University. The Center is responsible for compiling, managing, and storing GIS data layers for the Consortium. The Center has completed GIS and GPS work for various federal, state, and local entities.

These initiatives, combined with those discussed in Core Component 1.B.1, demonstrate Western's engagement with local and regional communities and response to constituent needs.

Sources

- Advisory Board College of Business and Technology
- All Funds Budget
- All Funds Budget (page number 8)
- Audit Charter
- Board of Trustees
- Board of Trustees Bylaws
- Carnegie Foundation for Advancement of Teaching Community Engagement
- CAS Advancement Board
- Forgottonnia
- Foundation Audit Reports and 990s
- General Education Assessment
- Girls plus Math
- GIS Center
- Google Impact Challenge Award
- Governors Council on Rural Affairs
- Illinois Board of Higher Education
- Illinois Institute For Rural Affairs
- Internal Auditing
- LIFE Program
- Peace Corps Fellows
- Program Review
- Provost Advisory Committee
- Provost Office Forms
- Psychology Clinic
- Quad Cities Bicycle Trails
- Recreation Park and Tourism Administration Department
- School of Engineering
- Speech Language Hearing Clinic
- State of Illinois Office of the Attorney General
- Study Abroad and Outreach
- Summer Music Institute
- Tri States Public Radio
- Unaudited FY20 Financial Statements
- WIU Foundation
- WQPT
- Youth Summer Enrichment

1.C - Core Component 1.C

The institution provides opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse, multicultural society and globally connected world, as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

1. The institution encourages curricular or cocurricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success.
2. The institution's processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations.
3. The institution fosters a climate of respect among all students, faculty, staff and administrators from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas and perspectives.

Argument

1.C.1: Western encourages curricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success in several ways. Both general education and individual program requirements include structural components that foster informed citizenship and awareness of culture. One of the goals of the University's [general education curriculum](#) is to support students in developing "an understanding of the differences and relative power among peoples, both in the United States and across the globe." While each general education course addresses this goal in a different format or with different content, the theme crosses all general education courses. Undergraduate students are required to complete a 3-semester-hour multicultural studies general education course that is designed to "encourage a better understanding of the dimensions of experience and belief that distinguish cultures and societies from one another as well as the commonalities that knit together all people" to "recognize the historical, political, and cultural forces that foster inequality and injustice, while becoming aware of strategies of change that improve the quality of life for all people." Additionally, undergraduate students are required to complete a [Foreign Language/Global Issues](#) requirement either through a designated course in global issues or through demonstrated coursework or proficiency in a non-native language. See Core Components 3.B.1 and 3.B.3 for discussion of general education requirements.

Several academic programs at Western have civic engagement incorporated into their requirements or co-curricular programming, such as student-teaching, clinical experience, and internships. For example, students in Political Science participate in [Model Illinois Government and Model United Nations](#) events, and the Centennial Honors College has hosted [mock presidential elections](#) (2007, 2011, 2015) and [U.S. Constitution Day](#) events and activities for students and the University community. Additionally, some programs include professional development courses as degree requirements.

Western also encourages informed citizenship and workplace success through co-curricular activities and services. The Office of Retention Initiatives houses the [Center for Career Preparation and Employer Engagement](#), which offers a variety of resources and support for internship and career success, and includes resources specifically designed to support students

with disabilities, international students, and active duty military and veterans. The Center hosts four on-campus and virtual internship and career fairs throughout the year and provides support to academic programs organizing additional opportunities for their students to connect with potential internship sites and employers. The Office of Retention Initiatives also hosts [Camp Leatherneck](#), a free, two-day leadership retreat for incoming students (organized and facilitated by current student leaders).

Leadership opportunities are provided through [Residence Life](#), including [Inter-Hall Council](#) and capstone programs within each residence hall. Western's [Office of Student Engagement](#) also provides [leadership and service opportunities](#), and oversees the Student Government Association, Fraternity and Sorority Life, and hundreds of registered student organizations and other groups and programs including 23 with a focus on career development, 27 with a focus on community service and civic engagement, and 24 that are based on expanding knowledge of culture and cultural identity. These include, among others, the [International Friendship Club](#) and Food and Culture Club, which both have an international focus. [Quad Cities Student Services](#) provides leadership opportunities to Quad Cities students through the Student Government Association and [25 registered student organizations](#).

The [Gwendolyn Brooks Cultural Center](#) houses several cultural and resource centers. The [Veterans Resource Center](#) and Student Development and Success Center (which includes [Disability Resources](#)) also support students and provide opportunities for personal, civic, and professional education and development. These centers are discussed in more detail in Core Component 1.C.2. In 2020, the [Black Male Mentoring Program](#) was created to provide first-year students with access to a network of Black professionals working at Western and in the local community. The program also plans to sponsor monthly workshops, activities, and experiences for students.

Students also engage with faculty outside the classroom in scholarly and creative activities by participating in independent studies, thesis and dissertation research, capstone requirements, the [Research Inspiring Student Excellence](#) (RISE) program in the College of Arts and Sciences, annual [Thomas E. Helm Undergraduate Research Day](#) (URD), annual [Graduate Research Conference](#) (GRC) begun in 2013, and the [Quad Cities Research Conference](#) (QCRC). Likewise, at multiple points in their education, students will engage with peer mentors, learning assistants, and discipline-specific tutors for academic and workplace success.

1.C.2: Western's processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations. The following units specifically promote inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations:

- [Assistant to the President for Diversity and Inclusion](#) – (position established in Spring 2020) ensures that Western's diversity initiatives are further enhanced and continue to evolve; this position oversees the restructured University Diversity Council and the Community Engagement Council, and organizes training and other University-wide diversity and inclusion initiatives (also see Core Component 5.C.1).
- [Casa Latina Cultural Center](#) –offers a holistic learning experience through programs and initiatives that facilitate the exploration of ethnic identity development, social justice,

community outreach, cultural expression, and social and professional networking so students can become the best version of themselves.

- [Center for Global Studies](#) – formerly the School of Global Education and Outreach, the Center for Global Studies seeks to prepare globally competent citizens by administering the General and Interdisciplinary Studies Degree Programs, advancing the development of in-demand online academic degree programs, providing high-quality English language and cultural competency instruction, promoting intercultural and educational exchange on campus and abroad, and offering meaningful community service and educational experiences for youth and adults.
- [Community Engagement Council](#) –(established Spring 2020) comprised of diverse community members who can build advocacy networks and promote/support Western’s initiatives.
- [Gwendolyn Brooks Cultural Center](#)– supports all students and promotes student success through cultural awareness, academic achievement, and social advocacy, and provides support services to students through educational programs, communal and public dialog, collections, exhibitions, and other initiatives.
- [International Bazaar](#)–one of the biggest annual events hosted on the Macomb campus, the Bazaar offers attendees the opportunity to try international foods, watch a dance competition, and learn about unique cultures, clothing, food, and music from around the world.
- [LGBT*QA Resource Center](#)–offers a welcoming and inclusive environment for people of all sexualities and gender identities/expressions and serves as a connection for LGBT*QA individuals to resources, support, education, programming, and advocacy with an emphasis on the holistic development of students.
- [Minority Health Month](#) –Western plans and hosts a variety of activities for the month-long celebration annually in April.
- [Office of Equal Opportunity and Access](#) – the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access reports to the President of the University and is responsible for the implementation of all Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity policies and programs, ensuring that University policies and programs comply with federal and state regulatory agencies. The University's Anti-Harassment Policy is administered by the Office. The Director of Equal Opportunity and Access is also the Campus Compliance Coordinator for the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Title IX Coordinator.
- [Student Development and Success Center](#) –assists students through their transitional periods focusing on academic and personal development, and offers services such as emergency and crisis follow up assistance, referrals, disability resources, and other initiatives and programs aimed at retention and success.
- [Student Diversity Coalition](#) –(established Fall 2019) comprised of students from our multicultural centers and other representatives, including volunteers who signed up to be part of an action committee – this student-led coalition reports directly to the President. A student from this coalition is also a part of the University Diversity Council.
- [University Diversity Council](#)–the UDC fosters the progression and sustainability of diversity, equity, and inclusion to embrace a culture of understanding, acceptance, and a sense of belonging, and serves in an advisory capacity to the University President on issues regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion.

- [Veterans Resource Center](#) – is committed to assisting those who have served or are currently serving in the U.S. military, and their families. In collaboration with an array of University departments and community organizations, the VRC provides coordinated services and resources in a one-stop location to ensure that all veterans and service members are afforded the greatest opportunities for success.
- [Women’s Center](#) –advocates for gender equity through examinations of feminisms, sexism, patriarchy, and misogyny; leads the University community in explorations of gender as a social construction; and promotes opportunities to celebrate women, collaborate in programming and outreach, and seek unity and understanding.

1.C.3: Western fosters a climate of respect among all students, faculty, staff, and administrators from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives. In addition to the centers, programs, and initiatives discussed in Core Components 1.C.1 and 1.C.2, the [Center for Innovation in Teaching and Research](#) (now under the Office of Distance Education and Support) hosts faculty- and staff-led [workshops](#) throughout the year on diversity, equity, and inclusion in instruction, and the [College of Education and Human Services](#) hosts an annual [Dealing with Differences Institute](#) as part of the [Expanding Cultural Diversity Project](#) (ECDP) for faculty, staff, and students. The ECDP also sponsors a [speaker series](#) (since 2005), and several publications, videos, and other resources. As part of the ECDP, the [Multicultural Resource and Advising Center](#) works to build understanding of diverse cultures and cultural values, to promote effective communication across cultures, and to suggest ways to implement cultural diversity initiatives interpersonally, with an emphasis on social justice. The [Black Faculty and Staff Council](#) (BFSC) is dedicated to improving the quality of the Black experience at Western by fostering an inclusive campus climate.

Sources

- Assistant to the President for Diversity and Inclusion
- Black Faculty and Staff Council
- Black Male Mentoring Program
- Camp Leatherneck
- Casa Latina
- Center for Career Preparation and Employer Engagement
- Center for Global Studies
- Center for Innovation in Teaching and Research
- CITR Workshops
- College of Education and Human Services
- Community Engagement Council
- Community Engagement Council (page number 21)
- Dealing with Differences Institute
- Disability Resources
- ECDP Speaker Series
- Equal Opportunity and Access

- Expanding Cultural Diversity Project
- Foreign Language Global Issues Requirement
- General Education Requirements
- Graduate Research Conference
- Gwendolyn Brooks Cultural Center
- InterHall Council
- International Bazaar
- International Friendship Club
- Leadership and Service Opportunities
- LGBTQA Resource Center
- Minority Health Month
- Mock Presidential Elections
- Model Illinois Government and Model UN
- Multicultural Resource and Advising Center
- Office of Student Engagement
- Quad Cities Research Conference
- Quad Cities Student Organizations
- Quad Cities Student Services
- Research Inspiring Student Excellence
- Residence Life
- Student Development and Success Center
- Student Diversity Coalition
- Student Diversity Coalition (page number 21)
- Undergraduate Research Day
- University Diversity Council
- US Constitution Day
- Veterans Resource Center
- Womens Center

1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

Summary

1.S: As a masters I public institution of higher education, Western Illinois University is committed to its mission to provide student-centered programs characterized by innovative teaching, research, and service; to collaborate with alumni and community partners in providing educational opportunities, public services, and economic development to the region; and to empower our faculty, staff, and students to lead dynamic and diverse communities regionally and around the globe. The mission, vision, and core values of the University are posted on Western's website and form the foundation of the goals and action plans for our strategic planning documents. Western's core values of academic excellence, educational opportunity, personal growth, and social responsibility are reflected in our enrollment profile and inform our academic offerings, student support services, co-curricular opportunities, and regional outreach.

Sources

There are no sources.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

2.A - Core Component 2.A

The institution establishes and follows policies and processes to ensure fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty and staff.

1. The institution develops and the governing board adopts the mission.
2. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions.

Argument

2.A.1:Development of Western Illinois University’s mission and associated documents is discussed in Core Components 1.A.1 and 1.A.2. The [WIU Board of Trustees](#) (BOT) adopted Western’s mission on June 8, 2012, with an approval of [Resolution No. 12.6/1](#): Implementation of “Higher Values in Higher Education: 2012-2022.” Additionally, the BOT [Statement of Mutual Expectations](#) states the BOT’s responsibility with respect to our mission, as follows: “Advocate for the WIU Values, Vision and Mission Statements: a) Be knowledgeable and able to publicly articulate the WIU Values, Vision, Mission and Strategic plan; b) Promote the continual enhancement of the WIU educational experience; and c) Work with Illinois executive and legislative branch decision makers to advance the strategic plan and mission of WIU.”

2.A.2:Western operates under shared governance through planning, policies, and procedures. Regarding financial integrity, Western and its Foundation annually complete [internal](#) and [external audits](#) and follow Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) reporting guidelines in accordance with several [statutes and policies](#). Western Illinois University’s audited financial statements present the financial position and financial activities of the University. Following the Illinois Office of the Auditor General’s historical timeline, the University’s most recent fiscal year audited financial statements are released on or before March 31 each year. The primary sources of [funding](#) for the University include: tuition and fees, grants and contracts, state appropriations, auxiliary operations (inclusive of room and board), sponsored programs and grants, and donor contributions. While tuition and fees are the most significant source of revenue, Western is dependent upon all funding in order to balance the budget. When applicable, the University carries forward state appropriated funds in compliance amounts and categories defined by state statute. Annual reports for the All Funds Budget, Appropriated Funds Budget, and Auxiliary Facilities Systems Budget are publicly available on the WIU [Budget Office web page](#). The WIU [Finance Dashboard](#) provides comparison data on tuition, fees, and room and board for all Illinois public institutions, and includes our annual institutional updates to the Higher Learning Commission (HLC).

Western annually transmits the following: planning, programmatic, and budgeting decisions to the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) through the Resource Allocation Management Program; documentation summarizing fiscal operations for institutional and programmatic changes to the Illinois Legislature; and [financial indicators](#) to the HLC as part of the Annual Institutional Data Update process.

[Policies and procedures](#) for purchasing approvals are publicly available and indicate the approvals required for different levels of spending, up to and including those which require BOT approval. The BOT [annually approves](#) fiscal year spending plans and all funds budgets.

As part of our commitment to integrity, Western is transparent in its financial functions. In 2018 the University President, in consultation with the Faculty Senate Chair, initiated the Faculty Senate [Budget Transparency Committee](#), which reviews budgetary items and documents, meets with the Budget Director, consults with the Faculty Senate and responds to any budget concerns, and serves as a resource to the faculty and Faculty Senate on budgetary questions, issues, and ideas. The [Budget Office News](#) web page provides information on cash flow, budget letters and releases, and budget presentations.

Regarding human resources, personnel integrity is upheld through institutional policies, training, structures, processes, and corrective actions when necessary. All employees are required to annually complete the [Mandatory Governmental Online Ethics Training](#) and [Harassment and Discrimination prevention training](#). Failure to comply with the training and [state statutes](#) can result in sanctions up to termination and fines.

Western trains all employees who are involved in [Title IX adjudication](#) according to all state and federal compliance mandates. Additionally, the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access (EOA) provides training to all athletes, coaches, residence life staff, and any student organization requesting training. We track all of our training for the state and federal requirements. The EOA Office replies to all reports of harassment and discrimination it receives. The EOA Office and [University Diversity Council](#) have discussed a combined campus climate survey for 2021-2022 that would ask questions regarding all forms of discrimination and harassment.

The [Official University Policy Manual](#) outlines policies related to fair behavior and equal treatment of employees as well as ethical behavior of employees across all areas of academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions. [Board of Trustees Regulations](#) include institutional policies and processes related to employee discipline and termination. Employee rights and responsibilities in these and other matters are further defined in contractual agreements ([WIU/UPI Agreement 2017-2021](#) for faculty and academic support employees) and the [Civil Service Handbook](#).

Regarding academics, policies covering academic affairs begin with the documents referenced above. These policies and manuals provide guidance and procedures for all things academic, from the university organizational structure to duties and responsibilities of administrators, faculty, staff, and their respective units, as well as the academic calendar, hiring, evaluation, promotion, classroom and syllabus expectations, and the appropriate and ethical use of technology and university resources.

Additionally, the [Code of Student Conduct](#) and [Student Academic Integrity Policy](#) provide guidance for students' behavior, rights, and responsibilities. The [University Judicial Board](#) is a University council that serves as the hearing body for students and student organizations alleged to have violated the Code of Student Conduct. All Board members participate in 1-2 training sessions per semester. University Judicial Board hearings are conducted as needed. The [Council on Admission, Graduation, and Academic Standards](#) (CAGAS) is a Faculty Senate council responsible for recommending and evaluating policies concerning admission, retention, graduation, and academic standards and for establishing some of the procedures to carry out such policies. Incidents of academic dishonesty are addressed by CAGAS. As noted in their [2019-2020 annual report](#), the Council updated the academic integrity policy and forms to better facilitate the process of reporting and appeals for both faculty and students. The [School of Graduate Studies](#) and [University Graduate Council](#) receive and address all reports regarding academic integrity and conduct at the graduate level.

Individual departments/units may provide additional ethics and integrity guidance and policies to their employees and students as appropriate.

Regarding ethical conduct of the BOT: The [Statement of Mutual Expectations](#) requires that the BOT “maintain high standards of professionalism and ethical conduct, including the following items: a) Model and nurture positive norms and values; b) Avoid any conflicts of interest and adhere to the standards of conduct as set forth in the [Illinois Governmental Ethics Act](#) and [State Officials and Employees Ethics Act](#); c) Respect the academic culture, institutional norms and the academic governing process; d) Ensure full compliance with the open meetings and public records laws; e) Maintain confidentiality.”

In a statement to the University community on November 5, 2018, the WIU Board of Trustees (BOT) acknowledged that it did not comply with the [Illinois Open Meetings Act \(110 ILCS 690/35\)](#) in its June 28, 2018 closed session. The Chairperson presiding over the BOT at that time resigned. The University hired new legal counsel with expertise in the *Illinois Open Meetings Act*, and the trustees were required to participate in additional Open Meetings Act training in cooperation with the Illinois Attorney General Public Access Counselor. In early 2019, seven new trustees were appointed by Governor Pritzker, and [announced to the public](#) on March 28, 2019. In June 2019, Western [notified HLC](#) of the situation and the change in the BOT. In July 2019 Governor Pritzker [removed](#) two of those members and issued a statement saying it was in the best interest of Western to go in a different direction. They were replaced in September 2019. All current trustees have completed Open Meetings Act training.

Sources

- Board approval of budget
- Board of Trustees
- Board of Trustees Regulations
- BOT Statement of Mutual Expectation
- Budget Office
- Budget Office News

- Budget Transparency Committee
- CAGAS Annual Reports 2010-2020
- Civil Service Handbook
- Code of Student Conduct
- Council on Admission Graduation and Academic Standards
- EOA Trainings
- Finance Dashboard
- Financial Indicators
- Foundation Audit Reports and 990s
- FY21 and FY22 Budgets
- Governor Removes Two Trustees
- Illinois Government Ethics Act
- Illinois Open Meetings Act
- Internal Auditing
- Internal Auditing Resources
- June 2012 Board Mtg Agenda
- June 2012 Board Mtg Agenda (page number 2)
- Mandatory Ethics Training
- New Board announced to public
- Official University Policy Manual
- Purchasing policies and procedures
- School of Graduate Studies
- State Officials and Employees Ethics Act
- Student Academic Integrity Policy
- Title IX Regulations
- University Diversity Council
- University Graduate Council
- University Judicial Board
- UPI Agreement
- WIU Audit Reports
- WIU Changes to HLC June 2019

2.B - Core Component 2.B

The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public.

1. The institution ensures the accuracy of any representations it makes regarding academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, governance structure and accreditation relationships.
2. The institution ensures evidence is available to support any claims it makes regarding its contributions to the educational experience through research, community engagement, experiential learning, religious or spiritual purpose and economic development.

Argument

2.B.1: Western is accurate in all representations of academic offerings, personnel, costs, governance structure, and accreditation.

For example, Western makes information about its academic programs for the Macomb Campus, Quad Cities Campus, and distance learning publicly available on the [academic programs](#) web page, and in the [Undergraduate Catalog](#) and [Graduate Catalog](#). The latter two documents also contain academic policies, and program and degree requirements.

The Undergraduate Catalog [lists](#) the WIU Board of Trustees (BOT), officers of the University, faculty, and professional staff. The [University Directory](#) provides program/unit affiliation and contact information for all University employees. Departmental web pages provide faculty contact, rank, and academic/professional background information. Examples are shown for [Biological Sciences](#), the [School of Education](#), [Management and Marketing](#), and [Music](#).

Western's [Admissions](#) web page provides transparent information on costs, financial assistance and scholarships, academic programs, and admissions requirements. Tuition, fees, and room and board rates are also displayed in Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs, and on our [Tuition and Costs](#) web page. The [Western Commitment](#) web page provides information about the amount in automatic scholarships new freshmen will receive. Similar web pages are also available to new [transfer students](#) and [dually enrolled high school students](#). We also provide a [net price calculator](#) to assist with financial planning.

Finally, the Undergraduate Catalog and Graduate Catalog document Western's history and development as a public university. These documents also explain our accreditation relationships with the Higher Learning Commission, 17 discipline-specific agencies, and membership in the National Council for State Authorization and Reciprocity Agreements. The [Accreditation Schedule](#) contains links to each of Western's accrediting bodies, the degree programs accredited, and the last and next dates of accreditation. Our governance structure is represented in the BOT Regulations, WIU/UPI Agreements (most recently 2017-2021), and the WIU [Organizational Chart](#) (updated November 2020).

2.B.2: Western ensures that evidence is available to support all claims made about the educational experience at the University. For example, our [Consolidated Annual Reports](#) and [Program Review Reports](#) document goals, accomplishments, and measures of productivity for each University unit, including student participation in research activities, internships, and community-based service and learning. Annual [alumni surveys](#) (administered to graduates 1, 5, and 9 years out from graduation) ask alumni to answer questions with respect to their education, educational experience and satisfaction, employment, employment satisfaction, and connections between education and employment. (Note: The annual alumni survey instrument and process is being updated for Spring 2021.)

In addition, Western participates in several [reports](#) required by the Higher Education Act (HEA) that ensure accountability to support the claims made.

Results of the [National Survey of Student Engagement](#) (NSSE), available on our website, indicate that students perceive research, community engagement, and experiential learning are a part of their educational experience, as shown in the table below.

Results of NSSE Pertaining to Educational Experience with Respect to Research, Community Engagement, and Experiential Learning (2019, 2017, 2015)

	Seniors			First-Years		
	2019	2017	2015	2019	2017	2015
About how many of your courses at this institution have included a community-based project (service learning)? (1=none, 2=some; 3=most)	1.8	1.7	1.7*	1.7	1.7*	1.7*
About how many hours do you spend in a typical 7-day week doing community service or volunteer work? (3=1-5 hrs.; 8=6-10 hrs.)	3.6*	3.8*	3.3*	3.4*	2.9*	2.1
Have you worked with a faculty member on a research project or do you plan to before you graduate? (% indicates “done or in progress”)	26%*	27%*	26%	8%*	5%	7%
Have you participated in an internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement or do you plan to before you graduate? (% indicates “done or in progress”)	43%	49%	44%	4%	6%	5%

* indicates student average was significantly higher compared to Illinois public institutions, Carnegie Class, and/or Great Lakes public institutions.

Of note with respect to community engagement and economic development is The [Peace Corps Coverdell Fellows Program](#) at Western, a two-year graduate fellowship program for returned Peace Corps volunteers (RPCV) managed through the [Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs](#) (IIRA). The program offers RPCVs an opportunity to pursue graduate studies with an emphasis on rural

community and economic development. As part of their degree program, Fellows serve an eleven-month internship in a rural community, leading local development projects, such as downtown revitalization, business retention and expansion, tourism development, health education, volunteer management, and disaster preparedness. Peace Corps Fellows have completed more than 2,500 community projects; they have recruited close to 10,000 community volunteers and served in 101 rural communities and 28 counties in Illinois, resulting in the creation of more than 330 jobs in small communities across the state. Information about the program's impact is available through [press releases](#) as well as the IIRA's annual reports, which are submitted to the Office of the Provost.

Sources

- Academic Programs
- Accreditation Schedule
- Admissions
- Alumni Surveys
- Biological Sciences Faculty
- Consolidated Annual Report 2020
- Dual Enrollment
- Graduate Catalog
- Higher Education Act Reporting
- Illinois Institute For Rural Affairs
- Management and Marketing Faculty
- Music Faculty
- National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
- Net Price Calculator
- Organizational Chart
- Peace Corps Fellows
- Peace Corps Fellows Press Release
- Program Review Documents
- School of Education Faculty
- Transfer Scholarships
- Tuition and Costs
- Undergraduate Catalog
- Undergraduate Catalog (page number 370)
- Undergraduate Catalog in pdf for admin fac and staff lists
- University Directory
- Western Commitment Scholarships

2.C - Core Component 2.C

The governing board of the institution is autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution in compliance with board policies and to ensure the institution's integrity.

1. The governing board is trained and knowledgeable so that it makes informed decisions with respect to the institution's financial and academic policies and practices; the board meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
3. The governing board reviews the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
4. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties.
5. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the institution's administration and expects the institution's faculty to oversee academic matters.

Argument

2.C.1: The WIU Board of Trustees (BOT) consists of eight members (seven appointed by the governor with term limits of six years, and one student appointee elected by the students to serve one year). The powers and duties of the BOT are defined in Illinois State Statute [110 ILCS 690/35-45](#), Western Illinois University Law. These responsibilities include institutional planning and priority setting, legal and fiduciary management, and degree conferral. The [Board Roles and Responsibilities](#) document is publicly available on the BOT web page, and includes, "Know and understand higher education governance. This includes being aware of important trends and issues in higher education governance, taking advantage of training and using best practices when operating the Board" and "Preserve, protect and ensure the quality of the institution. Be knowledgeable about the academic programs and planned changes or improvements in the programs." Additional policies and guidance with respect to the BOT's role and responsibilities, including The [Board of Trustees Bylaws](#) and the [Board of Trustees Regulations](#), are publicly available and referenced elsewhere in this document.

As required by [Public Act 99-0695](#), within two years after beginning service and within every two years of service thereafter, every voting member of the BOT must complete a minimum of four hours of [professional development leadership training](#). Topics shall include, but are not limited to, public university and labor law, contract law, ethics, sexual violence on campus, financial oversight and accountability, audits, and fiduciary responsibilities of a member of a governing board.

All trustees attend required training provided annually. Sessions include key issues facing Illinois public higher education. Representatives of the BOT also attend the Association of Governing Boards (AGB) annual conferences and share information with the BOT as a whole.

The BOT's [web page](#) contains links to duties and responsibilities; relevant contracts, legislation, and policy; academic catalogs; and organizational charts. Additional resources are also included to assist the BOT in knowledgeably fulfilling its responsibilities. As detailed in the [BOT minutes](#), various University units also provide quarterly and annual reports to the BOT to aid them in making informed decisions regarding quarterly and annual resolutions.

2.C.2: The WIU Board of Trustees' (BOT) deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution in accordance with the mission and values outlined in the Western Illinois University Strategic Plan: Higher Values in Higher Education, and its Statement of Mutual Expectations, which states that the BOT shall "insist on sound financial management and standards" and "allocate resources to effectively advance the strategic plan and mission of WIU." As such, the BOT receives the following:

- Quarterly Reports from the President, Assistant to the President for Governmental Relations, the Vice Presidents, and four standing reports on Contributions, Purchases between \$100,000-499,999, Planning, and the President's Executive Institute (2016-2019).
- Three standing quarterly resolutions that require BOT action: Purchases Above \$500,000, contract ratifications with collective bargaining units, and Release of Closed Session Minutes.
- Fourteen annual reports with regard to: Academic Program Changes; Athletics; Campus Master Plans; Cumulative Strategic Plan Accomplishments; Curricular and Administrative Changes; Enrollment, Retention, and Graduation Rate Information; External Audit; Facilities Condition Assessment; Financial Aid; Reporting on Teach Out Plans for Disestablished Majors; Sponsored Projects; Strategic Plan Update; and Student Cost Guarantee.
- Thirteen annual resolutions, where the BOT takes action on: All Funds Budget, Appropriated Operating and Capital Recommendations to the Illinois Board of Higher Education, Approved Depositories and Signatories, Calendar Year Board Meeting Schedule, Fees, Higher Values in Higher Education (University Strategic Plan) or Higher Values in Higher Education Supplement, Internal Audit Charter, Preliminary Spending Plans, Presidential Assessment and Contract, Room and Board, Student Health Insurance, Tenure Recommendations, and Tuition.

The BOT also receives ad hoc reports and resolutions to address timely issues. Examples include [Statewide Budget Context](#) PowerPoint presentations between FY16-18 as the University implemented plans to decrease expenditures and increase revenue, and [FY19 Positioning Western Illinois University for the Future](#) quarterly updates with similar goals. Additional examples include approving Western Illinois University's Quality Initiative for the Commission, offering federal tuition assistance for students from the United States Armed Forces, and approving honorary doctorate recipients. [BOT meeting agendas, minutes, and materials](#) are publicly available and the Open Meetings Act requires that deliberations are transparent. (Note: Core Component 2.A.2 provides additional information on the sanctions that resulted from a violation of the Open Meetings Act.)

2.C.3: The WIU Board of Trustees (BOT) uses the following methods to gain wider university perspectives from Western's internal and external constituents:

- The [Office of Assessment, Accreditation, and Strategic Planning](#) provides [Quarterly Strategic Plan Updates](#) to convey timely strategic planning information, seek institutional feedback, and provide information received to the BOT.
- The [BOT web page](#) contains contact information for each Trustee.
- Part of the BOT's [annual retreat](#) is used to learn more about institutional programs and services. For example, the [Summer 2018 Retreat](#) discussed service provision, needs, and concerns with representatives from the Centennial Honors College, the College of Business and Technology, and the School of Law Enforcement and Justice Administration. The Summer 2020 Retreat included training on the state ethics law, Board rules, changes to Title IX, labor law, accountability, and audits.
- Quarterly Board meetings include a report on activities and perspectives from all of Western's governance groups on both campuses. The governance groups also present a Consent Agenda to provide the BOT with feedback on scheduled reports and resolutions. Likewise, there is at least a 30-minute comment slot on every BOT meeting agenda to gain additional feedback on the materials contained in the [BOT's agenda](#). If there are more comments than can be fit into that slot, a second comment period is added at the end of the agenda. Annual reports from various University units and the WIU Foundation are also shared with the BOT to inform their decisions on annual and quarterly resolutions.
- Until 2019, each trustee also completed a Trustee in Residence annually. Each trustee visits with employees in areas of interest. Past Trustees residencies have been completed across the University, including in Admissions, Athletics, Facilities Management, the Office of the President, and Western Illinois University-Quad Cities. The BOT chairperson intends to reinstate the program in Fall 2021.

2.C.4: All WIU Board of Trustees (BOT) candidates are vetted by the Illinois State Senate to ensure independence from undue influence. BOT membership is voluntary. Appointed members sign Annual Conflict of Interest Statements with the University and the State. No more than four trustees may be members of the same political party, and all must be residents of the state of Illinois. The [Board of Trustees Bylaws](#) state, "Members of the Board of Trustees are expected to refrain from entering into any activity that might constitute a conflict of interest with Western Illinois University, or which would prejudice their ability to carry out their duties and responsibilities as members of the Board. Any situations in which a conflict of interest might exist, or might appear to exist, should be referred to University and Board Legal Counsel or to your personal attorney." Additional measures to preserve the BOT's independence from undue influence and conflicts of interest are outlined in [Western Illinois University Law](#).

2.C.5: According to the [Board of Trustees Regulations](#), "Although the Board is responsible for assuring that its policies and regulations are followed, it shall not participate in the details of institutional management delegated to the University administration. Members of the Board, as representatives of the State and its citizens, may exercise official Board authority only when the Board is in session or when trustees are acting on behalf of the Board pursuant of its direction.

Committees of the Board may be created from time to time to function only as fact-finding, deliberating, and advisory bodies that may present proposals to the Board for approval.”

Of note: During the last several years, Western has experienced changing senior leadership resulting in interim appointments. In Fall 2020 the University initiated and completed a Presidential Search, which led in January 2021 to the appointment of the [12th President of Western Illinois University](#). In addition, the University is now seeking to establish permanent hires for administrative positions currently filled by individuals in interim roles. Recent permanent hires include a Provost, an Associate Provost and Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs, a Dean of the College of Education and Human Services, a Director of Admissions and Enrollment Services, and an Executive Director of the Center for Global Studies.

Faculty of Western Illinois University [develop the curriculum](#) and oversee academic matters. Details concerning procedures for curriculum and academic program development are provided in Core Components 3.A.1 and 3.C.2. The WIU/UPI Agreements (most recently 2017-2021) and University Policy Manual also outline faculty responsibilities and roles with respect to academic matters.

Sources

- 110 ILCS 690 35-45
- 2018 Board Retreat
- 2020 Board Retreat
- Assessment Accreditation and Strategic Planning
- Board of Trustees
- Board of Trustees By Laws
- Board of Trustees Minutes
- Board of Trustees Regulations
- Board of Trustees Training
- Curriculum Workshop
- December 2020 Board of Trustees Agenda
- FY18 Statewide Budget Context
- Office of the President
- Positioning WIU for the Future
- Public Act 099-0695
- Quarterly Strategic Planning Updates
- University Board Roles and Responsibilities
- Western Illinois University Law
- WIU President homepage

2.D - Core Component 2.D

The institution is committed to academic freedom and freedom of expression in the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

Argument

2.D: The [Policy on Political Activities](#) ensures that free discussion of subjects of an either controversial or uncontroversial nature shall not be curtailed at the University. Western encourages a respectful, civil, supportive, and peaceful community. The 2020 election cycle saw several [messages](#) from the administration reminding all University community members that Western values free expression.

Part of free speech is participation in religious observance. Following Western's [Religious Observance Policy](#), a student who is unable because of the observance of a religious holiday to attend classes on a particular day or days or at a particular time of day shall be excused from taking any examination or any study or other academic work assignments on such days or times.

Western's [Code of Student Conduct](#) and [Disruptive Student Behavior Procedure](#) address misconduct and disruption or obstruction of teaching, research, administration, or other University activities, including its public service functions on or off campus, or of other authorized non-University activities when the conduct occurs on University premises.

The WIU Board of Trustees [Regulations on Academic Freedom and Responsibility](#) recognizes that academic freedom is an essential right to teaching and research for the common good. It also recognizes that membership in the academic community imposes responsibilities and obligations to respect the dignity of others; the right to express differing opinions; and the responsibilities and obligations to foster and defend intellectual honesty, freedom of inquiry, instruction, and expression—on and off campus.

The University has protective measures for students and faculty as they address controversial subject matter. The University's [Policy on Grade Appeal](#) assures that grades assigned represent a fair and consistent evaluation of student performance.

Sources

- Code of Student Conduct
- Disruptive Student Behavior Procedure
- Free Expression Message
- Policy on Grade Appeals
- Political Activities Policy
- Regulations on Academic Freedom and Responsibility
- Religious Observance Policy

2.E - Core Component 2.E

The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, staff and students.

1. Institutions supporting basic and applied research maintain professional standards and provide oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior and fiscal accountability.
2. The institution provides effective support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff and students.
3. The institution provides students guidance in the ethics of research and use of information resources.
4. The institution enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Argument

2.E.1: Western Illinois University supports basic and applied research. In addition to [sabbatical](#) opportunities for tenured faculty (see WIU/UPI Agreement 2017-2021), the [Mini-Sabbatical/Grant Writing Fellowship Program](#) provides a semester workload reduction for successful applicants to work on professional projects or grant applications. The [University Research Council](#) annually offers seed grants to tenure-track faculty to support research. The School of Graduate Studies awards [funding](#) to graduate students to support basic and applied research and professional development, and has hosted an annual [Graduate Research Conference](#) for graduate students since 2013. Undergraduate students are supported in their research as well. For example, the Centennial Honors College hosts an annual [Undergraduate Research Day](#) and the College of Arts and Sciences makes funds available through the [Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity Grant Competition](#) each semester to support undergraduate students' research/scholarly activities, as well as to help defray travel costs for students presenting research at off-campus conferences.

Support for faculty travel at Western for research and professional development was traditionally funded through the operating budgets of individual academic departments. However, due to budget constraints, beginning in 2008-2009 funding for faculty travel was centralized and became available through the [Provost's Travel Awards](#). These awards have typically provided faculty with up to \$500 of travel funds. The college deans' offices have provided additional funding to cover conference registration costs. During the two-year period (Fall 2015-Spring 2017) when Illinois public institutions suffered through the state budget impasse, faculty travel funding was temporarily suspended. However, the Provost's Travel Awards were restored, on a limited basis, prior to all travel being restricted since March 2020 due to COVID-19. Western intends to restore funding for faculty travel as early as Fall 2021.

With respect to research conducted by Western faculty, staff, and administrative units, the University maintains professional standards and provides oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior, and fiscal accountability. The [Office of Sponsored Projects](#)

provides pre-award assistance in editing and budget preparation, as well as post-award assistance with grant and contract administration, compliance oversight, budget reallocations and transfers, and time and effort reporting.

Oversight for the ethical use of human subjects is the responsibility of the [Institutional Review Board](#) (IRB), which acts according to policies set forth by the United States Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR 46). All research that involves human subjects undertaken by a member of the University community must be approved by the IRB. Individuals engaged in research involving human participants must also complete an educational program related to the responsible conduct of research prior to initiation of a research project. Similar structures and processes are used by the [Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee](#).

Western's [Conflict of Interest with Regards to Sponsored Projects Policy](#) assures that scholarship is conducted in an objective manner, free of any potential for undue influence arising from the private financial interests of those responsible for the conduct of the research.

[Board of Trustees Regulations](#) also contain the University's Intellectual Property Policy (# 17) to ensure clear understanding of the roles, responsibilities, and ownership related to intellectual property, technology transfer, patent, copyright, traditional academic copyrightable works, works created as an institutional initiative, and non-exclusive right to use.

2.E.2: Western provides the support needed to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice. All individuals conducting research that requires IRB approval or exemption must go through IRB training. The Office of Sponsored Projects provides support services as discussed in Core Component 2.E.1.

Students participate in research in courses, and as undergraduate and graduate research assistants. In addition to access to the programs, services, and requirements discussed above, students and faculty have access to the [University Writing Center](#), and the [University Libraries](#) offer individual or group presentations on how to [effectively use the library](#). Librarians are available in person, by phone, and through instant messenger and web-based inquiry interfaces. WIU Libraries Information Systems and Digitization Unit developed a [Research Panel](#) to increase research productivity. The new extension enables convenient access to library information resources and services including scholarly databases, library catalogs, interlibrary loan, and internet resources such as Google Scholar. A faculty member also developed a guide to provide information on [choosing and evaluating journals](#) for possible publication.

Individual schools and departments also provide university-wide and discipline-specific information to students on scholarly activity, resources, and expectations. Examples include [Counselor Education](#), [Environmental Science](#), [Nursing](#), and [Psychology](#). Additionally, the School of Graduate Studies produces [Guidelines](#) for the submission of theses and dissertations.

The Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Center partners on research projects, and provides GIS and GPS training. The Center for Innovation in Teaching and Research provides the following:

- Workshops and lectures related to using statistical software, library databases, information searching, assessment, program evaluation, and other topics.
- The [Research Collaboration Database](#), which identifies researchers from across the University with similar research interests to foster collaboration.
- Online surveys to support research, classroom activities, and program evaluation.

The promotion, retention, and tenure process includes oversight for the quantity and quality of faculty scholarly/creative activity, as discussed in the WIU/UPI Agreement (most recently, 2017-2021).

2.E.3 Western provides its community with the guidance needed to do ethical research, using reliable information sources. In addition to the services provided by the institution and discussed in Core Component 2.E.2, [University Technology](#) introduces students to the ethical use of information resources at [Summer Orientation](#). Signing on to the Western network requires the end-user acknowledge appropriate use. [Writing in the Discipline](#) courses, and other research courses in the student's discipline, also cover this topic.

The University's [Course Syllabus Policy](#) requires that all Western course syllabi contain a weblink to the [Student Academic Integrity Policy](#). The [Code of Student Conduct](#) outlines sanction procedures to hold students accountable when engaging in academic dishonesty, including unethical use of information resources.

All Western Illinois University students (and faculty and staff) are governed by the [Appropriate Use Policy](#), [Password Policy](#), and [DMCA and HEOA Response Policy](#) to ensure that computing resources are used ethically.

2.E.4: As noted in Core Component 2.A.2, the WIU Academic Integrity Policy outlines definitions of academic dishonesty and the policies and procedures in place for addressing incidents at the graduate and undergraduate levels. Engagement in academic dishonesty (plagiarism, fabrication and falsification, cheating, complicity in academic dishonesty, abuse of academic materials, and multiple submissions) by students results in sanctions ranging from redoing the assignment to dismissal from the University.

Faculty use plagiarism detection software to ensure that students are submitting original work. [Testing Centers](#) on both campuses deploy video surveillance to ensure that students are not cheating. The University also uses [HonorLock](#), [Respondus Monitor](#), and [Lock Down Browser](#) to ensure distance education students maintain academic integrity.

Sources

- Appropriate Use Policy
- Board of Trustees Regulations
- Choosing and Evaluating Journals Publishers Conferences
- Code of Student Conduct (1)
- Conflict of Interest With Regards to Sponsored Projects Policy

- Counselor Education resources
- Course Syllabus Policy
- DMCA and HEOA Response Policy
- Environmental Studies resources
- Faculty Travel Policy
- Graduate Research Conference
- Graduate Student Research Funding
- Graduate Studies Guidelines for Preparation and Submission of Theses and Dissertations
- HonorLock
- Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)
- Institutional Review Board (IRB)
- Libraries Individual and Group Research Training
- Mini Sabbatical Fellowship Program
- Nursing resources
- Office of Sponsored Projects
- Orientation
- Password Policy
- Psychology resources
- Research Collaboration Database
- Respondus FAQs
- Respondus Lockdown Browser
- Sabbatical Leave Policy
- Student Academic Integrity Policy
- Testing Center
- Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities Grant
- Undergraduate Research Day
- University Libraries
- University Research Council
- University Technology
- University Writing Center
- WIU Libraries Research Panel
- Writing Instruction in the Disciplines

2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

Summary

2.S: Western Illinois University has policies, procedures, and support services in place to ensure that all units and constituents conduct their duties, responsibilities, and work in an ethical and responsible manner. Western is transparent in its offerings, structure, and budgeting process. The University, which operates in a shared governance system, ensures regular communication between the WIU Board of Trustees, senior administration, faculty, staff, and student representatives. Institutional policies and procedures, as well as unit-specific policies and procedures, define and guide appropriate activities to ensure ethical and responsible behavior, practices, and accountability across all areas of University operations. Academic freedom is defined and supported in the University Policy Manual. Several processes are in place to monitor and address issues related to institutional integrity, including research compliance, conflicts of interest, and academic integrity.

Sources

There are no sources.

3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support

The institution provides quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

3.A - Core Component 3.A

The rigor of the institution's academic offerings is appropriate to higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of student performance appropriate to the credential awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate and certificate programs.
3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

Argument

3.A.1: Currency of courses and programs and credential-appropriate student performance levels are supported through Western Illinois University's [program accreditations](#), [program review process](#), participation in the [Illinois Articulation Initiative](#) (IAI), curriculum review and approval processes, and assessment processes.

As stated in our [Federal Compliance Filing](#) with the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), Western's Definition of [Academic Terms](#) includes our definition of and policy on Unit of Credit. This policy is approved by the [Faculty Senate](#) and the President (most recently in 2018) to ensure external standards are met. In accordance with this policy, Western follows U.S. Department of Education [Program Integrity Rules](#) (2011) in the assignment of credit hours. The Unit of Credit Policy applies to all courses, disciplines, programs, and transcribed credential levels for all course locations and modalities. Credit hours are assigned according to instructional time provided to students and the calendar format. The Unit of Credit Policy defines credit hour assignment for classroom or direct faculty instruction, laboratory work, internships, student teaching, clinical or practicum experience, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours. As described in both [Undergraduate](#) and [Graduate Catalogs](#), [honor points](#) are assigned to the student's grades and used to determine the student's academic standing and grade point average.

Information regarding our accreditations is publicly available in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs. In addition to all of our teacher licensure programs and the WESL Institute, eight

graduate degrees and 19 undergraduate degrees hold program-level accreditation. The institutional and program [accreditation schedule](#) and status are publicly available.

Undergraduate and graduate degree programs, including post-baccalaureate certificate programs, are [reviewed](#) every eight years; reviews are conducted over the academic year and submitted annually in June to the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE). Review of new program progress is conducted three years after the program is established and a progress report is submitted to IBHE. [Program review policies](#), procedures, schedule, and forms are publicly available on the Provost's web page. The IBHE has set [guidelines](#) for the minimum number of majors and degrees awarded, and has provided guidelines for conducting program reviews. Policies and procedures for [academic program elimination review](#) for low-enrolled programs are also available on the web page and in the [WIU/UIP Agreement 2017-2021](#) (Article 26). The program review process is determined by the individual academic department in concert with their Dean and the Office of the Provost, and follows the general guidelines set forth by the IBHE. To avoid redundancy, academic departments have the discretion to use current findings from specialized program accreditations and other reviews as the basis of the program review process, if they are not more than two years old. Program Review allows academic units to thoroughly and candidly evaluate 1) the mission and goals of the program and its relation to those of the University; 2) the educational objectives, curriculum, and student learning outcomes of undergraduate and graduate programs; 3) the quality and diversity of faculty and their contributions to the program; 4) resources (e.g., library, physical facilities); and 5) the reputation of the program among peers in the discipline.

Since 2011, four undergraduate programs (majors) and one graduate program have been eliminated due to low enrollment of majors and low graduation rates. Teach-out plans were implemented following IBHE guidelines. The four undergraduate programs were identified as part of an [academic program elimination review](#) conducted in Spring 2016. Four additional undergraduate programs were identified in 2016 for low enrollment with recommendations to undergo modifications; one of these just completed a low-enrollment progress review in 2019-20 and three underwent modifications that included combination with other programs and/or name changes. A fifth undergraduate program will be eliminated in Spring 2021. In 2020-21, three additional undergraduate programs will undergo low enrollment progress reviews. One post-baccalaureate certificate program was suspended in Fall 2017. Additional information about program review and elimination can be found in the 2020 and 2018 IBHE [APEER reports](#).

Agendas and minutes for [Faculty Senate](#) and associated [curriculum review committees](#) are publicly available, as are [curriculum procedures, policies, and forms](#). [Agendas and minutes](#) for Graduate Council meetings, as well as [curriculum procedures and forms](#), are publicly available. The [Council on Admission, Graduation, and Academic Standards](#) (CAGAS) oversees academic standards and graduation requirements.

Undergraduate and graduate programs, along with general education, are assessed annually. Processes for the assessment of student learning are described in Core Component 4.B.

3.A.2: Western articulates learning goals for each program and course, and differentiates those goals according to level (undergraduate vs. graduate). [Student learning outcomes](#) are publicly

available on the Provost's web page; the [undergraduate](#) and [graduate](#) catalogs both reference this site. Per the course [syllabus policy](#), the purpose and objectives of each course are stated in course syllabi. Sample [assessment plans](#) and [reports](#) are also available on the [Office of Assessment Accreditation and Strategic Planning](#) web page.

3.A.3: Western is consistent across all modes of delivery and locations with respect to program quality and learning goals. All programs have specific learning outcomes, undergo regular program review, and annually conduct student learning assessments in accordance with their assessment plan, which are reported to the Office of Assessment, Accreditation, and Strategic Planning for review. Successful completion of assessment is required for curricular changes (including new courses) to be considered in a given program. [Instructional faculty](#) consist of full- or part-time, regular or term, appointments. Faculty teaching courses in graduate programs have graduate faculty status (temporary, associate, or full); faculty directing graduate exit options have full graduate faculty status.

Western offers courses through extension, hybrid, live streaming, face-to-face (on campus), study abroad, sponsored credit, video conference, and weekend delivery modes. The Office of the Registrar provides official [course type definitions](#). We offer 40 [integrated bachelor's-master's degree programs](#), including two programs with external institutions—[St. Ambrose University](#) and [Wartburg College](#). (Note: Some undergraduate portions are offered in different locations from the graduate portion, thus the undergraduate and graduate programs that are part of integrated programs are considered separately in the numbers provided below for each location, as appropriate.)

All courses and programs use their respective program and course student learning outcomes; outcomes and assessment methods within each program are consistent across all courses and modes of delivery. Western is approved by the IBHE to participate in the [National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements](#) (NC-SARA). As such, our distance learning program follows policies and standards that are overseen by the NC-SARA and endorsed by the [Midwest Higher Education Compact](#), one of four regional higher education compacts.

Note: The number and types of programs offered in each location and each modality are described below. If a program is offered in more than one location or modality, it is listed under each location or modality through which it is available. For the total of each kind of program offered at Western, please see Core Component 1.A.4.

[Macomb Campus](#)

On our Macomb Campus, Western offers 58 undergraduate degree programs, 32 master's degree programs, 2 specialist's degree programs, 1 doctoral degree program, and 10 post-baccalaureate certificates.

[Quad Cities Campus](#)

Western offers 20 undergraduate degree programs, 15 master's degree programs, 1 specialist's degree program, 2 doctoral degree programs, and 7 post-baccalaureate certificates that can be

completed at the Quad Cities Campus. There are 4 undergraduate degree programs (in engineering disciplines) for which the final two years must be completed at the Quad Cities Campus. For scheduling purposes, courses offered at [Nahant Marsh](#), [Niabi Zoo](#), [Figge Art Museum](#), [Putnam Museum](#), and [Black Hawk College](#) are scheduled as Quad Cities Campus courses. (Note: Western discontinued our registration with the Iowa College Student Aid Commission in Summer 2020. No courses have been offered at Iowa locations, including the Figge Art Museum, Nahant Marsh, and Putnam Museum, since Spring 2019).

These programs and courses follow the same guidelines and procedures for program review and learning assessment as their Macomb Campus and online counterparts.

[Online Programs](#)

Western offers 14 undergraduate degree completion programs, 9 master's degree programs, 10 post-baccalaureate certificate programs, and 1 undergraduate dual program online. These online programs represent an [online version](#) of a program also offered face-to-face. Online programs follow the same guidelines and procedures for program review and assessment as their face-to-face counterparts.

[Consortium Arrangements](#)

Western has financial-aid related consortium agreements with Eastern Iowa Community College District (EICCD) and Blackhawk Community College, for which students are taking courses at both Western and the respective community college.

[Dual Programs](#)

Western offers four dual degree programs (clinical laboratory science, engineering, law, and chiropractic) through arrangements with other institutions.

[Programs Taught Off-Campus](#)

Western offers some programs at approved, off-campus locations through the School of Education, until recently in six locations in Illinois and one in Iowa. In 2019, Western was approved by HLC for an additional location.

[Dual Credit/Concurrent Enrollment Classes](#)

Western has an official dual credit agreement with Macomb High School for Physics 211: University Physics I.

Western offers dual enrollment courses online, face-to-face on both campuses, and in five high schools (Spring 2020). In Fall 2020, we offered three live-streamed courses for dual enrollment. These courses are all offered by Western faculty, following our University policies with respect to course design and syllabi, regardless of location. When reporting student learning assessment

results, data from these courses are combined with results from the same courses delivered via other modes.

Sources

- 2020 APEER Report
- Academic Program Elimination Review
- Academic Programs
- Academic Terms
- Accreditation Schedule
- APER Report
- Assessment Accreditation and Strategic Planning
- Assessment Plans
- Assessment Reports
- Black Hawk College
- Consortium Agreements
- Council on Admission Graduation and Academic Standards
- Council on Curricular Programs and Instructions
- Course Syllabus Policy
- Course Type Definitions
- Curriculum Procedures and Forms
- Dual Programs
- Evidence File
- Faculty Senate
- Faculty Senate Councils and Committees
- Faculty Senate Meeting and Minutes
- Figge Art Museum
- Graduate Catalog
- Graduate Council Agendas and Minutes
- Guidelines for Low Producing Programs
- High School Dual Enrollment
- HLC Approval for Additional Off Campus Location
- Honor Points
- Illinois Transfer Portal
- Integrated Baccalaureate and Masters Degree Programs
- Integrity on the Assignment of Credit hours
- Learning Outcomes
- Macomb Campus
- Midwest Higher Education Compact
- Nahant Marsh
- NC-SARA
- Niabi Zoo
- Off Campus Locations

- Program Review Policies
- Program Review Process and Schedule
- Putnam Museum
- Quad Cities Campus
- St Ambrose WIU Integrated Program
- Undergraduate Catalog
- UPI Agreement
- Wartburg WIU Integrated Program
- WIU Online
- WIU-Federal-Compliance-2019-2020

3.B - Core Component 3.B

The institution offers programs that engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in mastering modes of intellectual inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution. The institution articulates the purposes, content and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements.
2. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity and provides students with growth opportunities and lifelong skills to live and work in a multicultural world.
4. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their offerings and the institution's mission.

Argument

3.B.1: Candidates for a baccalaureate degree at Western are required to complete the [General Education Curriculum](#) (43 s.h.) approved by the University faculty. Western's general education [philosophy and goals](#) are consistent with [our mission and with our values](#) of academic excellence, educational opportunity, personal growth, and social responsibility. As referred to in the General Education Review Committee Report, the [purpose of general education](#) at Western is to help students:

- To cultivate personal responsibility, understand principles of wellness for a holistically healthy life, and understand differences in power;
- To develop intellectual flexibility and transferable skills that will be useful in their careers and in assuming responsibilities as global citizens and lifelong learners; and
- to develop knowledge, skills, and abilities that will allow them to contribute to society and the common good through work and civic engagement.

Western has university general education requirements in the six areas of Communication Skills, Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Social Sciences, Humanities and Fine Arts, Multicultural Studies, and Human Well-Being. The general education program defines the learning outcomes for each of the six areas in the [Undergraduate Catalog](#). Departments and faculty define how those outcomes are integrated in each course. As discussed in Core Component 1.C.1, we also have a university-wide [Foreign Language/Global Issues](#) requirement that can be met in multiple ways. The general education curriculum was designed to be flexible across all undergraduate degree programs, with a variety of designated course choices that allow students to find options relevant to their respective contexts and programs. Most general education courses are 100- and 200-

level, though some are 300-level. We also participate in the [Illinois Articulation Initiative](#) (IAI) with respect to the [General Education Core Curriculum](#).

The [Council on General Education](#) reviews the General Education Curriculum, oversees and advises on ongoing assessments of that curriculum by other agencies, and works to ensure that the curriculum reflects the University's philosophy and goals of General Education. Applications for general education designation for a new or existing course must be reviewed and approved by the Council on General Education. In Fall 2016, the Council on General Education, with the addition of six Senate-appointed members, was charged with conducting a thorough review of our General Education requirements at Western. The [report](#) by the General Education Review Committee (GERC) was completed in Summer 2018 and approved by Faculty Senate in September 2018 and by the President in October 2018. More details about this review and the resulting changes, as well as information about the processes and procedures for assessing student learning in general education, are addressed in Core Components 4.B.1 and 4.B.2.

In addition to the university-wide general education requirements for undergraduates, all undergraduate degree programs have a [Writing in the Disciplines](#) (WID) requirement within the program, usually a 300- or 400-level course, through which students are introduced to the conventions of professional writing in the field.

Students completing certain degrees in the College of Arts and Sciences have [additional college general education requirements](#), as follows: Bachelor of Arts (17 s.h.), Bachelor of Science (12 s.h.), and Bachelor of Liberal Arts and Sciences (14 s.h.).

3.B.2: Western's general education program is grounded in the philosophy that "General Education is the component of the undergraduate curriculum devoted to those areas of knowledge, methods of inquiry, and ideas that the University and scholarly community believe are common to well-educated persons. General Education provides a foundation for future learning." The curriculum is based on a framework that posits, "The generally well-educated student will demonstrate 1) broad knowledge and understanding of the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities; 2) an ability to analyze, think critically, and form reasoned conclusions; 3) competence in communicating his or her views and ideas clearly and cogently; 4) an understanding of the methods by which people pursue knowledge; 5) an understanding of the differences and relative power among peoples, both in the United States and across the globe; and 6) knowledge of the principle of wellness for living a healthy and fit life, both physically and mentally."

Results of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) ([2015](#), [2017](#), [2019](#)) indicate that consistently, at least 60% of our seniors responding feel their coursework at Western has prepared them in writing and speaking clearly and effectively, thinking critically and analytically, solving complex real-world problems, and acquiring job- or work-related knowledge and skills.

3.B.3: Western's commitment to "equity, social justice, and diversity" is reflected in our [core value](#) of social responsibility and in our [general education requirements](#) for Multicultural Studies and our Foreign languages/Global Issues requirement (discussed in Core Component 1.C.1). One

of our undergraduate university-wide general education learning goals is that students will demonstrate “an understanding of the differences and relative power among peoples, both in the United States and across the globe.” Currently, we offer [58 courses](#) across all four colleges and the Centennial Honors College with a Multicultural Studies general education designation. These requirements help to prepare students to succeed in a multicultural world. Individual programs also have requirements that focus on human and cultural diversity. For example, [sociology undergraduate majors](#) can choose directed electives in the social inequality emphasis category, [English undergraduate majors](#) can select directed electives from courses designated as social justice courses, and [Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Administration](#) students can complete coursework in an option entitled “Adapted Recreation and Inclusion.”

Results from the NSSE for both freshmen and seniors provide evidence that students perceive their Western education supports engaging and developing understanding of human and cultural diversity (2015, 2017, 2019).

[Results of NSSE Pertaining to Engaging and Developing Understanding of Human and Cultural Diversity](#)

During the current school year, about how often have you done the following:	Seniors			First-Years		
	2019	2017	2015	2019	2017	2015
Connected your learning to societal problems or issues (scale 1-4; 1=never, 2=sometimes, 3=often, 4=very often)	2.7	2.7	2.8	2.6	2.6	2.7
Included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments (scale 1-4; 1=never, 2=sometimes, 3=often, 4=very often)	2.6	2.6	2.7	2.5	2.5	2.5
Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from their perspective (scale 1-4; 1=never, 2=sometimes, 3=often, 4=very often)	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.8

3.B.4: Western is categorized as “M1: Master’s Colleges and Universities: Larger Programs” under the [Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education](#). Our faculty participate in research across all colleges and disciplines.

All tenured and tenure-track faculty are expected to produce scholarly or creative work related to their respective disciplines in order to meet the [requirements for retention, tenure, and promotion](#). Support for this work with respect to funding and sabbaticals is discussed in Core Component 2.E.1. Policies regarding retention, tenure, and promotion with respect to scholarship are addressed in the [WIU/UPI Agreement 2017-2021](#) (Article 20.4). Additionally, each department has its own approved criteria for retention, tenure, and promotion evaluation with respect to scholarship (see Core Component 3.C.4).

There are several programs that support student research and creative work at Western. Funding support and recognition for undergraduate and graduate research is discussed in Core Component 2.E.1. In 2019, approximately 228 undergraduate students presented their work at the annual [Thomas E. Helm Undergraduate Research Day](#) and over 70 graduate students presented their work at the annual [Graduate Research Conference](#). Note: The 2020 Undergraduate Research Day scheduled for April 8th was canceled due to COVID-19. The 2020 Graduate Research Conference, held February 28th, had 63 graduate students present their work.

Other examples for student research opportunities include two programs in the College of Arts and Sciences: RISE and WIU-WIS. [RISE](#) (Research Inspiring Student Excellence) provides students with research and academic experiences, as well as funding opportunities, to help them “become tomorrow's leaders.” WIU Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics ([WIU-WIS](#)) fosters “research and scholarly activities, to provide opportunities and to encourage the advancement of women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines.... WIU-WIS connects female students in the College of Arts and Sciences majoring in Biology, Clinical Laboratory Science, Chemistry, Forensic Chemistry, Geology, Mathematics, Meteorology and Physics with research advisors and WIS faculty mentors.”

Sources

- 2015 NSSE Senior Frequencies and Statistical Comparisons
- 2017 NSSE Senior Frequencies and Statistics
- 2019 NSSE Senior Frequencies and Statistics
- Carnegie Classifications of Institutions of Higher Education
- College of Arts and Sciences Additional General Education Requirements
- Core Values
- Council on General Education
- English Major
- Faculty Retention Promotion Tenure Merit
- Foreign Language Global Issues Requirement
- General Education
- General Education Curriculum
- General Education Review Committee Report
- Graduate Research Conference
- IAI General Education Curriculum
- Illinois Transfer Portal
- NSSE Results
- Philosophy and Goals Of General Education
- Research Inspiring Student Excellence
- RPTA Major
- Sociology and Anthropology Major
- Undergraduate Catalog
- Undergraduate Research Day

- UPI Agreement
- WIU Mission
- WIU Women in Science
- Writing Instruction in the Disciplines

3.C - Core Component 3.C

The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

1. The institution strives to ensure that the overall composition of its faculty and staff reflects human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.
2. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance, assessment of student learning, and establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff.
3. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual and consortial offerings.
4. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
5. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.
6. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
7. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising and cocurricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained and supported in their professional development.

Argument

3.C.1: Western strives to ensure that the overall composition of its faculty and staff reflects human diversity as expressed in the [Interim President's statement](#) (2019-2020) on diversity and inclusion. Our affirmative action program and diversity initiatives are supported by the University's Strategic Plan: [Higher Values in Higher Education 2017-2027](#), as these efforts support two goals outlined in the Plan: to attract, recruit, retain and develop an excellent faculty representative of the diverse and global society; and to develop strategies to increase the recruitment and retention of staff and administration from traditionally underrepresented groups.

Our Affirmative Action Program and Diversity Initiatives are updated annually in October through the WIU [Affirmative Action Plan Update](#) (AAPU). Demographic data regarding faculty, staff, and student populations are available in the [WIU Fact Books](#).

Since 2011, Western has experienced a [significant increase in diversity](#) among our students and a slight increase in diversity among our employees. In Fall 2020, 34.9% of [our student population](#) and 11.9% of our total employee population (17.9% of faculty) identified as belonging to a minority racial/ethnic group. In 2011, 21.4% of our student population and 10.8% of our total employees (16.1% of faculty) identified as belonging to a racial/ethnic minority group.

Budget cuts in the state of Illinois have been ongoing for over a decade, as noted in the [2011 accreditation self-study and HLC report](#). As a result, Western has experienced widespread layoffs in recent years, and retirements and resignations with the resulting vacant positions unfilled. In Fall 2020, the total number of employees at the University was 1,280. Since 2011, the number of employees at the University has decreased approximately 38.0% (from 2,565). Student enrollment has also decreased approximately 40.3% in that same time (from 12,544 to 7,490). Despite these challenges, we are working to increase the diversity of our faculty and staff through several initiatives.

The [University Diversity Council's](#) mission is to foster “the progression and sustainability of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to embrace a culture of understanding, acceptance, and a sense of belonging.” They work with [Equal Opportunity and Access](#), Academic Personnel, Human Resources, Student Services, and Admissions to ensure that Western attracts and retains diverse faculty, staff, and students. Western’s [Affirmative Action Plan Update](#) (2020) outlines our policies and procedures with respect to recruiting and hiring diverse faculty and staff, statistics on employee demographics, diversity goals, problem areas, and action plans. The following programs also aim to recruit and promote a diverse faculty and staff:

- [Affirmative Action Administrative Internship Program](#) (on hold since January 2020) – The purpose of this program is to increase the pool of qualified women and minorities for administrative positions. The program provides women and minority employees with an opportunity to develop and increase administrative skills in an area of their interest. The program is not intended to guarantee a change in employment or salary status when the internship period ends. Employees are offered the opportunity to work on a temporary released-time basis under the direction of an appropriate administrative mentor. These internships are typically either half-time for a full academic year or full-time for one semester. Administrative interns observe and participate in many of the University's administrative decision-making processes during the internship experience. Interns and mentors also define a specific project to focus the administrative experience. All continuing employees are eligible to apply.
- [Intern Program](#) – The Intern Program was established by the State Universities Civil Service System (SUCSS) to supplement an applicant pool in order to provide a cross-section representation of gender, racial, ethnic, and cultural groups, especially when recruitment efforts have failed to attract qualified applicants and/or operating needs warrant ongoing training to supplement staffing and recruiting efforts. The program is utilized for those classifications that have an educational, experience, or skill requirement. The Intern Program allows the university to hire individuals who possess career potential, but may lack one or more of the minimum qualifications for the class, giving them an opportunity to receive on-the-job training.
- [C.T. Vivian Dissertation Fellowship and Visiting Professor Teaching Scholars Programs](#) – Also known as the Underrepresented Minority Dissertation Fellowship and Visiting Professor Program; this program was designed to provide professional teaching experiences, mentoring, and potential tenure-track employment opportunities within academic departments and schools at Western that are strongly committed to cultural diversity. Applicants from diverse cultural backgrounds, especially those from historically underrepresented groups, are encouraged to apply.

- [Dual Career Retention and Recruitment Program](#) – This program supports Western's goal of attracting and recruiting an "excellent faculty representative of the diverse and global society." Priority may be given to dual career hires that will contribute to faculty/staff diversity, i.e., where hiring the spouse/partner will assist in the hiring of faculty/staff from underrepresented groups.

3.C.2: Student-faculty ratios, using the total student FTE over the total instructional faculty FTE, have declined from 2011 (16:1) to 2020 (13:1) as shown in the WIU [Common Data Sets](#), section I2. The ratios for individual colleges and programs vary. The ratio decline reflects both a decline in enrollment and in the number of instructional faculty. The ratios do not include graduate teaching assistants.

Faculty oversee the curriculum and expectations for student performance in their programs and individual courses. [Curriculum changes](#) and development of new programs and courses begin with the faculty in departments and follow procedures for review and approval. Undergraduate courses and programs are approved through college curriculum committees, college deans, the [Council on Curricular Programs and Instruction](#) (CCPI), and the full [Faculty Senate](#), before final approval from the Provost. Where applicable, courses must also receive approval from the [Council on General Education](#) (CGE), the [Council on Writing in the Disciplines](#) (WID), and/or the [University Committee for Educational Preparation](#) (UCEP). Graduate courses and programs are approved through the department, college deans, the [Graduate Council](#), and the Provost. New graduate programs must also receive approval from the President and the WIU Board of Trustees.

Faculty serve on all search committees to hire new faculty (tenure and non-tenure track) in their unit and are involved in determining the academic qualifications for new faculty. Faculty are also involved in reviewing applications and hiring graduate students for research, teaching, and teaching support assistantship positions.

As discussed in Core Component 4.B.1, faculty are involved in [student learning assessment](#). Faculty determine program and course level student learning outcomes and assessment plans, collect assessment data, review findings, and report assessment results, along with the short- and long-term impact (implemented or planned) of those results on the course or program, including modification of the assessment plan itself. Assessment reports are reviewed by the Associate Provost/Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Academic Assessment Coordinator (a member of the faculty) assigned to the Office of the Provost. The [Student Learning Assessment Committee](#) (SLAC) includes faculty representatives from the Faculty Senate, Council on General Education, and Graduate Council.

3.C.3: All instructors teaching in Western programs are appropriately qualified. Dual enrollment courses are taught by Western faculty, as discussed in Core Component 3.A.3.

Table of WIU Faculty Qualifications (from WIU [Common Data Sets](#))

Year	# Instructional Faculty (FT & PT)	Doctorate or other terminal degree	Masters but not a terminal degree	Bachelor's	Unknown/Other*
2020	501	362	132	2	5*
2019	537	381	148	1	7*
2018	587	409	169	1	8
2017	608	418	177	4	9
2016	615	425	176	5	9
2015	679	469	200	5	5
2014	705	473	218	6	8
2013	720	489	211	5	15
2012	737	500	203	4	30
2011	731	498	192	5	36

* This category was intended to include non-terminal degrees that were not defined. However, the WIU Academic/Administrative Personnel Office confirms that all seven individuals in this category for 2019 had master's (4) or doctoral (3) degrees. Three from 2020 have doctoral degrees, one was ABD but is no longer employed at Western, and one has a master's degree.

[Educational requirements](#) for tenure are clearly outlined for each department. In the past 10 years, the percentage of faculty with a terminal degree has increased from approximately 68% to over 70%. All graduate level instructional faculty must be approved with temporary, associate, or full graduate faculty status by their department, dean, and the Graduate Council. All faculty hired into tenured/tenure-track positions receive associate graduate faculty status and are able to teach graduate courses and serve on graduate exit option committees. Full members of the graduate faculty must have the appropriate terminal degree and a record of scholarly/creative activity appropriate to the field. Only full graduate faculty are permitted to chair exit options. As program needs require, faculty who do not hold associate or full graduate faculty status may apply to the Director of Graduate Studies for temporary graduate faculty status (for one year) to teach a graduate course. Additional powers and responsibilities and the process for becoming a member are outlined in the [Operating Paper of the Graduate School](#).

3.C.4: The performance of all faculty members is evaluated according to the [WIU/UPI Agreement 2017-2021](#) (Article 20, Evaluation: Criteria and Procedures Unit A and Article 33, Evaluation and Evaluation Criteria Unit B). Tenure-track faculty (Unit A) are evaluated every year until tenure. Thereafter, there is an appraisal every five years required of all tenured faculty not applying for promotion. The appraisal cycle begins in an employee's fifth year after being awarded tenure. Based on policies in the Agreement, each department has its own document outlining its specific criteria and expectations for evaluation, retention, and promotion with respect to scholarly work, teaching/primary duties performance, and service (for examples, see [English](#) and [Libraries](#)). Faculty are evaluated by their department personnel committee and department chair. Evaluations are then forwarded to the respective dean for approval, then to the

[Office of the Provost](#), then President, for final approval. Negative decisions by any of these evaluators result in the College and University Personnel Committees also reviewing the evaluation portfolios. Associate faculty (Unit B) are evaluated every one to three years, depending on status and according to the Agreement. Associate faculty are evaluated by their department chair. Evaluations are then forwarded to the respective dean for approval, then to the Office of the Provost for final approval. It is university policy that all university courses are evaluated by students every semester. An exception occurred in Spring 2020 as a result of the disruption to course delivery formats due to COVID-19. The WIU/UPI Agreement specifies how student course evaluations should be used with respect to faculty evaluation (see Article 20.11). Each department determines how student course evaluations are used with respect to evaluating graduate teaching assistants.

3.C.5: Per the [WIU/UPI Agreement 2017-2021](#) (Article 20.4), each department outlines requirements for demonstrating currency in the discipline and adept teaching performance in the department criteria documents.

The WIU/UPI Agreement currently provides opportunity for merit increases for faculty members at the full professor rank for 5, 10, and 15 years (Article 20 sections 3.f and 13). These merit increases are based on a point system that recognizes productivity in the categories of teaching/primary duties, scholarly/professional activities, and service activities following promotion to full professor. This merit system replaces the [Professional Achievement Awards](#) (PAA) merit system that was in place prior to 2017. All faculty (Unit A and B) were eligible for these PAAs, but in the most recent Agreement, the faculty union and administration agreed to limit merit awards to full professors as a means of encouraging continued productivity following the achievement of the Professor rank. Western has policies in place to help to assure faculty are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles (see also Core Component 3.C.3 and 3.C.4).

Additionally, some departments and programs have specific requirements for individual faculty or faculty positions to maintain currency in their field. For example, to renew their nursing licensure, nursing faculty are required by the IDFP-Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation to complete at least 20 hours of continuing education every two years. In Psychology, all four of the clinical faculty (including the program director) who provide services within the psychology clinic as well as supervise the clinical work of the graduate students within the psychology clinic must be licensed in the state of Illinois. This requirement is based on accreditation standards by the program's accrediting body, [Master's in Psychology and Counseling Accreditation Council](#) (MPCAC). Per the MPCAC accreditation manual, under Accreditation Standards: "The program must include significant supervised experiences, a minimum of 600 hours across at least two semesters. At least 240 of the supervised experiences should be direct contact hours. Supervisors must be appropriately credentialed."

The Official University Policy Manual includes a [Faculty Responsibilities Policy](#) that addresses expectations with respect to teaching. The [Center for Innovation in Teaching and Research](#) (CITR) offers workshops throughout the year aimed at faculty professional development in the areas of teaching and research. One of the courses they offer is a 6-week course that covers design and delivery of courses in various modalities. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic,

CITR worked with faculty and staff to deliver workshops specifically aimed at helping faculty transition to online formats for teaching and learning. Professional development opportunities may also be offered within individual departments.

Faculty travel funding was discussed in Core Component 2.E.1. Other opportunities for professional development include the annual WIU [Dealing with Differences Institute](#), [Faculty Summer Institute](#) (offered through the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), the WIU [Summer Stipend program](#), sabbatical leave for Unit A faculty (WIU/UPI Agreement 2017-2021 Article 27.2), and a [mini sabbatical fellowship](#) program for Unit A faculty (Article 27.17). Unit A faculty may also apply for retraining leave (Article 27.3). Unit B faculty may apply for Administrative Educational Leave for the purposes of professional growth (Article 41.2). A full-time employee may enroll for credit at the University for a maximum of two courses, or six credit hours, whichever is greater, in any one academic term with [exemption from the payment of tuition and fees](#).

Faculty who demonstrate difficulties or challenges in their teaching primary duties are encouraged and supported in seeking professional development support, resources, and mentorship for improvement. In some cases, Unit A faculty are required to follow a professional improvement plan (PIP), in accordance with the WIU/UPI Agreement (Article 20.12.d-f).

3.C.6: Western instructors are accessible for student inquiry. The [WIU/UPI Agreement 2017-2021](#) states: “Each [faculty member] shall maintain a schedule of at least four office hours per calendar week spread over at least three days. These hours shall be scheduled to allow reasonable access and shall be posted. Department chairs may allow an adjustment or appropriate substitution to the above office hour requirement to provide for nontraditional classes or unique teaching situations. If necessary and reasonable, faculty are expected, and have a professional obligation, to be accessible to meet students, other faculty, and staff, as well as attend meetings, on days and times other than those of posted office hours and scheduled classes” (Articles 18.15 and 32.1.g). [Graduate teaching assistants](#) are also required to hold office hours. For example, GTAs in English are required to hold one office hour per week for each course taught.

The [NSSE surveys](#) (2015, 2017, 2019) indicate that, when compared to other institutions, Western students perceive high quality of interaction with faculty and higher-than-average engagement with faculty in the areas of career planning, course material outside of class, academic performance discussions, and extracurricular projects.

Results of NSSE Pertaining to Instructor Accessibility (2019, 2017, 2015)

	Seniors			First-Years		
	2019	2017	2015	2019	2017	2015
Quality of Interaction with Faculty (scale 1-7; 1=poor, 7= excellent)	5.6*	5.6*	5.8*	5.2	5.3	5.1

Talked about career plans with a faculty member (scale 1-4; 1=never, 2=sometimes, 3=often, 4=very often)	2.6*	2.7*	2.7*	2.6*	2.5*	2.4*
Worked with a faculty member on activities other than coursework (scale 1-4; 1=never, 2=sometimes, 3=often, 4=very often)	2.3*	2.3*	2.3*	2.2*	2.1*	1.9*
Discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with a faculty member outside of class (scale 1-4; 1=never, 2=sometimes, 3=often, 4=very often)	2.3*	2.3*	2.5*	2.2*	2.1	2.1*
Discussed your academic performance with a faculty member (scale 1-4; 1=never, 2=sometimes, 3=often, 4=very often)	2.3*	2.4*	2.5*	2.4*	2.3*	2.3*

* indicates student average was significantly higher compared to Illinois public institutions, Carnegie Class, and/or Great Lakes public institutions. None of these averages were significantly lower in comparison.

3.C.7: Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development. An example is [FERPA training](#). Mandatory ethics, Title IX, and other trainings are discussed in Core Component 2.A.2. Additionally, we have sponsored a [Professional Development Day](#) open to all faculty and staff at both campuses.

Each [student support office](#) under the Student Services unit is overseen by a director who is at least a master's level professional. Offices found throughout student services are also comprised of varying master's and bachelor's level professionals in addition to graduate assistants and undergraduate employees. Every student support services position has specific duties, expectations, and qualifications (for an example, see the [University-Wide Primary Advising Responsibilities](#)). Full qualifications (including education and experience) vary depending on the position. All staff go through annual training and ongoing professional development.

The [University Writing Center](#) is overseen by a director who is a tenured/tenure-track faculty member in English with a doctorate degree in a relevant field; writing consultants in the Center include graduate teaching support assistants and undergraduate employees who go through [annual training](#) and ongoing monthly to weekly professional development.

When hiring new academic advisors or [academic success coaches](#), Western requires a minimum of a master's degree from an accredited institution in college student personnel, psychology or another master's degree program that specializes in human growth and development. Some academic departments require their advisors to hold a minimum of a bachelor's degree in the subject area in which they will be advising.

Besides the annual mandatory ethics and Title IX trainings that every Western employee must complete, new advisors are trained on university policies, student records processes, and academic department graduation requirements. There are yearly professional development

opportunities offered to academic advisors via the Advising Leadership Team (ALT). ALT provides University-wide professional development programs for academic advisors through the Leatherneck Advising Academy. Training includes topics such as Advising Theories: Appreciative Advising, Developmental Advising, Strengths-Based Advising, Proactive Advising vs. Prescriptive Advising; Motivational Interviewing; Digital Civility; and Communicating in an Inclusive and Respectful Manner. Advisors can access the videos, [slides](#), and handouts from these programs in a Google shared drive folder at any time.

In addition to ALT programming, the [Council of Academic Advisors](#) (COAA) offers support and guidance to faculty, staff, and students by providing council members to serve as liaisons to the [Council on Admission, Graduation, and Academic Standards](#) (CAGAS), to the [Council of General Education](#) (CGE), on the Provost's Deans and Directors committee, and on the FYE Leadership Committee, as well as other committees and councils as needed.

Sources

- 2010 HLC Reaccreditation-Report
- Academic Success Coaching
- Advisors Workshop Presentation
- Affirmative Action Administrative Internship Program
- Affirmative Action Administrative Internship Program Overview
- Affirmative Action Plan Update
- Center for Innovation in Teaching and Research
- Common Data Sets
- Council of Academic Advisors
- Council on Admission Graduation and Academic Standards
- Council on Curricular Programs and Instructions
- Council on General Education
- Curriculum Procedures and Forms
- Dealing with Differences Institute
- Department Criteria - Department of English
- Department Criteria - University Libraries
- Dual Career Recruitment AND Retention Program
- Equal Opportunity and Access
- Faculty Responsibility Policy
- Faculty Senate
- Faculty Summer Institute
- FERPA Training
- Graduate Assistantships
- Internship Program
- Mini Sabbatical Fellowship Program
- Minority Student Headcount 2016 to 2020
- MPCAC

- NSSE Results
- Office of the Provost
- Operating Paper of the Graduate School
- Presidents Statement on Diversity and Inclusion
- Professional Achievement Awards
- Professional Development Day
- Rev Dr CT Vivian Dissertation Fend Visiting Professor Teaching Scholars Programs
- Sabbatical Leave Policy
- Student Learning Assessment
- Student Learning Assessment Committee
- Student Support Offices
- Tenure Requirements
- Tuition and Fee Waiver
- University Committee for Education Preparation
- University Diversity Council
- University Fact Books
- University Graduate Council
- University Strategic Plan Higher Values in Higher Education 2017 to 2027
- University Writing Center
- University Writing Center Training and Resources
- University-Wide Primary Advising Responsibilities
- WIU Receives Diversity Access Award
- WIU Summer Stipend Program
- WIU_UPI Contract Agreement 2017-2021
- Writing Instruction in the Disciplines

3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and resources for effective teaching.

1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.
2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.
3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its offerings and the needs of its students.
4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites and museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).

Argument

3.D.1: Western provides [student support services](#) on both the Macomb and Quad Cities campuses through the following units:

- [Campus Recreation](#) (supports 18 sports clubs for students in addition to the services and facilities available through the Donald S. Spencer Student Recreation Center)
- [Multicultural Center](#) (houses the Casa Latina Cultural Center, the Gwendolyn Brooks Cultural Center, the Women's Center, and the LGBT*QA Resource Center—see Core Component 1.C.2)
- [Scholarship Office](#)
- [Student Development and Success Center](#) (houses disability resources, health education, student support, and student rights and responsibilities—see Core Component 1.C.2)
- [Office of Student Engagement](#) (see Core Component 1.C.1)
- [University Union Bookstore](#)
- [Housing and Dining Services](#)
- [Counseling Center](#)
- [Western Courier](#)
- [Transition and Academic Skills Center](#) (houses Academic Success Coaching, Rocky's Resources, New Student Orientation, and Camp Leatherneck programs)
- [Center for Career Preparation and Employer Engagement](#)— Handshake was adopted in Fall 2019 to expand student access to internship and career opportunities (see Core Component 1.C.1)
- [First-Year Advising Center](#)
- [Financial Aid](#)
- [Residence Life](#)
- [Beu Health Center](#)
- [Disability Resources](#)
- [University Writing Center](#)

- [Veterans Resource Center](#) (see Core Component 1.C.2)
- [Student Services – Quad Cities Campus](#)

Information about student support services is available in the [academic catalogs](#), as well as on the [Student Life](#) web page. Information about tutoring for writing and other subjects is also available online.

Western has developed or expanded several services since 2011 to better meet the needs of its student populations.

An effort by the Student Success committee and supported by Western’s participation in the HLC [Persistence and Completion Academy](#) led to the implementation of an [Academic Success Coaching](#) (ASC) program to address the needs of students who find themselves on academic probation or warning. A student can sign up to meet bi-weekly with a coach to determine barriers and short-term and long-term goals, and develop an action plan to meet those goals. The coach serves as an accountability partner and conduit to University resources when needed.

[Rocky's Resources](#) expanded their tutoring services to all undergraduates in 2014. Tutors are graduate assistants from various academic departments. The most widely requested tutoring services are from students who need help in math, chemistry, and computer science. Prior to the pandemic, student usage was greatest in a walk-in format. In Spring 2020, Rocky’s Resources created a virtual tutoring program using the Zoom Webinar format and expanded hours for tutoring services to Sunday through Thursday, 21 hours/day. Virtual tutoring continued in the Fall 2020 semester. Western offers [Success Workshops](#) through the Rocky's Resources program. These are targeted skills-based workshops that are open to all undergraduate students. Topics include Time Management, Organization, Effective Study Tools, Stress Management, and Test Preparation. In Fall 2020 sessions on Mastering Online Classes and tutorials on how to register for classes were added.

The [University Writing Center](#) offers one-on-one and group writing support to students, faculty, and staff. The UWC also collaborates with faculty and Rocky’s Resources to offer in-class presentations and workshops for students. In Fall 2019, the UWC piloted asynchronous e-tutoring services to complement their face-to-face and synchronous online formats. In Spring 2020, e-tutoring was expanded and online and e-tutoring appointments and workshops replaced face-to-face sessions because of COVID-19. The Center also expanded hours to offer services seven days a week, 15 hours/day. These hours continued with virtual delivery for AY 2020-21.

[Tutoring](#) services are also offered through individual departments, and [Athletics has additional tutoring services for student athletes](#).

As the [NSSE surveys](#) (2015, 2017, 2019) indicate, Western students perceive that they have high quality interactions with their advisors and student services staff.

Results of NSSE Pertaining to Student Support Services (2019, 2017, 2015)

	Seniors	First-Years
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	2019	2017	2015	2019	2017	2015
Quality of interaction with academic advisors (scale 1-7; 1=poor, 7= excellent)	5.6	5.5	5.6	5.5	5.6	5.5
Quality of interaction with student services staff (scale 1-7; 1=poor, 7= excellent)	5.1	5.1	5.1	4.8	5.2	4.9
How much does your institution emphasize the following (scale 1-4; 1=v little, 2=some, 3=quite a bit, 4=very much)						
providing support to help students succeed academically	2.9	2.9	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.2
learning support services (tutoring services, writing center, etc.)	2.8	2.8	2.9	3.0	3.1	3.1
Providing support for your overall well-being (recreation, health care, counseling, etc.)	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.9	3.0	3.1
Helping you manage your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)	2.1	2.2	2.2	2.5	2.5	2.7

3.D.2: Western's support for students' learning and academic needs begins at the recruitment stage and continues throughout students' academic careers. Students receive support from the first stages of recruitment through [admissions staff](#) dedicated to assisting students in finding success. Prospective students can connect directly with their admissions counselor through Undergraduate Admissions. From there, admissions counselors meet with students directly to explore degree options and share insights on financial aid and support. After admission to the University, [first-year students receive advising](#) related to programs and courses for which they are prepared. The initial advising meeting takes place during the [Summer Orientation and Registration](#) (SOAR) event.

3.D.3: Beginning in 2020, all incoming first year students are [advised](#) via professional advisors found in the [University Advising and Academic Support Center](#) (UAASC). Students meet with their first-year advisor multiple times throughout the semester to discuss academic progress, college transition, and future planning. In Fall 2020, advisors in the First-Year Advising Program began creating an online registration portal to assist students with the registration process for Fall 2021. This tool will be available to incoming freshmen in March 2021 and will streamline the process of registration by focusing on students' placements, transfer credits, and major requirements so that advisors can register students for courses that fit their educational plan and needs.

The University Advising and Academic Support Center also provides advising to high school dual enrollment students at the Macomb Campus. Dual enrollment students in the Quad Cities are advised by the Director of Student Services at the Quad Cities Campus.

Students admitted through the [Reach Program](#) are advised by staff from the [University Advising and Academic Support Center](#) in Macomb and by professional advising staff in the Quad Cities. UAASC staff also advise students participating in the [University Advising \(UA\) Program](#) for students who have not declared a major.

After a student's first year, regularly admitted and all other degree-seeking students and dually-enrolled community college students are advised by professional advisors and/or faculty in their school/department/college.

Students in the [Centennial Honors College](#), Athletics, and Study Abroad receive additional advising by advisors from those areas.

Western's School of Graduate Studies offers a [New Graduate Student Orientation](#), as well as [New Teaching Assistant Orientation](#) for those who will serve in an instructional capacity. They also provide a new graduate student [checklist](#) that offers additional support resources. Graduate students are advised by program faculty.

During the 2019-2020 academic year, the academic advising community adopted an online scheduling system utilizing Google Appointment Slots in an effort to accommodate students' diverse and busy lifestyles. This system provided students with a way to self-schedule advising appointments. Students no longer had to wait until business hours to make an appointment. An [online directory](#) of academic advisors was also created, which includes links to advisors' appointment calendars and is housed on the newly developed [academic advising web page](#). In Fall 2020, Calendly professional scheduling software was adopted to further streamline scheduling and communication workflows related to academic advising appointments. The software began the implementation phase in October 2020 and is expected to be utilized by all professional academic advisors in Spring 2021.

3.D.4: Western provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections, as appropriate to our offerings).

During orientation and again once they begin their studies at Western, new and transfer student receive information about important University resources, such as [Rocky's Resources](#) (including tutoring and academic success support services), the [University Writing Center](#), the [Student Development and Success Center](#), [faculty/staff and peer mentoring](#) opportunities, and services offered through the [Office of Retention Initiatives](#).

Additional examples of technological infrastructure, facilities, and collections are included below.

[The Center for Innovation in Teaching and Research](#)

CITR offers instruction support in the areas of pedagogical innovations, use of technology, and strategies for supporting student success and retention. It also supports instructional staff in the

use of our online course platform (Western Online) and an attendance tracker faculty can use. CITER organizes a [New Faculty Mentor Program](#) that pairs new faculty with current faculty.

[College of Arts and Sciences](#)

The [Alice L. Kibbe Life Science Research Station](#), a biological reserve of 222 acres, serves as an outdoor classroom for field studies and environmental research. The Cedar Glen Eagle Roost, adjacent to Kibbe, maintains research sites and equipment for sampling on the Mississippi River.

The [Rodney and Bertha Fink Environmental Studies Field Laboratory and Conservancy](#), a 77-acre natural area just west of the Macomb Campus, is available for research and teaching.

The [Department of Biological Sciences](#) has [facilities](#) and equipment for cell and molecular research, and houses the University Greenhouse and adjacent W.M. Walter Natural Area. The R. M. Myers Herbarium contains collections of more than 75,000 vascular plants, non-vascular plants, algae, and fungi. The animal collections include invertebrate and vertebrate specimens.

The [Department of Psychology](#) houses a [psychological clinic](#) and a psychoeducational clinic to provide psychological services to students and area residents. Many psychology faculty members have laboratories that contain equipment enabling them and their students to investigate topics from eyewitness memory to neuroscience.

The [Department of Earth, Atmospheric, and Geographic Information Sciences](#) houses the WIU [GIS Center](#). Other facilities include a Remote Sensing/GIS lab, an instructional lab for both GIS and meteorology-related instruction, a meteorology lab for meteorological data analysis instruction, a forecast office, and a geographic information display center with multiple screens.

[College of Business and Technology](#)

The [Department of Engineering Technology laboratories](#) include facilities for computer aided design/manufacturing, robotics, 3-D printing, metrology, material testing, programmable logic controlling, Auto-ID, and CNC machining.

The University is a member of the [Quad City Manufacturing Laboratory](#). This membership provides opportunities for applied research, professional work projects, and graduate internships with its industrial partners.

The [School of Agriculture](#) has several laboratories and test stations, as well as three [greenhouses](#) and 400 acres dedicated to research on alternative, organic, and traditional crops. Four facilities constitute the School of Agriculture's farms: The Agriculture Field Laboratory, the Kerr Agricultural Field Laboratory, the leased Allison Organic Research and Demonstration Farm, and the Scott County Farm. Integral to curriculum in agriculture as well as biology and recreation, parks, and tourism administration, these four farms total 530 acres and are a combination of crop land, pasture, forest, and conservation acreage.

[College of Education and Human Services](#)

The College of Education and Human Services (COEHS) maintains 32 electronic classrooms in Brophy, Currens, Horrabin, Knoblauch, and Stipes halls, permitting students and instructors to access the [latest instructional technologies](#).

[Horn Field Campus](#) is a 92-acre outdoor education and research facility and center for outdoor curriculum and programs. It is located south of Macomb and managed by the [Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Administration](#). Horn Field is available to the University and greater Western Illinois communities for educational, research, and outreach opportunities.

The [Department of Kinesiology](#) has modern [facilities](#) that include electronic classrooms and six labs (ADAM, Applied Sport Psychology, Athletic Training, Human Movement Performance, Motor Behavior, and Physical Education Teacher Education).

[College of Fine Arts and Communication](#)

The College of Fine Arts and Communications includes the [University Art Gallery](#), [COFAC Recital Hall](#), [Hainline Theatre](#), [Horrabin Hall Theatre](#), [Simpkins Theatre](#), [the Brophy Dance Studio](#), a [Music Library](#), a CAD Lab for theatre and design students, [radio broadcast and television facilities](#), and other facilities to support their programs and serve the community.

The [Speech-Language Hearing Clinic](#) provides diagnostic and therapy services for Western faculty and students, as well as area residents. The clinic offers state-of-the-art clinic rooms with a web-based video recording system. The speech clinic has a Computerized Speech Laboratory (CSL), Deep Pharyngeal Neuromuscular Stimulation and Vital Stimulation for voice and swallowing.

[Quad Cities Campus](#)

Besides many of the shared services housed on the Macomb Campus that benefit students on the Quad Cities Campus, the Quad Cities Campus also has the following facilities that support teaching and learning: [U.S. Bank Writing Center](#), [Quad Cities Campus Library](#), [Veterans Resource Center](#), [Food Pantry](#), and [Testing Center](#). In addition, all classrooms and most conference rooms on the branch campus are [capable of video-conferencing](#) to the Macomb Campus. The campus is also equipped with several computer labs, an engineering lab, a counselling lab, and several science labs that are all supported by on-site [facilities](#) and [technology staff](#).

[University Libraries](#)

The University Libraries are comprised of the main Leslie F. Malpass Library in Macomb and three branch libraries: WIU-QC Library, the Music Library, and the Curriculum Library (the latter two on the Macomb Campus). Malpass Library houses more than a million cataloged volumes and contains seating space for over 1,300 library users. The library is a government information depository for both federal and state documents. A large legal collection is also

available. The library maintains more than 56,000 print and electronic journal subscriptions in its periodical collection. The archives area of Malpass library serves as an official regional depository for public records of courthouses and city halls in the 16 counties surrounding Western. The libraries provide discipline/department [research guides](#) tailored to each discipline's needs, as well as class-specific guides developed by library staff working with faculty. Research tools and tutorials are available through links from multiple points on the libraries web page. Librarian [assistance](#) is available through text, email, phone, and live chat. Malpass Library also has several in-house and online collections, two computer classrooms, computer labs, and a Digital Studio.

[University Technology](#)

University Technology (uTech) creates, implements, and supports integrated information management solutions that contribute to the success of the University's mission. They also support third-party applications used by functional offices at the University and all administrative batch processing as well as [WIUP and STARS](#) transactional systems, and are responsible for network infrastructure, server administration, telecommunications, web services, and user support services. UTech is further discussed in Core Component 5.B.1.

The [Center for the Application of Information Technologies](#) (CAIT) is an Illinois Board of Higher Education designated center housed in the uTech division at Western. CAIT provides innovative and practical technology solutions, technical consulting, and sound e-learning for the University, as well as to external clients, such as state agencies, educational institutions, businesses, public agencies, and nonprofit organizations.

Sources

- Academic Advising
- Academic Advisors Directory
- Academic Catalogs
- Academic Success Coaching
- Academic Success Workshops
- Administrative Information Management Systems
- Admissions Counselors
- Alice L Kibbe Life Science Research Station
- Ask a Librarian
- Athletics Academic Services
- Beu Health Center
- Biology Facilities
- Campus Recreation
- Centennial Honors College
- Center for Career Preparation and Employer Engagement
- Center for Innovation in Teaching and Research

- Center for the Application of Information Technology
- COEHS Technology
- COFAC Recital Hall
- College of Arts and Sciences
- College of Business and Technology
- College of Education and Human Services
- College of Fine Arts and Communication
- Counseling Center
- Department of Biological Sciences
- Department of Earth Atmospheric and GIS
- Department of Kinesiology
- Department of Psychology
- Disability Resources
- Engineering Technology Facilities
- Faculty_staff and peer mentoring opportunities
- Financial Aid
- Fink Environmental Studies Field Laboratory
- First Year Advising
- GIS Center
- Greenhouses
- Horn Field Campus
- Housing and Dining Services
- Kinesiology Facilities
- Libraries Individual and Group Research Training
- Multicultural Center
- Music Library
- New Faculty Mentor Program
- New Graduate Student Checklist
- New Graduate Student Orientation
- New Teaching Assistant Orientation
- NSSE Results
- Office of Student Activities
- Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities
- Office of Transitional Programs
- Persistence and Completion Academy
- Psychological Clinic
- Quad Cities Campus
- Quad Cities Campus Electronic Classrooms
- Quad Cities Campus Facilities
- Quad Cities Campus Library
- Quad Cities Campus UTech
- Quad Cities Campus Veterans Resource Center
- Quad Cities Food Pantry
- Quad Cities Testing Center
- Quad City Manufacturing Lab
- Radio and TV facilities

- Reach Program
- Recreation Park and Tourism Administration Department
- Residence Life
- Retention Initiatives
- Rocky Resources
- Scholarship Office
- School of Agriculture
- Speech Language Hearing Clinic
- Student Development and Success Center
- Student Life
- Student Services - QC Campus
- Student Support Services
- Summer Orientation and Registration
- Theatre and Dance Facilities
- Transition and Academic Skills Center
- Tutoring
- University Advising and Academic Support Center
- University Advising Program
- University Art Gallery
- University Technology
- University Union Bookstore
- University Writing Center
- US Bank Writing Center
- Veterans Resource Center
- Western Courier
- WIU Libraries

3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

The institution provides quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

Summary

3S: Western Illinois University documents that courses and programs are current and credential-appropriate through a regular program review process, program accreditations, rigorous curriculum review and approval processes, and assessment processes. Undergraduate, graduate, and certificate programs have clear and differentiated student learning outcomes delivered and assessed consistently across all modalities and locations.

Western supports its mission and the values of academic excellence, educational opportunity, personal growth, and social responsibility through a general education program that provides a broad base of knowledge, methods of inquiry, and perspectives that are essential for a college-educated person; that integrates with the degree and certificate programs offered; and that establishes a foundation for future learning. The general education curriculum incorporates requirements in multicultural studies and foreign languages/global issues that reflect our commitment to equity, social justice, and diversity and that provide students with growth opportunities and lifelong skills essential in a multicultural world. Faculty are active in research and creative and scholarly work, and support graduate and undergraduate students in developing and sharing their research and creative work as well.

Western continues to prioritize diversifying its faculty and staff to reflect human diversity and to best serve its diverse constituencies. While we have faced significant faculty and staff reductions along with enrollment declines in the past ten years, student-faculty ratios are reasonable and units continue to offer high-quality educational programs and support services delivered by qualified faculty and staff. Ongoing trainings and professional development opportunities, along with regular, transparent review processes, ensure expectations are met.

The educational environment at Western is further enhanced by infrastructures and resources that support teaching, learning, research, and creative work.

Sources

There are no sources.

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

4.A - Core Component 4.A

The institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews and acts upon the findings.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that ensure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It ensures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution ensures that the credentials it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission.

Argument

4.A.1: The program review process and procedures for acting on findings are discussed in Core Component 3.A.1.

4.A.2: Western Illinois University evaluates all credit that it transcripts, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties, as explained below.

Undergraduate Students

Following the [Credit by External Examination Policy](#) and [Policy on Articulating Credit for Advanced Placement and External Examinations](#), Western grants up to 30 semester hours of academic credit to students successfully completing any of five programs (College Level Examination Program [CLEP], Defense Activity for Nontraditional Education Support [DANTES], International Baccalaureate [IB], Proficiency Examination Program [PEP], Seal of

Biliteracy [HB 4330]) prior to enrollment at the University. Advanced Placement credit is not subject to the 30-hour credit rule. Western publishes the list of [Advanced Placement](#) courses we accept and related policies, as well as policies regarding [Course Equivalencies](#). Western accepts transfer credits from regionally accredited institutions across the nation. [Credit transfer](#) is determined by existing course articulation agreements and school/departmental review.

All Illinois and some Iowa public community colleges have a written [articulation commitment](#) (compact agreement) from Western. Western has partnered with several [community colleges](#) to create a 2-year degree plan for an associate degree and a subsequent 2-year plan to complete a bachelor's degree. Completion of an Associate in Arts (AA) will satisfy Western's General Education requirements. This AA degree is designed to transfer and parallel the first two years of a bachelor's degree. Thus, completion of an AA degree in a baccalaureate-oriented program at an accredited Illinois two-year institution provides that the student will a) be automatically admitted and accepted with junior standing, and b) be considered to have completed the General Education requirements (University General Education Curriculum) at Western. An Associate in Science degree (AS) will satisfy some of our General Education requirements but does not guarantee all requirements will be met. This AS degree is designed to transfer into math and science-related majors.

[Linkages](#) (community college dual enrollment agreements) is a concurrent enrollment program where students enroll at Western and a participating community college, locking in our 4-year cost guarantee and ensuring a seamless transition into a Western major. The Linkages Program also includes an advising model that prepares students for a full transition to Western.

The [Undergraduate Catalog](#) includes policies on *Illinois Statewide Articulated Baccalaureate-Oriented Associate Degrees, Out-of-State and Private Institutions Baccalaureate-Oriented Associate Degrees Articulation [Compact] Agreements, Illinois Articulation Initiative, Evaluation of Transferable General Education Credit, Evaluation of Baccalaureate Major Transfer Credit, and the Dual Admission Transfer Program*. Western provides tools to support seamless transfer planning including [Transfer Guides](#) and [Transferology](#). These tools allow all potential transfer students to see how their courses will transfer to Western. Students who participate in Western's [Transfer Admission Guarantee](#) receive course credit evaluations and a Western degree audit of their courses every semester.

Bachelors of Arts in General Studies Candidates

The [Bachelor of Arts in General Studies](#) (BGS) degree is a 120-semester hour program, requiring 30 hours to be earned at Western in order to satisfy residency requirements. All other semester hour requirements can be fulfilled through Western courses and/or a combination of the options that are displayed in the Policy on BGS [Degree Completion Options](#) for Earning University Credit (i.e., [transfer courses](#), [military courses/training](#), [non-collegiate credit](#), [proficiency exams](#), [internship\(s\)](#), and/or [prior learning portfolio](#)).

Graduate Students

The [Graduate Transfer Policy](#) states, “Transfer credits are approved by the School of Graduate Studies or the Graduate Council only after the degree plan has been approved. Petitions for transfer of graduate credit must be submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, and official transcripts recording the transfer courses must be sent directly from the registrar of that institution to the School of Graduate Studies. No course credit may be transferred unless the grade received was at least a B.”

If approved by the department, a student may transfer a maximum of six semester hours of approved graduate credit from an accredited institution in a 30-hour degree program or nine semester hours in a 32-hour degree program, with the exception of doctoral programs. A student in a doctoral program may transfer a maximum of twelve semester hours with approval from the department. Students may petition the [Graduate Council](#), with the approval of the advisor and the departmental graduate committee, for additional hours to be accepted from other accredited institutions. Coursework that was used to meet degree requirements for a master’s degree at a different institution will not be allowed to transfer to Western.

International Course Credit

The [Undergraduate Transfer Credit for International Classes](#) Policy stipulates that undergraduate courses taken at schools outside the U.S. are evaluated on a course-by-course basis. Students requesting credit for specific courses are required to submit detailed course descriptions or a syllabus for each course. If submitted materials are not in English, word for word translations are required. Graduate students follow the Graduate Transfer Policy outlined above.

4.A.3: As explained in Core Component 4.A.2, Western has policies at the undergraduate and graduate levels that ensure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer, including policies on AP credit and high school course equivalencies, transfer credit from accredited U.S. and international institutions, military courses/training, non-collegiate training, proficiency exams, internships, and prior learning portfolios.

4.A.4: Western maintains and exercises authority over the [prerequisites](#) for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. Faculty own the curriculum, set course requirements, and maintain academic rigor in all offerings. The [Official University Policy Manual](#) has policies with respect to [prerequisites](#), [course syllabi](#), and faculty and department responsibilities with respect to [curriculum](#). As cited in Core Component 3.A.1, curriculum-focused committees at departmental, college, and university levels have policies with respect to prerequisites, rigor, and expectations for student learning. Expectations for student learning are addressed in Core Components 3.A.2 and 4.B.1. Access to learning resources is addressed in Core Components 3.D.2 and 3.D.4. Faculty qualifications for Western programs, including dual credit programs, are addressed in Core Component 3.C.3. Core Component 3.A.3 also specifically addresses academic expectations for dual credit courses.

4.A.5: As discussed in Core Component 3.A.1, Western maintains [specialized accreditation](#) for graduate and undergraduate degrees, as appropriate, in addition to teacher licensure programs

and the WESL Institute. All accredited programs at Western are currently approved and compliant with full accreditation, certification, or licensure.

4.A.6: Western evaluates the [success of its graduates](#) and ensures that the credentials it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, we look to indicators we deem appropriate to our University mission.

Western's alumni are highly successful in graduate/professional school and employment outcomes. We [survey alumni](#) on a rotating basis (at one year, five years, and nine years post-graduation). Of those who respond to surveys, institutional data consistently indicate that over 90% of graduates are employed or enrolled in further education within one year of graduation. In 2019, 88% of respondents 9 years post-graduation indicated that they were employed, either full-time or part-time, with 68% indicating that their job was closely related to their degree.

In 2020 the [Center for Career Preparation and Employer Engagement](#) (CCPEE) was established, replacing the Career Development Center, to assist with our focus on employment outcomes and student career success. The Center for Career Preparation and Employer Engagement works to foster connections between Western and employers throughout the western Illinois and Quad Cities regions to ensure opportunities exist for local employment and workforce needs. In an effort to gain further insight into our recent graduates' career outcomes the CCPEE will begin administering an annual National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE)-compliant First Destination Survey via Handshake to the class of 2021.

External sources provide additional evidence of our graduate success. For example, over 74,000 Alumni have connected to Western's [LinkedIn page](#). LinkedIn data indicate that Western graduates are employed at top companies, such as Caterpillar and John Deere. The U.S. Department of Education [College Scorecard](#) provides a snapshot of graduation rates and salary in the first year post-graduation. Another external resource from the state of Illinois, the [Illinois College2Career](#) website, provides information on graduates who entered the job market and stayed in the state of Illinois. These data indicate that a minimum of 64% of Western graduates stay in the state of Illinois and of those alumni, nearly 79% have job stability.

Sources

- 2 plus 2 Articulation Agreements
- Accreditation Schedule
- Advanced Placement Credit
- Alumni Surveys
- Bachelor Arts in General Studies
- BGS Degree Completion Options fo Earning University Credit
- Center for Career Preparation and Employer Engagement
- College Scorecard
- Course Equivalencies

- Course Syllabus Policy
- Credit by External Examination
- Department Curriculum Responsibilities
- Enforced Prerequisite Procedure
- Graduate Transfer Policy
- Illinois College2Career
- Internship for BGS UNIV 490 BGS SYLLABUS
- Linkages Program
- Non-Collegiate Credit
- Official University Policy Manual
- Policy on Articulating Credit for Advanced Placement and External Exams
- Post Graduate Successes
- PREREQUISITE Information sheet
- Prior Learning Portfolio
- Proficiency Examinations
- Transfer Admission Guarantee Program
- Transfer Credits for BGS
- Transfer Guides
- Transfer Students
- Transferology
- Undergraduate Transfer Credit for International Classes
- University Graduate Council
- Veterans Resource Center
- Western Illinois University LinkedIn

4.B - Core Component 4.B

The institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students.

1. The institution has effective processes for assessment of student learning and for achievement of learning goals in academic and cocurricular offerings.
2. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
3. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty, instructional and other relevant staff members.

Argument

4.B.1: Western's [assessment of student learning](#) supports our University mission by continually improving undergraduate, graduate, general education, and co-curricular student learning through a cyclical four-step process of 1) identifying learning outcomes; 2) directly measuring students' achievement of those outcomes; 3) analyzing the results of learning assessment; and 4) documenting "impact," i.e., using those results as a basis for enhancing the curriculum, the teaching-learning process, and co-curricular activities and programs. Course and program-embedded assessment is a favored strategy that often utilizes preexisting, and therefore potentially more meaningful, forms of measurement. The [Plan for Assessment of Student Learning in General Education](#), developed by the [Council on General Education](#) (CGE) and approved by the [Faculty Senate](#), encourages course-embedded assessment and describes Western's six general education goals, which are assessed following the [four-step model of assessment](#). The Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs contain links to [student learning outcomes](#) for all certificate and degree programs and the Goals of General Education.

Each academic program must have an assessment committee and an updated plan that aligns with their annual assessment report. Departmental assessment subcommittees submit annual reports through their chairs to their deans' offices, who review and work with departments to address deficiencies, and then submit to the Academic Assessment Coordinator and the Associate Provost/Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs. Program directors submit co-curricular assessment to the Co-Curricular Assessment Coordinator and the Associate Provost. Programs receive continual support throughout the year to ensure standards are met. In Fall 2017, the General Education Review Committee (GERC), under the Council on General Education, began a comprehensive review that resulted in concrete improvements in assessment (Spring 2018), including a system for requiring strong impact statements ([General Education Review Committee Final Report](#)).

All academic programs, general education, and co-curricular [assessment reports](#) are reviewed and receive written feedback. Programs resubmit with revisions, and their final status is reported in the [Annual Assessment of Student Learning Matrix](#) to faculty, staff, and students annually. The Matrix is submitted to the Faculty Senate, Graduate Council, Student Government

Association, and Student Services Leadership Team, and shared on the Assessment of Student Learning web page, and in meetings with individual departments and programs. Academic programs must have an acceptable assessment report on file for curricular requests to be approved at the level of the Provost's Office. In co-curricular programming, effective assessment is tied to requests for funding.

The [Student Learning Assessment Committee](#) (SLAC), comprised of faculty, administrators, staff, and a student representative, serves as an advisory group to the Associate Provost/Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, supporting consistency in maintaining external accrediting requirements and internal standards for assessments. SLAC was instrumental in uniting the associate deans in each college and creating a team that supports assessment at that crucial level. SLAC approves any changes to the [University Assessment Plan](#).

Over the last decade, the Provost's Office has institutionalized a culture of assessment across the University and worked to unite assessment processes. In Fall 2020, the [Office of Assessment, Accreditation, and Strategic Planning](#) (AASP) was created, along with a director position, to centralize assessment activities in academic affairs, co-curricular programming, and administrative services by connecting accreditation and strategic planning. Oversight continues to reside with the Associate Provost/Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, but the Director of Assessment, Accreditation, and Strategic Planning guides day-to-day AASP operations. Key objectives of AASP are to create a university-wide, data-informed culture; align student learning assessment with the mission; analyze institutional efficiency and operational performance; support accreditation activities; facilitate communication with the Western community; foster University engagement with assessment and planning; and create all University planning documents.

We share information with our constituencies through the [Assessment of Student Learning](#) web page. In 2015, we conducted college-wide assessment workshops to explain and support the emphasis on the fourth step, the impact of the data on student learning. The materials produced were updated and are on the web page, as are the most recent [Annual Assessment of Student Learning Matrices](#). There are assessment guidelines, example rubrics, and information on annual reporting on the site.

Assessment of student learning processes are continually evaluated for effectiveness in enhancing student learning and achievement. Assessment processes themselves are regularly reviewed, updated, and approved by their respective areas and by the [Student Learning Assessment Committee](#). Appropriate faculty, staff, and administrative units annually review the assessment processes in their areas and provide recommendations for the purpose of improving the structure.

Offices and centers throughout the divisions of student services and enrollment management participate in co-curricular assessment to continually improve services, programs, and offerings to students. A formal co-curricular assessment process was implemented in 2020, modeled on undergraduate, graduate, and general education assessment processes following the four-step process of identifying outcomes, measuring outcomes, analyzing results, and identifying impact. Unit leaders identify learning outcomes for the upcoming year ranging from programmatic

outcomes to overarching assessment of the impact that interactions with a given office may have on student learning. Staff within units collect data throughout the year and submit reports to the Co-Curricular Assessment Coordinator. Reports are reviewed and written feedback is given. Units are asked to revise reports as needed.

Since co-curricular assessment is in the early stages of implementation, units that have worked to implement the process over the past year will now work on processes for utilizing data collected. Upon implementation, co-curricular assessment followed the same timeline as academic programs. After review of the first year's implementation, the co-curricular timeline was adjusted (effective Spring 2021) to adhere to the fiscal year in order to meet the planning needs of departments. Offices and centers will submit reports to the Co-Curricular Assessment Coordinator by June so that revisions can be submitted and upcoming learning outcomes identified by the new fiscal year.

4.B.2: Departments must provide evidence of annual assessment data for program reviews and must have annual assessment reports on file to have curriculum changes approved at the level of the Provost's Office. [Assessment reports](#) identify the impact of assessment on curriculum and learning outcomes. Departmental assessment subcommittees initiate program changes to promote continuous improvement of student learning based on assessment results. For example, the WIU Writing Program annually assesses the objectives in its general education writing sequence on a rotating basis and makes changes to course goals and student learning outcomes to best reflect what was learned from assessment and best practices in the field, in alignment with articulation agreements.

4.B.3: As discussed in Core Component 4.B.1, assessment of student learning at Western involves faculty and staff at the program or department, college, and university level. The process is guided by [Committing to Quality: Guidelines for Assessment and Accountability in Higher Education](#), as well as by Western's [Higher Values in Higher Education Strategic Plan](#), the [Philosophy and Goals of General Education](#), the [Assessment of Student Learning in General Education](#), the [Student Learning Assessment Committee \(SLAC\) Mission and Purpose](#), and the [Operating Paper of the Graduate School](#), all of which are also shaped by continual faculty and staff involvement. All annual assessment reports, including academic programs, general education, and co-curricular programs, require evidence of faculty and/or staff involvement in the creation, implementation, discussion of results, and use of the results to improve student learning. The [Office of Assessment, Accreditation, and Strategic Planning \(AASP\)](#) oversees meetings and correspondence with program faculty and staff to discuss adjustments to their assessment plans and deficiencies in their reports, and to train new faculty and staff who have moved into positions requiring an advanced understanding of best assessment practices. AASP is responsible for providing training, materials, meetings, and quality checks to ensure assessment processes are strong.

In teacher education, the [University Committee for Education Preparation \(UCEP\)](#) sets the criteria for teacher education program assessment reports annually. The Associate Provost/Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Academic Assessment Coordinator work with the Assistant Dean for Educator Preparation to facilitate this process.

Western defers to teacher education accreditation standards, ensuring that Higher Learning Commission standards are met in the process.

Faculty within departments identify which goals of general education are addressed in each course, develop and conduct forms of course-embedded measurement that provided direct evidence of student learning relative to the learning objectives, analyze the findings, use the data to improve student learning in general education, and report annually to the Subcommittee on Assessment in General Education, which works with the Associate Provost/Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Academic Assessment Coordinator to evaluate the status of the reports, require revisions, and determine the acceptance of the report. The [Council on General Education](#) (CGE) uses assessment results in their ongoing review of general education. The Subcommittee on Assessment in General Education provides continuous updates and an annual report to the CGE.

Sources

- Assessment Accreditation and Strategic Planning
- Assessment of Student Learning Plan
- Assessment Reports
- Committing To Quality
- Council on General Education
- Evidence File
- Faculty Senate
- Four Step Model of Assessment
- General Education Assessment
- General Education Review Committee Report
- Operating Paper of the Graduate School
- Philosophy and Goals of General Education
- Student Academic Assessment at Western
- Student Learning Assessment Committee
- Student Learning Outcomes
- University Committee for Education Preparation
- University's Strategic Plan- Higher Values in Higher Education 2017-2027

4.C - Core Component 4.C

The institution pursues educational improvement through goals and strategies that improve retention, persistence and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence and completion that are ambitious, attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations and educational offerings.
2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence and completion of its programs.
3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

Argument

4.C.1: Western has long-standing goals and priorities to improve student retention, persistence, and completion rates in line with its mission, student population, and educational offerings, as documented in the [WIU Retention Goals](#). These goals include mid- and long-term goals for overall retention and graduation rates as well as specific goals for:

- New first-year students including first-year fall-to-spring and fall-to-fall retention rates;
- Upper division students including transfer fall-to-spring retention rates;
- Subpopulations, with the intent to close the gap for underrepresented student populations, as well as for male and low-income students; and
- Academic programs, focusing on retention rates by college, major, and special admit student population (our Reach Program, see Core Components 3.D.3 and 1.A.3).

Western aims to achieve retention and graduation rates that place the University at the median and then top 25% of [peer institutions](#). Data indicate that this will entail improving retention rates from an average of 67.4% to 80.6% to reach the median, and improving to 84.8% to reach the top 25% for the Macomb peer group. Western's graduation rate will need to improve from an average of 53.2% to 62.0% to reach the median, and improve to 68.4% to reach the top 25% of peer institutions.

Thus, while Western's goals are ambitious, recent progress in response to new and improved programs and initiatives (see Core Component 4.C.3) shows they are also achievable.

4.C.2: Western uses the IPEDS definition of retention and graduation, cohorts, and first-time freshman and transfer students. We also use IPEDS data to create benchmark data comparisons. First-to-second year retention rate and six-year graduation rate data are reported every year to [state](#) and [federal agencies](#), as well as the [University](#) community. Goals, accomplishments, and data with respect to retention, persistence, and completion are also part of the presentations of the representatives from the Division of Enrollment Management in their annual meetings with the President. Further, representatives from this Division, along with the Associate Provost/Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, present these findings each fall to the WIU Board of Trustees.

Data on retention and graduation rates are also available from [Institutional Research and Planning](#) (IRP). Degrees conferred, retention, persistence, and completion data are collected and analyzed as part of program review and discipline-specific accreditation processes. Annual WIU Fact Books provide retention and graduation data to assist in program evaluation. The WIU [Fact Books](#) include new freshmen retention and graduation rates by gender, ethnicity, and admission program. They also include the same information for new transfer students by gender, ethnicity, class, and associate's degree status. As a result of participating in the HLC Persistence and Completion Academy, we created another repository for data and analysis, the WIU Data Warehouse (for discussion of the Academy and Data Warehouse, see Core Component 4.C.3).

4.C.3: Western uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to develop new initiatives and improve existing ones aimed at educational opportunity and academic success.

WIU [Fact Book](#) data for Fall 2015 show that 10,877 freshmen applied and 6,534 were admitted, an admission rate of 60.1%. Of the freshmen who enrolled, 50.4% were minority. In Fall 2019, admissions acceptance rates had fallen to 56.7%, and of those who enrolled, 44.2% were minority. [Admission policy](#) was revised for the Fall 2020 freshman class (see Core Component 5.A.2) to offer high-achieving students test-optional admission to ensure greater opportunity, especially for diverse populations. Students in the top 10% of their high school class also gain automatic admission to Western. For Fall 2020, the expected outcomes of our revised admissions criteria were achieved: 67% of freshmen applicants were accepted, and of those who enrolled, 55% were minority students. The GPA of the entering class also increased from 3.40 to 3.49. We expect future incoming cohorts to benefit from increased access to higher education, and for Western to continue to be more diverse in student enrollment.

We are aware of persistence challenges for different populations of students but our focused [work in retention](#) is reaping rewards. Western's Fall 2019-to-Fall 2020 retention rates for full-time, first-year bachelor's (or equivalent) degree-seeking undergraduate students increased 9.5 percentage points to 77.0% from our [Fall 2018-to-Fall 2019](#) rate of 67.5%. Previous data indicate that Western's average first-year (fall-to-fall) retention rate of first-time, full-time freshmen was 67.4% for the Fall 2014-2018 cohorts compared to 79.8% for our peer institutions. The six-year graduation rate for the 2013 cohort was 51%. Analysis of six-year graduation rates for Western using the Macomb Campus benchmark institutions indicates that the 2013 cohort's rate (51%) was below that of the average six-year graduation rate (62.0%) of our peer institutions.

Within this recent data, we see encouraging trends related to our minority student populations. Recent evidence demonstrates that Western is experiencing progress in student persistence through concerted efforts occurring at the school/department, college, campus, and university levels. The retention rate from Fall 2019 to Fall 2020 for students who identify as African American/Black increased 13.3 percentage points from 54.4% to 67.7%. The retention rate for students who identify as Hispanic increased 13.0 percentage points from 64.7% to 77.7%. In Fall 2018, the first-year persistence rates for Black students (54.4%) and Hispanic students (64.7%), were below the 67.5% rate for the total cohort. However, for the Fall 2017 to Fall 2018 cohort, first year persistence rates were up 3.9% for Black students and 3.3% for Hispanic students. Over the last three years, we have seen consistent increases.

HLC's Persistence and Completion Academy 2014-2018 and the Data Warehouse

As a result of our membership in the Higher Learning Commission's (HLC) [Persistence and Completion Academy](#), a significant amount of data review and analysis took place leading to the implementation of improvements. A primary goal of the Persistence and Completion team was to streamline and consolidate the collection and processing of retention data beyond our annual WIU Fact Books. The result was the creation of the [WIU Data Warehouse](#), which includes 18 undergraduate cohorts; 80 demographic, application, academic, course placement, and financial aid filters; more than two dozen success measures such as course deficiencies, retention, and graduation rates; and National Student Clearinghouse data.

The Data Warehouse allowed the team to see that course deficiencies and early warnings were indicative of student attrition. This led the Persistence and Completion team to propose and implement an [Academic Success Coaching](#) model on the Macomb Campus (discussed in Core Component 3.D.1) and enhance the Building Connections Mentorship Program (discussed below). The Data Warehouse lacked the predictive analytics necessary to pinpoint exactly which students were most at risk upon entry. WIU's Institutional Research and Planning (IRP) developed an Early At-Risk Predictive Model that can be used for proactive intervention. Western utilizes a predictive analytics software, which is provided by the third-party company [Rapid Insight](#), to assist with early identification of at-risk students. Currently, the variables in the retention model are all pre-enrollment variables (e.g., high school grade point average, standardized test score, financial variables). After students are identified as early at-risk (for not retaining), we can assist the students by identifying barriers to success and implementing other success strategies. Additional analysis is taking place through the [Office of Retention Initiatives](#). Specifically, enriching data regarding the students' sense of belonging, connectedness to the University, and engagement are collected and will be used to develop a model that will predict a mid-term at-risk population that we can assist with persistence intervention measures.

Two culminating recommendations from the Persistence and Completion team were to create and fill a retention coordinator or director position and create a [Retention Dashboard](#), which was implemented in Fall 2020.

Office of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Retention Initiatives (2018) and Office of Retention Initiatives (2019)

In 2018, a plan was enacted to recruit and hire the first Director of Retention to focus on retention initiatives, data analyzation, and continual improvements to best impact student retention. Due to the availability of funds, current staffing structures were modified and the Office of Student Judicial Programs evolved to become the [Office of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Retention Initiatives](#).

Upon reorganization of the University and creation of the [Division of Enrollment Management](#), the [Office of Retention Initiatives](#) was established in 2019 with a retention area encompassing first-year advising, orientation program, career development, mentorship programming, and academic support services. The position of [Executive Director of Retention Initiatives](#) was established to lead the area and focus on data utilization and best practices for future planning. The Office of Retention Initiatives oversees retention efforts including the [Building Connections Mentorship Program](#), [Leatherneck Care Referral Program](#), [Leatherneck Success Team](#), [Online Absence Reporting System](#) (OARS), and the [Connections Mapping Program](#). New initiatives include a streamlined tool for attendance tracking, advising management, and student communication; enhancing academic advising; restructuring select introductory courses; and increasing student involvement. Key initiatives are highlighted below.

Retention Initiative Team

In 2020, the [WIU Retention Initiative Team](#) was established by the Office of Retention Initiatives to focus on data analyzation and response to meet student needs. The team is a university-wide committee comprised of representatives from each college as well as representatives from student services and enrollment management. They review retention and completion data from IRP, including information relating to subpopulations of students, as well as data provided by IPEDS and the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE). They assist the Office of Retention Initiatives in developing retention plans, initiatives, and recommendations.

Building Connections Mentorship Program

The [Building Connections Mentorship Program](#) (piloted Spring 2012 with full rollout Fall 2012) focuses on assisting students in their transition to Western. All students are invited to register and then are paired with volunteer faculty, staff, alumni, and upper-division students who facilitate individual meetings to discuss campus connections, resources, and more. Students taking [University 100](#) are automatically paired with a Building Connections Mentor.

Leatherneck Care Referral Program

The development of the [Leatherneck Care Referral Program](#) was a direct response to student trends in utilization of University resources and needs. Western is committed to the emotional and physical well-being of all students, as well as their academic success. The Leatherneck Care Referral offers a user-friendly tool for a member of the Western community to share non-emergency-related concerns about student behaviors and potential barriers to success. There were over 200 submissions from students, faculty, staff, and families of students in the program's first semester (Spring 2019). Staff from the Student Development and Success Center and Office of Retention Initiatives lead the coordination of the Leatherneck Care Referral

Program and are trained to assist. The Leatherneck Care Referral Program saw over 915 submissions in AY 2019-20.

Online Absence Reporting System (OARS)

Western established new and enhanced existing programs and services to support student success in Fall 2019. The [Student Development and Success Center](#) and the [Office of Retention Initiatives](#) implemented strategic follow-up with students who have class absences. The source of information is the [Online Absence Reporting System](#) (OARS) implemented in 2013. Students are encouraged to submit an entry for each class missed. The information is forwarded to faculty. Additionally, the Office of Retention Initiatives provides phone or in-person outreach to students who miss an above-average number of classes or whom faculty have noted as having a high number of absences.

The Leatherneck Success Team (LST)

The [Leatherneck Success Team](#) was established in 2012 as a peer-to-peer resource and mentoring program for students, focusing on time management, study skills, and campus engagement.

Connections Mapping Program

Since 2016, Western has collected data on student interactions with the University and each other to utilize in predictive analysis and intervention. The [Connections Mapping Program](#) identifies first-year students who are at a higher risk of not retaining into their second semester and second year by compiling attendance data (voluntarily reported by faculty) from the [CITR Attendance Tracker](#), and data related to student use of resources like the [Spencer Student Recreation Center](#), [Purple Post](#), Western Online, meal plan use, connections identified through resident assistants, tutoring, support services, and more. Using data from the Connections Mapping Program, Building Connections mentors reach out with a goal of connecting students to more resources at the University and increasing awareness of offerings.

New Initiatives in Scholarship Programs

New efforts to improve student persistence and completion focus on issues of student cost sensitivity and price elasticity. As noted in the WIU [Fact Book](#), about 80% of all full-time undergraduate students who attend Western receive assistance through loans, scholarships, tuition waivers, grants, and/or employment. Our WIU Board of Trustees [FY 20 Performance Report](#) indicates that during Fall 2015-Fall 2019, an average of 50.36% of Macomb undergraduates, 40.2% of Quad Cities undergraduates, and 39.0% of extension undergraduates received Pell grants each year. Western students consistently receive the highest (2014-18) or second highest (2018-19) percentage of need-based aid of other Illinois public regional institutions.

We have created new, and enhanced existing, scholarship programs to build upon the [\\$10M in scholarships](#) that Western awards annually. We now offer [Alumni Legacy Scholarships](#),

[Leatherneck Visitor Scholarships, Chicago](#) and [St. Louis Leatherneck Scholarships, Local Leatherneck Housing Scholarships](#), and [Leatherneck Book Awards](#). Each of these scholarships and awards are effective with Fall 2020 new students. We also enhanced our [Western Commitment Scholarship](#) program. The scholarship automatically awards \$3,000-8,000 annually to incoming freshmen based on merit and need. The Western Commitment [Transfer Scholarship program](#) was also revised, with the automatic award increasing to \$2,500 and scholarship eligibility extended to part-time students. Additionally, the WIU [Phi Theta Kappa Scholarship](#) will provide a one-time \$1,000 award to Fall 2020 new transfer students who are members of this honor society.

Respondus Lockdown Browser

In 2016, several surveys were conducted to assess the effectiveness of online courses. The goal was to reduce barriers for students and increase retention. The results of the surveys showed that requiring in-person proctored exams for online courses was neither popular nor practical. It created barriers for online students. This finding led to the implementation of [Respondus Lockdown Browser](#) that locks the screen during exams to prevent cheating as well as [Respondus Monitor](#) that uses a student's webcam and serves as an electronic proctor for online exams. Respondus has been particularly useful with the implementation of COVID-19 guidelines.

4.C.4: Western utilizes a myriad of data when collecting and comparing best practices and student retention, persistence, and completion information. The [Office of Institutional Research and Planning](#) (IRP) collects and analyzes a variety of University and related data to assist in measuring performance and planning for the future of Western. IRP reports data to external agencies like the National Center for Education Statistics (IPEDS) and the Common Data Set Initiative using their data definitions, and this guides a majority of our data reporting. In addition to the information available in the WIU Fact Book, the IRP web page includes annual [Common Data Set](#) reports and [IPEDS Survey](#) reports. Individuals can also request specific data for analysis.

Western utilizes a variety of peer benchmark groups, including the other Illinois public universities, a Macomb benchmark group, a Quad Cities benchmark group, IPEDS selected benchmark group, and finally, a University Professionals of Illinois (UPI) peer group for salary studies.

Regardless of the peer group utilized, the definitions offered by IPEDS provide a clear and consistent definition across institutions, which increases the accuracy of the comparison. However, individual programs working with and collecting data may make modifications to those definitions, if appropriate, to assist in program evaluation and continuous improvement, based on best practices in their program. Internally, we review specific subpopulations and University-specific retention initiatives and time-to-degree variables. For example, the Office of Retention Initiatives uses Connections Mapping data to evaluate student performance in real time, allowing for interventions to occur in the semester where students might need additional support. For example, the Connections Mapping data are used to evaluate the number of students with early warning grades, make annual comparisons of the data, and respond appropriately.

Western collects data from first-year and senior students about their academic experience at Western via the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). IRP provides the results to various offices to assist in retention initiatives. The Office of Retention Initiatives and the Retention Initiative Team review [NSSE data](#) for insight on student engagement in order to enhance efforts to increase student retention, persistence, and completion.

Sources

- Academic Success Coaching
- Admission Standards
- Admissions
- Alumni Legacy Scholarship
- attendance_tracker
- Building Connections Mentor Program
- Campus Recreation
- Chicago Leatherneck Scholarship
- Common Data Sets
- Connections Mapping
- Data Warehouse
- Enrollment Management Division
- Executive Director of Retention Initiatives
- Fall 2018 to Fall 2019 Retention
- FY20-Performance-Report
- IBHE Retention and Graduation Rates
- Institutional Research and Planning
- IPEDS Reports
- IPEDS Retention and Graduation Rates
- Leatherneck Book Award
- Leatherneck Care Referral
- Leatherneck Success Team
- Leatherneck Visitor Scholarship
- Local Leatherneck Housing Scholarship
- National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
- Online Absence Reporting System
- Peer Institutions
- Persistence and Completion Academy
- Phi Theta Kappa Scholarship
- Purple Post
- Rapid Insight
- Respondus FAQs
- Respondus Lockdown Browser
- Retention Dashboard from Data Warehouse
- Retention Data Draft Plan 2020-2021

- Retention Initiatives Team
- Scholarships
- St Louis Leatherneck Scholarship
- Student Development and Success Center
- Student Rights Responsibilities and Retention Initiatives
- Transfer Scholarships
- University 100
- Western Commitment Scholarships
- WIU Factbooks
- WIU Vision and Mission

4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

Summary

4S: Western Illinois University demonstrates responsibility for quality educational programs through regular program reviews, evaluation by the University or responsible third parties of all credit transcripts (including transfer credit), external accreditations, and documented data on graduate success following degree completion. Western maintains and exercises authority over course prerequisites, rigor, expectations for student learning, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs.

Commitment to student learning outcomes and success is demonstrated by our processes for assessment of student learning and for achievement of learning goals in academic and co-curricular offerings. Assessment processes and learning outcomes are continually evaluated and adapted as needed to be more effective and reflect good practice. Student learning outcomes are clearly communicated and reflect an alignment between course, program, and University goals. All programs involve faculty and staff as appropriate in the assessment process as well as in the application of assessment outcomes to curricular, co-curricular, and programmatic decisions aimed to enhance student learning and success.

Western demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through defined goals and strategies for improving retention, persistence, and completion in its degree and certificate programs. We collect and analyze information on student retention, persistence, and completion, adapting existing programs and developing new ones based on the data in order to meet students' needs and support their success from the recruitment stage through graduation. Western offers several programs and initiatives to support at-risk students.

Sources

There are no sources.

5 - Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

The institution's resources, structures, processes and planning are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

5.A - Core Component 5.A

Through its administrative structures and collaborative processes, the institution's leadership demonstrates that it is effective and enables the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. Shared governance at the institution engages its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff and students—through planning, policies and procedures.
2. The institution's administration uses data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the institution and its constituents.
3. The institution's administration ensures that faculty and, when appropriate, staff and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy and processes through effective collaborative structures.

Argument

5.A.1: In order to promote shared participation in responsible and informed decision-making and to ensure open channels of communication, Western Illinois University operates under shared governance through planning, policies, and procedures, engaging the WIU Board of Trustees (BOT), as well as administration, faculty, staff, and students.

Shared governance policies and procedures with respect to the BOT are discussed in Core Components 1.B.1 and 2.C.5. The [WIU Organizational Chart](#) provides the structure through which planning, policies and procedures are employed at Western. The [Official University Policy Manual](#) is available online and details current policies in effect at Western.

The [President's administrative team](#) exemplifies the collaboration among the University's area divisions. Further collaboration is achieved through University-related organizations, which include the [Foundation](#), [Alumni Council](#), and [athletic associations](#). The students, staff, and faculty develop constitutions for their own duly established campus and government organizations.

The mission of the [Student Government Association](#) (SGA) is to promote the general welfare of students through the representation of their concerns, viewpoints, and interests regarding governance issues to the administration and faculty. The SGA has a Director of Academic Affairs who serves as an ex officio member of the Faculty Senate, a Director of Student Services who serves on the Council for Curricular Program Instruction (CCPI) and Council on General Education (CGE), and a Legislative Development Committee whose sole purpose is to evaluate

Academic and Student Services to address student concerns or needs and develop possible solutions. The Quad Cities Campus has its own [Student Government Association](#) that advocates for the interests of students at the branch campus.

The [Civil Service Employees Council](#) (CSEC) works with the Director of Human Resources in the formation of policies and procedures relating to all Civil Service employees, including facilitating communication between the employee groups and the Department of Human Resources. Specifically, the Council considers problems of Civil Service employees and makes recommendations to the Director of Human Resources and member(s) representing Western on the University Civil Service Advisory Committee, and to the Merit Board regarding the same. It also provides a medium for the passing of ideas and directives to the employee groups from the Director of Human Resources. This collaborative relationship has yielded changes in budget planning, compensation review, and grievance processes that benefit Western and our employees.

The [Council of Administrative Personnel](#) (COAP) provides representation as a group to the policy-making officers and the policy-recommending bodies of the University and governing boards in order to obtain and maintain ethical, acceptable, and equitable standards for administrative personnel. Examples of COAP's shared governance through planning, policies, and procedures include an open forum with the University President every spring for COAP members and member service on various University-wide committees to represent administrative personnel.

The [Faculty Senate](#) serves as a means by which the opinions and viewpoints of the faculty are determined and communicated to Western's administration, and it serves as an agency through which the faculty participate in the formation of basic University policy. The following is a comprehensive list of the Faculty Senate councils and committees:

Senate Committees

- [Executive Committee](#) (ExCo)
- [Budget Transparency Committee](#) (BTC) (discussed in Core Component 2.A.2)
- [Senate Nominating Committee](#) (SNC)
- [Committee on Provost and Presidential Performance](#) (CPPP)

Senate Councils

- [Council on Admission, Graduation and Academic Standards](#) (CAGAS) (discussed in Core Components 2.A.2 and 3.A.1)
- [Council on Campus Planning and Usage](#) (CCPU)
- [Council on Curricular Programs and Instruction](#) (CCPI) (discussed in Core Component 3.C.2)
- [Council on General Education](#) (CGE) (discussed in Core Components 3.B.1, 3.C.2, and 4.B.1)
- [Council for Instructional Technology](#) (CIT)
- [Council on Intercollegiate Athletics](#) (CIA)

- [Council for International Education](#) (CIE)
- [Council on Writing Instruction in the Disciplines](#) (WID) (discussed in Core Component 3.C.2)

The [committees of faculty government](#) participate in the decision-making process of the University in the following areas:

- University curriculum;
- [Basic policies with regard to campus planning and facilities construction and utilization](#);
- Creation of administrative positions at the level of dean and vice president and the selection of administrative officers for such positions as well as of the President of the University;
- Academic planning and the determination of priorities for the conduct and development of the University.

In addition to the shared governance groups, there are eight established [labor unions at Western](#), including:

- the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) for
 - Local #417 Building Services and
 - Local #8223 Clerical,
- the Illinois Fraternal Order of Police Labor Council,
- the International Union of Operating Engineers for
 - Local #399 Landscape Maintenance and
 - Local #399 Mechanical Maintenance/Heating Plant,
- the Pipe Trade District Council #34,
- the University Professionals of Illinois Local #4100 IFT/AFT, AFL-CIO (ProTech/civil service membership) and the [University Professionals of Illinois](#) Local #4100 AFT, AFL-CIO (faculty and academic support professionals).

5.A.2: Western's administration uses data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the University and its constituents. The [University President](#) and shared governance groups are dedicated to integrating data-informed decision-making into all policies and procedures. Evidence of the integration is prevalent in the strategic initiatives set by the University [President and Administrative Team](#). Two examples that exemplify the data-informed procedure include the faculty and staff collaboration in enrollment initiatives (e.g., Admissions Criteria) and strategic planning processes (e.g., Quad Cities Strategic Position Statement).

Admission Standards

[Undergraduate Admissions](#) employs the structure of shared governance combined with relevant data to adapt admissions criteria to meet the best interests of the University and our constituents. Most recently, Admissions proposed revised criteria that make SAT/ACT scores optional. The proposal was reviewed and supported by the [Council on Admission, Graduation, and Academic Standards](#) (CAGAS) and the [Faculty Senate](#) before being approved by the President in 2019. The proposal for test-optional admissions was based on a review by the [Office of Institutional](#)

[Research and Planning](#) (IRP) of predicted retention rates that considered both SAT/ACT score and high school GPA and subsequent data that indicate that student high school GPA is the primary determining factor in student success at Western (defined for these purposes as first-year retention rates). Standardized test scores, particularly since Illinois switched to the SAT, are less predictive. Starting in Fall 2020, under the revised policy, all new freshmen applying to Western are considered for admission on the basis of three criteria:

- High school coursework/curriculum;
- Cumulative grade point average on a 4.00 scale;
- An official SAT or ACT test result for students with less than a cumulative grade point average of 3.30 on a 4.00 scale.

In April 2020, recognizing that COVID-19 was a disruptive force in the lives of students, the admissions standards proposal was revised for Fall 2020 through Fall 2021 incoming students. Specifically, the shared governance committees and the University President [approved](#):

- Candidates with a minimum 2.75 cumulative high school GPA (4.0 scale) will be offered regular admission;
- Candidates with a 2.00 to 2.74 cumulative high school GPA (4.0 scale) without an ACT/SAT test score would be eligible for a holistic review of credentials to be considered for regular admission. Additional factors considered may include 7th semester transcripts, evaluation of specific Math and English classes and grades, and a student's personal statement;
- GED, proficiency-based school applicants, and standards-based school applicants without a test score, will be considered for admission using a full holistic review of all credentials.

The [University Admissions](#) web page further clarifies this policy for prospective students whose high schools employ a 5.0 grading scale.

These changes are data-driven, and reflect Western's vision for providing educational opportunity and access.

The Quad Cities Strategic Position Statement

A working group created by the President met for two months to review and synthesize institutional and external data, study Quad Cities area economic and workforce reports, conduct a SWOT analysis, and collect input from internal and external stakeholders. The findings indicate that with intentional strategic design, paired with institutional, community, and State of Illinois commitment and support, the Quad Cities Campus of Western Illinois University will be uniquely positioned to respond to Quad Cities area workforce demands through emphasis on practical, hands-on experiences, research, workforce preparation, and career placement, with a commitment to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion. The next step for moving this initiative forward is the formation of a more inclusive working group that will identify specific goals and strategies for implementing the position statement. The [Quad Cities Strategic Position Statement](#) was shared with the [BOT on September 24, 2020](#) (Report No. 20.9/4 Quad Cities

Strategic Position). A [Supplement](#) was added after input was received. Moving into calendar year 2021, led by the Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs/Administrator in Charge of the Quad Cities, this team will begin implementing initiatives.

5.A.3: Western's administration ensures that faculty and, when appropriate, staff and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective collaborative structures. The processes and structures of shared governance involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes were discussed in Core Components 2.A.2 (academic integrity), 3.A.1 (accreditation, curriculum and program review and approval, and assessment), 3.C.2 (curriculum), and 4.B.1 (assessment). The Faculty Senate and its committees and councils are also discussed in Core Component 5.A.1. As presented in the [Faculty Senate Constitution](#), a member of the Provost's Office serves as an ex-officio (non-voting) member and the Student Government Association (SGA) has member representation at the Senate meetings. The [Council on Admission, Graduation, and Academic Standards](#) (CAGAS) has ten faculty and two student members, in addition to five ex-officio (non-voting) members from Student Development and Success Center, the Registrar's Office, Advising, the Provost's Office, and Admissions.

Sources

- Admissions
- Budget Transparency Committee
- Civil Service Council
- COAP
- Committee on Provost and Presidential Performance
- Council for Instructional Technology
- Council for International Education
- Council on Admission Graduation and Academic Standards
- Council on Campus Planning and Usage
- Council on Curricular Programs and Instructions
- Council on General Education
- Council on Intercollegiate Athletics
- Executive Committee
- Faculty Senate
- Faculty Senate Constitution
- Faculty Senate Councils and Committees
- Freshmen Admissions Policy Approval 2020
- Freshmen Admissions Standards
- Institutional Research and Planning
- Labor Relations at WIU
- Leatherneck Club Athletic Association
- Office of the President
- Official University Policy Manual
- Organizational Chart

- Presidents Administrative Team
- Quad Cities Student Government Association
- Senate Nominating Committee
- September 24 2020 Board Book
- Student Government Association
- UPI Agreement
- Western Illinois University Alumni Council
- WIU Foundation
- WIU QC Strategic Position Statement
- WIUQC Strategic Position Supplement
- Writing Instruction in the Disciplines

5.B - Core Component 5.B

The institution's resource base supports its educational offerings and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

1. The institution has qualified and trained operational staff and infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The goals incorporated into the mission and any related statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources and opportunities.
3. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring its finances.
4. The institution's fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved.

Argument

5.B.1: Western has qualified and trained operational staff and infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.

Operational Staff

Western's response to the IPEDS Human Resource survey component for 2019-2020 indicates that Western employed a total of 1,294 full-time staff. The procedures for confirming that employees have the proper qualifications are described in the Academic Affairs [hiring procedures](#) and the [Civil Service hiring procedures](#). All student support leadership positions also require [specialized minimum qualification and ongoing professional development](#). To enhance the hiring and retention of qualified employees at Western, the hiring process has recently been restructured to be more efficient and to attract and hire top talent. For instance, we have recently combined separate offices for academic staff and operational staff (Civil Service) into a single Office of Human Resources. As part of this recent reorganization, the Office of Human Resources now includes a Talent Acquisition and Management team. New and more efficient hiring processes are currently being developed and put into use.

Upon employment, most new employees attend specialized employment orientation programs designed to specially address their needs. For instance, Western sponsors orientation programs for new faculty, new administrators, and new support staff. On-campus professional development for faculty and administrators is provided through the [Center for Innovation in Teaching and Research](#) (CITR), now under the Office of Distance Education and Support. The Office of Human Resources also provides a variety of [training opportunities](#) for professional and support staff.

Examples of the training and qualifications of operational staff in specific units include the following:

- *The Business Service Department* is led by employees who have, at minimum, bachelor's degrees in Accounting or Finance. The majority of our Assistant Comptrollers are Certified Public Accountants and they keep up with their certifications by completing continuing professional education. The Business Service staff keeps up with regular compliance changes, such as but not limited to tax compliance, bond/debt compliance, LAC guidelines, Title IV fund regulations, Perkins loans regulations, GASB changes, etc. Western is a member of NACUBO where we receive regular updates and trainings.
- *Office of Equal Opportunity and Access* staff have multiple years of experience serving higher education staff and students as relates to Title IX, Title VII, and other Equal Opportunity related issues.
- *Facilities Management* employs 165 personnel in diversified positions covering utility procurement and usage as well as building and grounds maintenance. Along with formal education requirements applicable to each position, many classifications require trade experience and licensure in the applied field of expertise. All personnel are required to meet minimum requirements according to the [State of Illinois Civil Service System](#).
- *Human Resources* staff have years of experience and training in talent acquisition, negotiations, compensation analysis, leave management, unemployment benefits, employment, and classification. The Office of Human Resources is a member of CUPA-HR where the staff receive regular training on regulatory updates and changes.

Infrastructure (Facilities Management)

Western serves approximately 8,000 students in the heart of the Midwest through its traditional, residential four-year campus in Macomb, Illinois (population 20,000) and its metropolitan, commuter campus in the Quad Cities/Moline, Illinois (Quad Cities population is 384,000 and the Moline population is 43,000). In total, Western operates 44 non-residential buildings, with over 2.6 million in gross square feet (GSF) and 1.8 million in net assignable square feet (NASF).

In Macomb, on more than 1,000 acres, Western operates 11 residential buildings with over 1.4 million GSF and 825,033 NASF, and has a residence hall capacity of approximately 3,000. On average 90% of our new freshmen live on campus. Additional resources and infrastructure supporting teaching and learning are discussed in Core Component 3.D.3.

The [Macomb Campus Master Plan 2012-2032: Enhancing the Student Experience](#) represents a unifying vision for Western that aligns the University's academic mission, strategic plan, and physical development goals into a single document. The plan presents a twenty-year vision to guide the future of Western, and to adapt and flexibly respond to unexpected future changes. This plan serves as an update to the 2007 Macomb Campus Master Plan. Many of the concepts illustrated in the plan are multistep initiatives that may require more than one project to achieve. The [FY20 Master Plan Update](#) highlights many of the completed projects.

The WIU Board of Trustees (BOT) approved a Campus Master Plan for the Quad Cities in 2006, the [Vision 2020: Western Illinois University-Quad Cities Campus Master Plan](#). The Plan focuses

on a three-phase development for the new Riverfront Campus (replacing its 60th Street facility). The three-phase plan aims to create a learner-centered campus that provides the infrastructure to support academic excellence and multidisciplinary inquiry; that can accommodate growth, incorporate flexibility, and enhance the positive relationship with our host community; and that achieves an aesthetically pleasing and visually distinctive identity while supporting environmental sustainability and social responsibility. Phase 1 was completed in January 2012 and Phase 2 was completed in August 2014. With the remaining funds from Phase 1 and 2, Western plans to construct a small addition to Riverfront Hall dedicated to engineering and science learning space. Phase 3 includes an additional building on the west side of campus to round out the grounds and classroom teaching space.

The Campus Master Plans outline parameters to strategically manage and phase opportunities over short, mid, and long-term time horizons. [Facilities Management](#) is currently assessing building usage and maintenance requirements. As this process is completed, a re-engagement of the master plan implementation committee is scheduled to begin, with plans to combine both campus plans into one united plan moving forward. Western is well positioned for future master plan actions when state capital funding is unfrozen and funds are released.

Infrastructure (University Technology)

[University Technology](#) (uTech) is a division of Academic Affairs at Western. Its mission is to provide customer-focused, high-quality, secure, and reliable technology services that support and advance the University's mission and core values.

The [2020-2023 Information Technology Strategic Plan](#), accepted by the BOT on September 25, 2020, identifies strategies and goals intended to guide the adoption of technologies pertaining to teaching, learning, research, and business processes at Western.

Western provides approximately 500 computers for use in 10 general use computer labs and 12 computer resource centers throughout the Macomb Campus and 2 computer labs at the Quad Cities Campus. Computer labs feature high-speed internet, USB connectivity, commonly used software applications, and access to printing. Western offers Wi-Fi throughout buildings and grounds. Classrooms on both campuses feature electronic and internet connected technology that connects the campuses to each other and beyond.

Western maintains three main data centers (two on the Macomb Campus and one on the Quad Cities Campus), with appropriate redundancies between each. A 10G internet link connects the Macomb infrastructure to the Quad Cities infrastructure, providing adequate redundancy. In addition, internet failover capabilities are also set up between the campus and residence hall networks, providing an added layer of contingency capabilities.

The BOT voted in October 2019 to move from a custom-built mainframe-based enterprise resource planning (ERP) system to a Software as a Service (SaaS) model with the vendor Unifyed. The [ERP Implementation Project](#) transition is projected to last seven years. Once complete, the new ERP system will modernize Western's student experience and administrative processes. The first two modules, Engage (portal access) and Admit (Customer Relationship

Management) are set to go live March 2021 and August 2021, respectively. The next module to begin in Spring 2021 will be the student information system (SIS).

5.B.2: The goals incorporated into Western's mission and related statements are realistic in light of our organization, resources, and opportunities. As the economic engine in the state's western region, Western is realistic in our vision to be the leading public regional university in providing educational quality, opportunity, and affordability. Western's [vision, mission, and values](#) are detailed in Core Component 1.A.1-5.

Western's [Higher Values in Higher Education Strategic Plan](#) and [Strategic Plan Supplements](#) set goals and priorities that directly stem from and support the vision and mission; the current strategic plan outlines 18 actions organized under the four goals of enriching academic excellence, advancing educational opportunity, supporting personal growth, and promoting social responsibility. The strategic plan updates and supplements ensure these goals are grounded in the reality of the institution's resources and opportunities through time.

The [WIU Foundation](#) inspires and motivates alumni, friends, faculty, and staff to make an impact on Western through financial support. Private support has become a necessary part of University operations. In December 2013, Western and its Foundation completed its second-ever capital campaign (the first completed in 2000), the Higher Values in Higher Education Campaign. Ultimately raising a total of \$62.1 million, the Campaign set out to raise \$60 million in support of four objectives: student scholarships, faculty support, capital improvement, and information and technologies. Donations included endowments as well as planned gifts, and funds from the campaign have supported scholarships, academics, athletics, performing arts, lab equipment, and research activities. The WIU Foundation's most recent [financial statement and independent auditor's report](#) are publicly available.

In 2020, the Illinois governor announced that the Illinois Capital Development Board (CDB) released \$8.9 million to Western Illinois University to restart the [Center for the Performing Arts](#) (CPA) project on the Macomb Campus. The CPA was first approved in December 2002, when the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) recommended a \$22.5 million FY 2004 appropriation for CPA planning and design. In April 2014, the state announced funding for the Center's construction, but the project stalled following the November 2014 election.

In 2020, the CDB also re-appropriated capital development funds for the WIU-Macomb Science Building, and provided new capital development funding for the Quad Cities Riverfront Campus Phase 3. The FY 2021 higher education appropriated budget also provides Monetary Award Program (MAP) and AIM High allocations for our students, funding for the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, and provisions for deferred maintenance/capital improvements.

Western also maintains strong partnerships with the cities of Macomb and Moline to facilitate projects that fall within its strategic planning goals and campus master plans. For example, Western is a member of the [Macomb Chamber of Commerce](#), the [Quad Cities Chamber](#), [The Greater Quad Cities Hispanic Chamber of Commerce](#), and the [Illinois Innovation Network](#), a group of hubs across the state that aim to boost Illinois' economy through entrepreneurship, research, and workforce development. In Macomb, memorandums of understanding and

partnerships between the University and city ensure that transition zones between city and campus and marketing materials follow particular standards.

The last decade has been financially challenging for Western. Between FY 2011 and FY 2021, Western's state appropriation funding was reduced by \$6.6 million (11.7%), from \$56.2 million in FY 2011 to \$49.6 million in FY 2021. The most difficult years followed the historic and unprecedented statewide budget impasse (FY 2016 and 2017). Despite the lack of state support, our qualified and trained academic and operational staff adapted to the unpredictable and insufficient state resources. Examples of [personnel related adaptations](#) included, but were not limited to [layoffs](#), [mandatory furloughs](#), [early retirement incentives](#), delayed salary increases for collective bargaining units, and reduced employment contracts from 12 to 11-month annual appointments.

In addition, permanent reductions to departmental operating budgets, restricted spending and reduced/monitored travel, and limited replacement hiring continues to take place at Western. The impact over the past decade on academic programs due to budget reductions and enrollment decline is discussed in Core Components 3.A.1 and 3.C.1.

Despite a significant decrease in state support, staff adapted to the reductions in resources and have continued to provide student-centered undergraduate and graduate programs characterized by innovative teaching, research, and service, grounded in multidisciplinary, regional, and global perspectives, as evidenced in Criterion 3. Thus, Western has adapted to resource changes and new opportunities with appropriate organizational and programmatic changes, guided by our vision, mission, and goals.

5.B.3: Western's process for budgeting and monitoring finances is guided by the State of Illinois' budgeting process and calendar. The University President and the Chief Financial Officer/Associate Vice President of Budget and Finance provide university-wide oversight and delegate fiduciary responsibility to the Provost/Academic Vice President, Vice President for Student Services, and other division heads for the fiscal management of their units.

For most of the decade, all academic departments and administrative units were required to complete [Consolidated Annual Reports](#). These reports highlight goals and accomplishments, areas of reallocation or reductions, and budget requests that have contributed to the University's Strategic Plan and/or Strategic Plan Supplements. Information presented in Consolidated Annual Reports is utilized by the vice presidents and/or division heads to engage in strategic resource allocation. Part of this process is a public presentation by each area highlighting their goals and accomplishments.

In December 2019, the Social Responsibility Task Force (SRTF) recommended that Western review and revise the current University budget model to better align strategic planning and budget allocation. The previous model relied on reporting short-term financial planning and did not adequately address long-term financial planning. In response, we have implemented changes that allow fiscal agents to use their discretion in allocating resources. Western continues to prioritize the allocation of budget for instruction, strategic plan initiatives, and our University mission. In Spring 2020, the academic units revised their required documentation to assist in

improving the process. Further, the newly formed [Office of Assessment, Accreditation, and Strategic Planning](#) (discussed in Core Component 4.B.1) will assist us in identifying, measuring, and connecting both administrative and academic initiatives to our strategic plan initiatives.

In addition to annual reporting, annual budget planning meetings are held by the President and the Associate Vice President of Budget and Finance with each area and include divisional leaders, deans, and directors. The purpose of the meetings is to discuss proposed operating and personnel budgetary changes for the upcoming fiscal year. After these spring meetings, the President provides a [Preliminary Spending Plan](#) to the BOT. Finally, in the fall, the President provides recommendations to the BOT via [Board resolutions](#) such as:

- All Funds Budget (Resolution No. 20.9/1),
- Appropriated Operating Budget Recommendations (Resolution No. 20.9/2), and
- Appropriated Capital Budget Recommendations (Resolution No. 20.9/3).

The day-to-day operations and oversight of the budget are delegated to the Budget Office. Budgets are monitored daily to ensure operations are within approved limits. Other various business operations are delegated to Business Services. Annual budgets and expenses by funding source are available from the [Budget Office](#) web page. Western's fiscal year [2011-2019 externally audited financial statements](#) are publicly available.

Western makes available to the public [budget and finance resource documentation](#). As discussed in Core Component 2.A.2, Western strives to promote open communication regarding our current financial position and activities. Budget and finance resource planning and allocation is carefully monitored by both internal and external agents. During the Illinois state budget impasse, the President communicated with both internal and external constituencies via the Budget Office news web page.

5.B.4: Western's planning processes help to ensure that fiscal allocations prioritize and serve the educational goals and actions framed under the University mission. The budgeting process (outlined in Core Component 5.B.3) provides the opportunity for faculty, department chairs, and deans to identify our primary educational initiatives. Ultimately, the President will review and approve the allocation of the budget. However, a key component of the entire process is outlined in Core Component 5.A.1, which is the shared governance committees. A majority, if not all, of the educational initiatives are vetted by the Faculty Senate and various faculty-driven committees to ensure fiscal allocations serve educational goals.

Due to the limited resources available, every decision regarding budget allocation is student-centered. Examples of administrative appointments created to support our student-centered mission are discussed in Core Component 5.C.1. As stated in Core Component 5.B.1, we have financially committed to implementing a new ERP system to better serve our educational goals. The first two stages of implementation are key to Western's educational mission. In these stages, Unified's AI-powered mobile app and web portal will help us improve student engagement and communication, while Unified's Student-Admit, an AI-based student admissions recruitment CRM for higher education, will aid with recruitment and enrollment.

Sources

- 2011-2019 externally audited financial statements
- 2016 Furloughs and Voluntary Pay Reduction Program
- 2016 University Layoffs
- 2018 Voluntary Retirement Program
- Academic Affairs Hiring Procedures
- Annual Reports
- Assessment Accreditation and Strategic Planning
- Budget Office
- Budget Office News
- Center for Innovation in Teaching and Research
- Center for Performing Arts
- Civil Service Employment Procedures
- ERP Implementation Project
- Facilities Management
- Greater Quad Cities Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Hiring Procedures
- Illinois Innovation Network
- Information Technology Strategic Plan 2020-2023
- IPEDS Human Resources Survey 2019-2020
- Macomb Area Chamber of Commerce
- Macomb Campus Master Plan 2012-2032
- Macomb Campus Master Plan FY20 Update
- Personnel Related Actions
- Preliminary Spending Plan
- Preliminary Spending Plan (page number 31)
- Quad Cities Chamber
- September 24 2020 Board Book
- State Universities Civil Service System
- Strategic Plan Supplements
- Student Support Qualifications and PD
- Talent Management
- University's Strategic Plan- Higher Values in Higher Education 2017-2027
- uTech
- WIU Foundation
- WIU Foundation Resources
- WIU Vision and Mission
- WIU-Quad Cities Campus Master Plan

5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities, including, as applicable, its comprehensive research enterprise, associated institutes and affiliated centers.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity, including fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue and enrollment.
5. Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.
6. The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.

Argument

5.C.1: Western's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission, goals, and associated action items. Annual strategic plan updates, performance reports, and accountability reports produced for the consolidated annual reports for each area of the University (Academic Affairs, Advancement and Public Services, Administrative Services, Strategic Planning and Initiatives, and Student Services) demonstrate that Western is continually monitoring the implementation and measurement of objectives, engaging in benchmarking, and enacting continuous improvement. An example from Academic Affairs can be found [here](#).

Core Component 1.B.2 details the allocations of Western's operating budget. Despite budget reductions, we have invested resources in mission-driven expenditures directly related to student access, inclusion, and success. One initiative was increasing financial aid packages for all students. Evidence reported in the [WIU Fact Book](#), Table 58, highlights Student Financial Aid per year. In 2018 the average financial aid package was \$15,509. In 2019 it increased to an average of \$15,413. In 2020 the [average financial aid package](#) was significantly higher, at \$18,227.

Western has also strategically allocated resources to support student access, inclusion, and success, most recently through the creation of the following units and positions:

- The [Division of Enrollment Management](#) and the positions of Associate Vice President of Enrollment Management and [Executive Director of Retention](#) were created to drive Western's educational mission forward. See Core Component 4.C.3 for details.
- The [Office of Assessment, Accreditation, and Strategic Planning](#) and the position of Director for Assessment, Accreditation, and Strategic Planning were created to strengthen

our ability to assess educational outcomes and inform the budget allocation processes. See Core Component 4.B.1 for details.

- The [University Diversity Council](#) was restructured and the Community Engagement Council was created; the position of Assistant to the President for Diversity and Inclusion was created. See Core Component 1.C.2 for details.

Western has also strategically sought out external funding to support its priorities, especially its comprehensive research enterprise. In early FY21, we entered into a 2-year relationship with the grant consulting firm McAllister & Quinn (M&Q) for support in the preparation of large institutional program grants as well as individual faculty research grant proposals. After discussions with the University community, M&Q identified several grant programs that aligned with Western's institutional program strengths and faculty interests.

To date, M&Q has assisted in the submission of two grant proposals – Institutional Resilience and Expanded Postsecondary Opportunity (USDE - \$2,999,611) and Nursing Workforce Development (HRSA - \$1,980,397). Two other program proposals are currently in development – Secure and Trustworthy Cyberspace (NSF) and Scholarships in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Program (NSF).

In addition, one faculty-driven proposal is in the early stages of development with at least one more slated for assistance in this first year of the agreement. It is anticipated that in FY22, four new institutional program proposals and two faculty-driven research proposals will be prepared with the assistance of M&Q.

5.C.2: As stated in Core Component 5.C.1, Western uses annual accountability reports to demonstrate links between budget allocations and strategic planning documents. The priorities for each planning area reflect evaluation of current operations and program performance. Operating and program performance metrics are aligned with state-level recommendations, found in such documents as The [IBHE Report on Low Producing Programs](#).

The university has a clearly defined [student learning assessment process](#) for academic programs (Core Component 4.B), a [program review process](#) (Core Component 3.A.1), and annual reporting processes. These processes indirectly impact resource allocation in the colleges and directly impact decisions to continue, enhance, or discontinue programs. In setting their annual goals for the department level plans, departments have explicitly referred to the use of assessment data in their metrics for improving their undergraduate and graduate programs. Annual reporting documents for our four major academic colleges (e.g., [College of Arts and Sciences](#)) link program performance and activity directly to budget requests and planning.

Additionally, [co-curricular assessment](#) assists offices throughout the divisions of Student Services and Enrollment Management in understanding where resources should be allocated and additional investments may need to be made. Assessment of learning outcomes for individual co-curricular programs and events provides direct insight on what students have learned from the interaction with the event. Co-curricular assessment may also focus on ongoing experiences. For example, the [Multicultural Center](#) focused on understanding if students involved in an ambassador program demonstrated an increase in knowledge of skills necessary to be a

productive member of a team. Based on student pre- and post-reflections, staff identified that students' learning about leadership and personal styles through the ambassador program experience helps them to be more successful on a team. This knowledge allows staff to commit to continuing to provide resources to support and develop the ambassador program. Another example involves our [University Union](#). Students involved on the [Union Advisory Board](#) were assessed on whether or not they had gained knowledge on how to seek insight from peers relating to implementing new ideas and programs. Data indicated a need to improve communication strategies so the general student population feels that they have a stronger voice with the Union. As a result, the Union is promoting the Union Advisory Board and the role they play in Union decision-making and planning more resources to support students involved in the Union Advisory Board.

In 2021, the [Office of Assessment, Accreditation, and Strategic Planning](#) will begin a University-wide reassessment of the Higher Values in Higher Education 2017-2027 Strategic Plan that will inform a revision of our strategic planning goals and action items to more clearly link institutional planning, curricular and co-curricular assessment, operations, and budget.

5.C.3: Western's planning process encompasses all areas of the University and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups through shared governance, advisory boards and councils, and meetings with various internal and external stakeholders as appropriate (see Core Components 1.A.3 and 1.B.3). The university strategic plan, campus master plans, and unit-specific plans like the [2020-2023 Information Technology Strategic Plan](#) have resulted from discussion and contribution from the full range of constituents through processes and committee structures designed to be inclusive and transparent.

For example, the [Social Responsibility Task Force](#) (SRTF) included representatives from all governance groups on both campuses, and students, faculty, and staff from areas that report to the President, each vice-presidential area, all colleges, and university libraries. To gain external perspective, members of the Alumni Council, local community colleges, and community leaders (e.g., Mayor of Macomb, City Aldermen in Moline, President of Spoon River College) have also participated on the SRTF. The SRTF worked collaboratively and iteratively with the University community in producing university plans that are endorsed by all governance groups on both campuses, before the BOT grants implementation approval.

5.C.4: Western understands its current capacity and plans accordingly. During the last decade, we have experienced a decrease in student enrollment and state funding. When we entered into the Illinois budget impasse in 2016, we had not yet recovered from the fallout of the 2007-2009 Great Recession. During the budget impasse, Western was forced to use all reserve dollars. During and after the budget impasse there were major budget reductions and staff layoffs (see Core Component 5.B.2). As a result of the budget impasse, Western was required to submit Financial Recovery Plans to the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) for both [FY 2018](#) and [FY 2019](#) in response to our reported FY 2016 and FY 2017 [Composite Financial Indicators](#) (CFI). Despite the challenges we have faced, the process gave us the opportunity to demonstrate and have confirmed that our institutional plans are based on a sound understanding of Western's capacity.

The Financial Recovery Plans submitted expressed concern that Western's CFI was artificially low due to the allocation of state appropriations during the budget impasse. In FY 2016, Western received only a portion of state appropriations, and this caused a significant drop in FY 2016's CFI. In FY 2017, Western received state appropriations that were permitted by the state to be used on FY 2016 expenditures.

In evaluating Western's [FY 2018 Financial Recovery Plan](#), the Financial Panel Review Team stated, "After much reflection, the panel [concludes] that Western has approached the state-created crisis in a sensible and thoughtful manner, and barring any further disruption in state appropriations, Western will rapidly regain CFI's that are in or above the zone." The following year, Western's most recently reported CFI (in the [2017-2018 Institutional Update](#)) was "in the zone," which triggered the required FY 2019 Financial Recovery Plan since it was not "above the zone" (i.e., a CFI of 1.0 or greater).

HLC's analysis of Western's [FY 2019 Financial Recovery Plan](#) concluded:

- Western has worked diligently to respond to unstable funding from the State of Illinois.
- Western's administration has aggressively responded to these changes in its financial position through program prioritization, administrative and instructional staff reductions, and creation of new innovative and marketable programs.
- There is nothing to cause the team to believe that Western will not continue to operate in the manner in which they diligently have in the past.

When the [2018-2019 Institutional Update](#) was compiled and submitted, Western's CFI had recovered and thus no further Financial Recovery Plans have been required.

The Standard & Poor's Bond Rating for Western is BB. As of June 30, 2020, Western has total assets of \$257,390,254, with total liabilities of \$108,830,162. Operating revenues were \$86,554,242 and operating expenses were \$222,229,580. Our net position at the end of FY 2020 was \$147,824,230. The FY 2020 operating budget totaled \$210,600,000, which includes the following:

- Direct state appropriation: \$49,588,000
- Tuition and other revenue: \$58,912,000
- Other non-appropriated: \$61,400,000
- Auxiliary enterprises and department/other activities: \$40,700,000

The strength of Western's planning is based on anticipated and actual impacts of fluctuating revenue.

5.C.5: Western's planning anticipates and adapts to evolving external factors, including technology advancements (Core Component 5.B.1), demographic shifts (Core Component 3.C.1), state support (Core Component 5.C.4), and the COVID-19 pandemic. We have been agile in our response to the pandemic, and implemented rapid actions aimed to support and protect students, staff, and faculty while continuing our educational mission. As discussed in Core Component 5.A.2, we changed several policies to better facilitate admissions and support

retention. We also implemented technology changes across all sections of the University to facilitate remote work and learning. Most notably, there was rapid growth in online or distance education, which has contributed to more comprehensive planning for online programs and offerings: in Fall 2019, 12% (292 sections) of courses were offered online, compared to 30% (702) in Fall 2020. Western is a recent recipient of a \$2.2M grant from IBHE for student retention and recruitment in light of the pandemic, as part of the state of Illinois CARES Act funds. Additional initiatives and policies put in place to respond to the challenges of the pandemic are detailed in Western's Higher Learning Commission Form: COVID-19 Planning and Process Changes – Institutional Response.

Western has on-going involvement with state-level officials regarding the future of higher education in Illinois. We are an active partner in data-share agreements and budgetary planning at the state level. As an engaged partner in state-wide planning Western positions itself to evolve, adapt, and most importantly, plan for the next decade in higher education.

5.C.6: Western implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes as evidenced in Core Components 5.B.1 (operations) and 4.B.1-2, 4.C.1, 4.C.3 (student outcomes). During the last decade, we have implemented strategic initiatives that have moved Western forward. We will continue to improve our strategic directions by prioritizing the review and modification of the University Strategic Plan. We are also continuously evaluating and revising our student learning assessment process and working to align program reviews, student learning outcomes, and curricular and co-curricular impacts. The lessons of the last decade will help shape the future of Western Illinois University.

Sources

- 2017-2018 Institutional Update
- 2018-2019 Institutional Update
- 2019-2020 Institutional Update
- Assessment Accreditation and Strategic Planning
- Assessment of Student Learning Plan
- Average Financial Aid and Scholarships
- College of Arts and Sciences Annual Report
- Composite Financial Indicators
- Enrollment Management Division
- Evidence File
- Executive Director of Retention Initiatives
- Freshmen Admissions Policy Approval 2020
- FY18 Financial Recovery Plan
- FY19 Financial Recovery Plan
- IBHE Report on Low Enrolled Programs
- Information Technology Strategic Plan 2020-2023
- Multicultural Center

- Program Review Process and Schedule
- Provost Consolidated Annual Report 2019
- Social Responsibility Task Force
- Union Advisory Board
- University Diversity Council
- University Union
- WIU Factbooks

5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

The institution's resources, structures, processes and planning are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Summary

5S: Western Illinois University fulfills its mission through strategic planning that is transparent and developed collaboratively with internal and external constituents; through processes and structures aimed at accountability, transparency, shared governance, and fiscal responsibility; and through the development and allocation of resources to address current and future challenges and seize opportunities to adapt and improve the quality of our educational offerings. Western's planning and resource allocation decisions are data driven; steps have been taken in the last decade to improve assessment and data collection, and to maintain and develop effective processes and structures for using data to make decisions across all areas of the University that are in the best interests of Western and its constituents. Despite the challenges of a state budget impasse and global pandemic, we have used our resources wisely to prioritize and support our educational offerings in line with the University's values, mission, and goals. Adjustments have been made as needed at all levels to ensure goals are realistic and educational purposes are achieved. The University community understands that only through collaboration, communication, and commitment to our values can we make progress toward our goal for Western to be the leader in educational quality, opportunity, and affordability among regional public universities.

Sources

There are no sources.