

WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

December 16, 2016

Report No. 16.12/3 Enrollment, Retention and Graduation Data

Higher Values in Higher Education 2012-2022, the University's Strategic Plan, charges Western Illinois University to identify future and sustainable enrollment growth goals for the Macomb and Quad Cities campuses. This information is designed to provide the Western Illinois University Board of Trustees with enrollment benchmarking information for the two campuses of Western Illinois University.

Executive Summary

- Western Illinois University's total enrollment decreased by 6.5 percent (-721) from 11,094 in 2015 to 10,373 in 2016. The total student credit hour production decreased by 5.2 percent (-15,693) from 299,628 in FY2015 to 283,935 in FY2016.
- The number of new freshmen decreased 0.5 percent (-8), from 1,535 in 2015 to 1,527 in 2016.
- The number of new transfers decreased 12.4 percent (-137), from 1,105 in 2015 to 968 in 2016.
- Total graduate student enrollment decreased 6.3 percent (-123) from 1,953 in 2015 to 1,830 in 2016.
- The 6-year graduation rate increased from 52.8 percent to 53.1 percent.
- The freshmen-to-sophomore retention rate increased from 67.7 percent in 2014 to 69.2 percent of the new 2015 freshmen class returning for their sophomore year.
- The primary strategy for recruiting more new freshmen to the Macomb campus is to promote an affordable option for all accepted students.
- The primary strategy of the Quad Cities recruitment efforts is to create additional market demand among adult students by approaching area businesses about educational opportunities and to work with area high schools to encourage high school students to enroll in college classes prior to graduation from secondary schools.

Term Definitions

Headcount Enrollment

Western Illinois University headcount enrollment includes four categories; Macomb campus, Macomb extension, Quad Cities campus and Quad Cities extension. Headcount enrollment is calculated at 10th day of each fall and spring semester and at the end of the summer semester. Each student's enrollment category is determined by the location of the majority of credit hours in which the student is enrolled. Examples: A student enrolled in 9 hours Macomb campus courses and 6 hours Quad Cities campus courses is counted Macomb campus. A student enrolled in 3 hours Quad Cities campus courses and 6 hours Extension courses is counted Quad Cities extension. A student enrolled in 3 hours Macomb campus courses and 6 hours Extension courses is counted Macomb extension. A student enrolled in an equal number of student credit hours in Macomb campus courses and Quad Cities campus courses is counted in Macomb campus headcount.

Full Time Equivalence (FTE) Enrollment

For fall and spring semesters, one full-time equivalent (FTE) student equals 15 student credit hours for undergraduates and 12 for graduates. For summer semester, one FTE student equals 8 student credit hours for undergraduates and 6 for graduates.

Student Credit Hour Production

The Student Credit Hour Production Report is calculated using three campus categories: Macomb, Quad Cities and Extension. Student credit hours earned in Macomb campus courses are counted in Macomb campus hours, student credit hours earned in Quad Cities campus courses are counted in Quad Cities campus hours and student credit hours earned in Extension courses are counted as Extension credit hours. Macomb campus courses, Quad Cities campus courses and Extension courses are identified by section number.

Total Enrollment

Western Illinois University's total enrollment decreased by 6.5 percent (-721) from 11,094 in 2015 to 10,373 in 2016 (Table 1). The total student credit hour production decreased by 5.2 percent (-15,693) from 299,628 in Fiscal Year 2015 to 283,935 in Fiscal Year 2016. On campus enrollment continues to have the largest negative impact on total enrollment. From Fall 2015 to Fall 2016, the Macomb on campus enrollment decreased by 6.8 percent (-587) and the Quad Cities on campus enrollment decreased by 14.4 percent (-164). Whereas, the Quad Cities extension enrollment increased 16.1% (+63) and Macomb extension enrollment decreased 3.8 percent (-33).

	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015-2016 % Change</u>
Total University	12,205	11,707	11,458	11,094	10,373	-6.5%
Macomb	10,003	9,464	9,220	8,694	8,107	-6.8%
Macomb Extension	825	741	715	869	836	-3.8%
Macomb Total	10,828	10,205	9,935	9,563	8,943	-6.5%
Quad Cities	1,204	1,237	1,198	1,140	976	-14.4%
Quad Cities Extension	173	265	325	391	454	+16.1%
Quad Cities Total	1,377	1,502	1,523	1,531	1,430	-6.6%

Source: Office of Institutional Research and Planning

Western Illinois University's new student enrollment continued to decline in Fall 2016. The new freshmen class of Fall 2016 was down 8 students from Fall 2015 (-0.5%). The new transfer enrollment decreased by 12.4 percent (-137). The new graduate enrollment decreased by 9.1 percent (-57).

	<u>Freshmen</u>			<u>Transfer</u>			<u>Graduate</u>		
	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>%Change</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>%Change</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>%Change</u>
Macomb	1,504	1,486	-1.2%	790	730	-7.6%	360	367	+1.9%
Mac Extension	2	4	+100.0%	77	61	-20.8%	133	98	-26.3%
Quad Cities	26	37	+42.3%	191	128	-33.0%	62	55	-11.3%
QC Extension	3	0	-100.0%	47	49	+4.3%	73	51	-30.1%
Totals	1,535	1,527	-0.5%	1,105	968	-12.4%	628	571	-9.1%

Source: Office of Institutional Research and Planning

Over the last five years, Western Illinois University’s total enrollment decreased by 15 percent (table 3). Western Illinois University’s enrollment changes are similar to other downstate “directional” universities in the state of Illinois, such as Northern Illinois University and Southern Illinois University-Carbondale. Whereas, the University of Illinois system schools (Urbana/Champaign, Chicago, & Springfield) have all reported increases over the last five years.

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2012-2016 % Change
University of Illinois-Springfield	5,048	5,137	5,431	5,402	5,428	+7.0%
University of Illinois-Urbana/Champaign	44,520	44,942	45,140	45,842	46,951	+5.5%
University of Illinois-Chicago	27,875	28,016	27,966	29,048	29,120	+4.5%
Governors State University	5,601	5,568	5,776	5,938	5,818	+3.9%
Illinois State University	20,706	20,272	20,615	20,807	21,039	+1.6%
Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville	14,055	13,850	13,972	14,265	14,142	+0.6%
Northern Illinois University	21,869	21,138	20,611	20,130	19,015	-13.1%
Northeastern Illinois University	10,997	10,786	10,275	9,891	9,538	-13.3%
Western Illinois University	12,205	11,707	11,458	11,094	10,373	-15.0%
Southern Illinois University-Carbondale	18,847	17,919	17,946	17,119	15,861	-15.8%
Eastern Illinois University	10,417	9,775	8,913	8,520	7,415	-28.8%
Chicago State University	5,983	5,701	5,211	4,767	3,578	-40.2%
Illinois Public Universities Total	198,123	194,811	193,314	192,823	188,278	-5.0%

Source: OAROSUI, 2016 Enrollment Breakdown Report

New Freshmen Enrollment

The number of new freshmen at Western Illinois University decreased 0.5 percent (-8), from 1,535 in 2015 to 1,527 in 2016. Western Illinois University was successful in stabilizing new freshmen enrollment by decreasing tuition by three percent and through marketing efforts highlighting signature programs.

The new freshmen class had an average ACT of 20.9 in 2016 (a decrease from 21.1 in 2015). The average high school GPA increased from 3.20 in 2015 to 3.21 in 2016. The average high school percentile rank decreased slightly from 60.6% in 2015 to 59.9% in 2016. There were fewer students who graduated high school in the top 30 percent of their class (-90 students). The number of students enrolling in the OAS program as new freshmen slightly decreased from 291 in 2015 to 287 in 2016.

There were also several significant demographic shifts in this year’s freshmen class. The number of students enrolling from Cook County, Illinois increased by 39 students, from 582 in 2015 to 621 in 2016. The number of new freshmen enrolling from the 10-county area surrounding the Macomb campus increased (+13 students) 8.8% from 147 students in 2015 to 160 in 2016. The number of new freshmen who identify as Black increased by 60 students, 469 in 2015 to 529 in 2016. The number of new freshmen who identify as Hispanic remained stable, 228 in 2015 and 225 in 2016. The number of new freshmen who identify as White, non-Hispanic, decreased by 73 students, from 744 in 2015 to 671 in 2016.

Table 4 shows the number of new freshmen who enrolled at the 12 Illinois state universities decreased overall by 6.5% (-1,651 students) from 2015 to 2016. There were two Illinois public universities with

significant growth in new freshmen, the University of Illinois – Springfield and Northeastern Illinois University had increases in both percent and actual student headcount. Fall 2016 was the first year that Northeastern Illinois University opened a residential facility to students.

Table 4. New Freshmen Enrollment by Illinois Public Universities, Fall 2012-2016

	<u>2012</u>	2013	2014	2015	2016	2015-2016 % Change
University of Illinois- Springfield	283	338	320	268	300	+11.9%
Northeastern Illinois University	1,033	803	765	743	793	+6.7%
Northern Illinois University	2,664	2,679	2,542	2,259	1,802	-20.2%
University of Illinois- Urbana/Champaign	6,921	7,329	6,937	7,562	7,592	+0.4%
Illinois State University	3,088	2,981	3,589	3,630	3,638	+0.2%
Western Illinois University	1,754	1,652	1,605	1,535	1,527	-0.5%
University of Illinois-Chicago	3,123	3,104	3,030	3,485	3,307	-5.1%
Governors State University	na	na	242	233	217	-6.9%
Southern Illinois University- Edwardsville	2,075	1,966	2,125	2,096	1,935	-7.7%
Southern Illinois University-Carbondale	2,286	2,571	2,694	2,177	1,685	-22.6%
Eastern Illinois University	1,234	1,254	1,063	1,085	739	-31.9%
Chicago State University	360	285	306	200	86	-57.0%
Illinois Public Universities Total	24,821	24,962	25,218	25,268	23,617	-6.5%

Source: OAROSUI, 2016 Enrollment Breakdown Report

The public universities in Illinois continue to compete with each other by offering more aggressive scholarship programs. In Fall 2016, Western Illinois University’s top five competitors were: Illinois State University, Northern Illinois University, University of Illinois at Chicago, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. In order to address the concern of price and college affordability, the President has assigned the Student Cost Task Force to make recommendations for tuition, fees, room, and board changes. For the 2016-2017 academic year, the Student Cost Task Force recommended a three percent decrease in tuition. In Fall 2016, the new freshmen class was surveyed to determine if the tuition decrease influenced their decision to attend. A majority of the respondents indicated that the top two factors in their decision to attend Western Illinois University was affordability and academic program.

New Transfer Enrollment

The number of new transfers at Western Illinois University decreased 12.4 percent (-137), from 1,105 in 2015 to 968 in 2016. The number of new students transferring to the Macomb campus decreased 8.8 percent (-76). The number of students transferring to the Quad Cities campus decreased 25.6 percent (-61).

The decrease in new transfer students is entirely in domestic new transfer students. The number of domestic new transfers decreased 12.7 percent (-138 students). This decrease in domestic students can be accounted for by decreases in new transfer students from community, including Spoon River College (-22; -31.9%) and Scott Community College (-20; -33.9%).

New transfer enrollment has historically followed changes in enrollment at Illinois community colleges from the previous year. According to the Illinois Community College Board, enrollment at the community colleges in the state decreased 5.9 percent (-19,947) from Fall 2014 to Fall 2015. Whereas, the overall number of new transfer students to the state universities in Illinois decreased by 3.2 percent (-437), from 13,602 in Fall 2015 to 13,165 in Fall 2016. The University of Illinois – Chicago had a large increase in the number of new transfers and Chicago State University had a large decrease in new transfers (see Table 6.).

Table 6. New Transfer Enrollment by Illinois Public Universities, 2012-2016						
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2015-2016 % Change
University of Illinois-Chicago	1,452	1,640	1,718	1,569	1,947	+24.1%
University of Illinois- Springfield	435	401	371	547	588	+7.5%
Governors State University	800	819	971	736	772	+4.9%
Southern Illinois University- Edwardsville	1,221	1,252	1,198	1,163	1,216	+4.6%
Northeastern Illinois University	1,193	1,184	1,125	1,085	1,103	+1.7%
Illinois State University	1,876	1,801	1,842	1,932	1,937	+0.3%
University of Illinois- Urbana/Champaign	1,350	1,343	1,331	1,381	1,380	-0.1%
Northern Illinois University	1,913	1,881	1,840	1,755	1,660	-5.4%
Western Illinois University	1,328	1,243	1,213	1,105	968	-12.4%
Southern Illinois University-Carbondale	1,420	1,366	1,397	1,261	1,072	-15.0%
Eastern Illinois University	854	789	755	692	450	-35.0%
Chicago State University	661	579	538	500	183	-63.4%
Illinois Public Universities Total	14,503	14,298	14,299	13,602	13,165	-3.2%

Source: OAROSUI, 2016 Enrollment Breakdown Report

Graduate Enrollment

Total graduate student enrollment at Western Illinois University decreased from 1,953 in 2015 to 1,830 in 2016 (-123; -6.3%). New domestic graduate enrollment decreased from 498 in 2015 to 440 in 2016 (-58; -11.6%), with the largest decrease coming from Western Illinois University undergraduates who did not continue their education into the Graduate School (-30, -16.2%). New international graduate enrollment remained stable from 130 in 2015 to 131 in 2016.

Table 7. Total Graduate Enrollment by Illinois Public Universities, 2012-2016						2015-2016
	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Eastern Illinois University	1,442	1,428	1,273	1,318	1,458	+10.6%
University of Illinois- Urbana/Champaign	11,121	11,204	11,169	11,482	12,005	+4.6%
Northeastern Illinois University	1,947	1,857	1,863	1,796	1,873	+4.3%
Illinois State University	2,449	2,523	2,460	2,380	2,396	+0.7%
University of Illinois- Springfield	1,994	2,098	2,393	2,465	2,469	+0.2%
Governors State University	2,354	2,261	2,107	2,213	2,157	-2.5%
Southern Illinois University- Edwardsville	2,192	2,091	2,030	1,958	1,897	-3.1%
Northern Illinois University	4,984	5,020	4,900	4,850	4,672	-3.7%
University of Illinois-Chicago	8,475	8,602	8,415	8,540	8,136	-4.7%
Chicago State University	1,094	1,003	950	947	902	-4.8%
Western Illinois University	1,942	1,833	1,813	1,953	1,830	-6.3%
Southern Illinois University-Carbondale	4,070	3,978	3,840	3,614	3,183	-11.9%
Illinois Public Universities Total	44,064	43,989	43,213	43,516	42,978	-1.2%

Source: OAROSUI, 2016 Enrollment Breakdown Report

Retention and Graduation

Western Illinois University's 6-year graduation rate increased from 52.8 percent to 53.1 percent. The freshmen-to-sophomore retention rate increased from 67.7 percent in 2014 to 69.2 percent of the new 2015 freshmen class returning for their sophomore year.

Table 8 illustrates the comparison of predicted versus actual graduation rates of the 12 state universities in Illinois. The graduation rate performance accounts for 7.5 percent of U.S. News College and University Rankings. The predicted graduation rate is calculated based on spending and student characteristics such as test scores and the proportion receiving Pell grants. Schools with higher than predicted graduation rates are determined to be enhancing achievement, rather than just enrolling an academically talented and/or advantaged freshmen class. Western Illinois University continues to out-perform its predicted graduation rate by 4 percent.

	Predicted	Actual	Difference
Illinois State University	61%	73%	+12%
Eastern Illinois University	49%	58%	+9%
Western Illinois University	49%	53%	+4%
University of Illinois- Urbana/Champaign	82%	85%	+3%
Northern Illinois University	53%	50%	-3%
University of Illinois-Chicago	63%	60%	-3%
Southern Illinois University-Carbondale	51%	45%	-6%
Chicago State University	28%	20%	-8%
Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville	58%	49%	-9%
University of Illinois- Springfield	59%	48%	-11%
Northeastern Illinois University	43%	22%	-21%
Governors State University	NA	NA	NA

Source: U.S. News and World Report, 2016

Table 9. Retention and Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity

First-Time, Full-Time New Freshmen who Returned for Second Fall Term							
Fall to Fall Retention Rates	2009 Cohort	2010 Cohort	2011 Cohort	2012 Cohort	2013 Cohort	2014 Cohort	2015 Cohort
White	74.0%	74.1%	72.4%	71.7%	78.6%	75.6%	75.9%
Black	74.1%	62.4%	59.4%	50.7%	62.7%	61.0%	58.5%
Hispanic	63.7%	74.2%	63.1%	59.7%	69.0%	61.9%	70.9%
Asian	64.7%	64.3%	54.5%	85.7%	63.2%	71.4%	50.0%
Native American	83.3%	100.0%	0.0%	50.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Pacific Islander	100.0%	50.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	33.3%
Foreign	40.0%	75.0%	100.0%	80.0%	80.0%	100.0%	87.5%
2 or More	68.2%	63.9%	72.1%	50.0%	64.0%	46.0%	66.0%
Total	72.7%	71.4%	67.7%	63.3%	72.1%	67.7%	69.2%

First-Time, Full-Time New Freshmen who Graduated within Four Years							
Four Year Graduation Rates	2006 Cohort	2007 Cohort	2008 Cohort	2009 Cohort	2010 Cohort	2011 Cohort	2012 Cohort
White	32.5%	31.8%	32.1%	36.5%	36.5%	37.2%	38.5%
Black	15.0%	18.9%	18.4%	16.7%	12.9%	13.9%	10.3%
Hispanic	25.0%	21.9%	28.6%	21.6%	26.6%	25.0%	28.9%
Asian	21.4%	24.1%	14.3%	11.8%	14.3%	18.2%	42.8%
Native American	28.6%	9.1%	8.3%	16.7%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%
Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Foreign	27.8%	30.0%	66.7%	0.0%	58.3%	33.3%	35.0%
2 or More	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	22.7%	19.4%	37.2%	17.3%
Total	30.6%	29.4%	29.8%	31.5%	30.6%	29.8%	28.1%

First-Time, Full-Time New Freshmen who Graduated within Six Years							
Six Year Graduation Rates	2004 Cohort	2005 Cohort	2006 Cohort	2007 Cohort	2008 Cohort	2009 Cohort	2010 Cohort
White	60.9%	54.7%	55.3%	58.8%	56.2%	56.9%	59.5%
Black	41.2%	44.0%	39.3%	38.3%	47.8%	41.9%	35.2%
Hispanic	46.7%	48.7%	50.0%	53.5%	50.9%	40.2%	49.2%
Asian	51.5%	50.0%	53.6%	44.8%	52.4%	47.1%	50.0%
Native American	0.0%	37.5%	57.1%	36.4%	33.3%	33.3%	0.0%
Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	50.0%
Foreign	80.0%	63.6%	61.1%	60.0%	66.7%	10.0%	75.0%
2 or More	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	36.4%	25.0%
Total	58.1%	53.4%	54.0%	56.1%	54.3%	52.8%	53.1%

Quad Cities Enrollment

The total Quad Cities enrollment at Western Illinois University decreased from 1,531 in 2015 to 1,430 in 2016 (-101; -6.6%). The decrease in enrollment is in the number of on campus students, undergraduate students on campus decreased 10.3 percent (-111) and graduate students on campus decreased 15.6 percent (-53). Whereas, the Quad Cities campus extension enrollment has steadily increased. The undergraduate students enrolled increased 2.8% (+6) and the number of graduate students increased 32.6% (+57).

Quad Cities	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016
Undergraduate	730	735	799	962	1,022	1,020	915
<i>On Campus</i>	685	663	673	778	794	804	693
<i>Extension</i>	45	72	126	184	228	216	222
Graduate	631	637	578	540	501	511	515
<i>On Campus</i>	592	572	531	459	404	336	283
<i>Extension</i>	39	65	47	81	97	175	232
Total	1,361	1,372	1,377	1,502	1,523	1,531	1,430

Source: Institutional Research and Planning, Fall 10th day enrollment reports

Recently, the Illinois Board of Higher Education approval the Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering in the Western Region degree, which will be delivered primarily at the Quad Cities campus, with freshman and sophomore years also offered in Macomb. The program offers a multidisciplinary program where students can focus in civil, computer-electrical, manufacturing-quality and materials engineering and engineering management. This new programming is expected to yield additional students in on-campus enrollment at Western Illinois University.

2016-2017 Recruitment Plan

The following recruitment plan was developed in accordance with the goals stated in the Western Illinois University's High Values in Higher Education Strategic plan to increase undergraduate enrollment, quality, and diversity. The plan covers the major on and off campus events, student search cycles, and publications, which support the recruitment efforts for both the Macomb and Quad Cities Campuses.

All recruitment activities identified in this plan are geared toward the achievement of institutional goals in the areas of student recruitment, applications, and yield. The focus of this plan is to implement essential student recruitment and marketing practices.

Western Illinois University will utilize strategies to increase applications and bring students through the college selection process with targeted and personalized communications so that prospective students can access information about the University from multiple sources during the critical recruitment and college selection process.

The goals of this plan are the following:

- Enroll at least 1,700 new domestic freshmen (1,650 Fall and 53 Spring)
- Enroll at least 1,500 new domestic transfer (1,100 Fall and 400 Spring)

Competitive Advantages:

- Most experienced admissions counselors in the Midwest (average tenure is 4 years)
- Clear cut admissions process
- All Cost Guarantee
- Western Commitment Scholarship Program
- First to send out award letters (November 3, 2016)
- Signature Programs
- Outperform predicted graduation rate by 4 percent
- Experiential learning opportunities

The primary focus for Fall 2016 will be to diversify our recruitment efforts with the following focus:

- Taking a proactive approach to recruitment by encouraging students to apply and visit campus early on in the admissions process.
- Financial Aid and Prior-Prior-Year and the FAFSA being available October 1st rather than January 1st, Western Illinois University was able to send out the first round of preliminary award letters on November 3rd. We were the first public institution in the state to do so. Continued focus on collaboration between the Admissions and Financial Aid offices to meet the needs of the new Financial Aid timeline.
- Continue to market affordable cost options to all students interested in attending WIU (Linkages)
- Niche marketing messages from signature academic programs
- Create more options for more high school students to explore and enroll at WIU (e.g. Special High School students).

Recruitment Strategies

- Develop and implement a more robust communication plan. This communication plan will consist of email, postcard, and text messaging communication to prospective students encouraging them to apply, visit, and take the next step in the recruitment process.
- Promote affordable options to students based on family income to reduce financial gap and increase college access for low and middle income students (e.g. highlight Linkages).
- Continue to work with department chairs to create differentiated messages for each academic major that explain how WIU's programs are unique among its competitors.
- Work with academic departments to identify program capacities, areas of growth, and how admissions and the department can better partner to set and reach enrollment goals.
- Expand outreach efforts in the St. Louis metro area.
- Expand opportunities to promote WIU-QC within the Quad Cities metro area to traditional-aged students and adult learners. This will include targeting feeder community colleges in an effort to maintain and build new relationships between the institutions.
- Increase data collection, tracking, and reporting (i.e. Pentaho) to more consistently evaluate the recruitment program by student target group, including freshmen, transfers, adult students, ethnic minorities, and students from various regions.
- Implement a segmented, systematic, and sequential written communication program designed to coordinate with phone, electronic, and hand written communications.
- Continue to assess the Western Commitment Scholarship program amount after Fall articulation conferences to determine relative net price with competitors.
- Partnering with Chegg to incorporate Geo-Fencing around targeted community colleges as well as high schools. This will raise WIU awareness at these locations with targeted messaging with specific "call to action" statements.
- Work with financial aid to improve communication for students selected for verification and students with revised award letters.
- Review OAS admissions process and standards.
- Promote and expand educational opportunities for special visiting high school students.
- Continue to develop transfer tools such as the Transfer Guide specifically designed for students transferring from a specific college to Western Illinois University.

Situational Analysis

We continue to see increased competition within the state of Illinois for our students with little increase in the number of high school graduates. The stabilization of the number of high school graduates in the state of Illinois coupled with the increased efforts on the recruitment of in-state high school graduates by the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign will pose more challenges for Western Illinois University as well as the other Illinois public and private institutions.

Western Illinois University has made the appropriate adjustments to the FAFSA timeline and began the award process early by sending preliminary financial aid award letters out to incoming freshmen students on November 3rd, 2016. This is a competitive advantage that Western Illinois University will utilize in the recruitment process as the majority of the other public universities in the state of Illinois will not be sending out preliminary financial aid award letters until January 1, 2017. We will continue to evaluate the impact an early award letter has on the college decision process of our prospective students.

Large research universities continue to be the only post-secondary institutions in the Midwest who are reporting enrollment increases, while small, private colleges, two-year community colleges, and comprehensive regional universities struggle to maintain enrollments. The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign is focusing recruitment efforts to recruit more in-state residents, which will impact the dwindling number of in-state prospective students for the other Illinois public institutions to recruit.

The primary competition for WIU continues to be other colleges and universities in Illinois, specifically the other state universities in Illinois. Western's top five competitors were: Illinois State University (360), Northern Illinois University (188), University of Illinois at Chicago (156), Southern Illinois University at Carbondale (137), and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (119).

In Fall 2016, the number of accepted new transfer applications was 1,586. Sixty-one percent (968) of the new transfer students who were accepted enrolled at WIU. Our top feeder transfer institutions included: Black Hawk College (113), Spoon River College (47), Carl Sandburg College (45), John Wood Community College (44), and Illinois Central College (43). Thirty-nine percent (618) of those prospective new transfer students declined enrollment at WIU. Of the prospective new transfer students who declined enrollment at WIU, 70% (430) enrolled at a different institution. Western's top five competitors were: Illinois State University (45), Northern Illinois University (31), Blackhawk College (20), Eastern Illinois University (20), and Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville (10).

According to the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, the number of students graduating from Illinois high schools will remain mostly unchanged over the next three years (Table 1).

Demographics will continue to shift with fewer white and black students, and more Hispanic students.

	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
White	75,797	74,578	74,178	74,121	73,491
Black	19,555	19,201	18,603	18,843	18,029
Hispanic	24,621	25,291	25,369	26,607	27,009
Asian/Pacific Islander	6,760	6,822	6,882	7,602	7,710
American Indian	384	389	357	369	404
Total	142,379	142,039	140,458	141,842	140,547

Source: Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

The competition for Illinois student enrollment has become more intense. More colleges and universities across the country are actively recruiting Illinois high school seniors. The number of regional admissions counselors in the Chicagoland area representing various colleges and universities from across the nation increased from 42 in 2009 to 108 in 2016. St. Louis is also seeing expansion in regional admissions counselors from 12 in 2007 to 27 in 2016. Illinois is now the largest exporter of college students in the nation.

Additionally, Table 2 shows that the surrounding states have a much higher percent of students who stay in-state compared to Illinois and import a larger percentage of their enrollments from other states, such as Illinois. For example, the state of Iowa enrolls one out-of-state student for every two in-state students.

	Stayed In-state	Percent Staying In-State	Migration into state	Net migration
Illinois	82,455	71.0%	17,073	-16,623
Iowa	24,315	86.5%	16,342	+12,539
Missouri	44,044	83.0%	13,313	+4,285
Wisconsin	40,817	82.0%	11,620	+2,603
Indiana	51,277	86.7%	16,583	+8,727

Source: http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_309.10.asp?current=yes

Enrollment takeaways

Recruiting students in the current marketplace is more competitive than ever. The rising cost of attending college has forced prospective students and families to take the financial commitment of attending college more into consideration in the past. Western Illinois University listened to the rising concern and lowered tuition for students entering in the fall of 2016. However, it was not that initiative alone that secured a stable freshman class for the fall of 2016. Our admissions staff did an excellent job ensuring that we did not experience a decrease in our incoming freshman class like some of the other Illinois public institutions experienced. Everyone in our office put forth the necessary effort to make sure that we left no stone unturned.

With success there is always a time to assess and identify ways in which we can enhance our processes and the services we offer throughout the recruitment process. There are things that we are good at that we must strive to be great at. The work that admissions offices do changes rapidly and striving to be great through enhancing our procedures and approach to recruitment is a necessity. How students are receptive to communication from colleges changes each year and we must adapt with what works best. Our communication plan will be under review on a yearly basis to meet the changing climate of what is the most effective way to reach students and there are always areas of opportunity that we will be focusing in order to enhance our communication with prospective students and families. We will ensure that our communication takes proactive approach in the recruitment of our incoming freshmen and transfer students.

The use of mobile devices by prospective students are also changing the recruitment landscape. Ninety percent of high school students are using mobile devices to research colleges and we are always exploring new ways in which to reach those students within the media they are utilizing. Marketing tools such as geo-fencing will enable us to have a presence within a high school or community college without the investment or time commitment of university personnel physically being there. This will enable Western Illinois to broaden our reach and deliver target messages with specific calls to action to a larger audience.

With the increased importance of effectively communicating with prospective students we will continue to evaluate our institutional reporting and tracking abilities. Enhancing our reporting and communication tracking abilities within our student record system will ensure that we are able to drill deeper into the data to formulate a more accurate and strategic approach to the recruitment of our incoming freshmen and transfer students. These enhancements will be focused on enabling the admissions counselors to effectively manage their territory by providing immediate and accurate data that will be useful in identifying where strategic focus needs to be given.

What our admissions office staff did for the fall 2016 class was amazing given the outside influences that public institutions in Illinois faced during the year. A new recruitment year has started and we cannot expect to get the same results by doing the same things we did last year. There are too many unknown circumstances when it comes to a prospective student's decision making abilities. That is why there is a high level of importance put on evaluation and enhancement even after a year of overcoming many obstacles to remain stable in our incoming freshmen enrollment.

2016-2017 Graduate Recruiting Plan – Programs

1. Program Goals for 2016-2017 – describe the number and types of students to refill/increase seats; the focus is on increasing any or all of the various parts of the funnel (prospect/inquiry, applied, accepted, enrolled).
2. Complete and submit the Weekly Inquiry Report. Designate a program member (faculty, staff, grad coordinator/committee chair/advisor) to collect info each week.
3. Maintain a database of prospects that includes the following information: Name, contact info, undergrad institution, referral source, # times contacted via email, # times contacted via phone, and whether the prospective student has visited campus, applied, was accepted, and enrolled.
4. Contact department chairs at least 10 new feeder schools below (or others) to build relationships and refer students to your program.

ILLINOIS SCHOOLS

Augustana College
Eureka College
Illinois College
Illinois Wesleyan University
Knox College
MacMurray College
McKendree College
Millikin University
Monmouth College
Quincy University
St. Ambrose

IOWA SCHOOLS

Central College
Coe College
Cornell College
Drake University
Grinnell College
Iowa Wesleyan College
Loras College
Luther College
Wartburg College

MISSOURI SCHOOLS

Culver-Stockton College
Hannibal-LaGrange University
Truman State University
Westminster College

WISCONSIN SCHOOLS

Beloit College
Carroll University
Edgewood College
Lawrence University
Ripon College

5. For programs that use other sources of outreach, connect with at least 10 new companies, school districts, civic/voluntary groups, etc. to build relationships and refer students to your program.
6. Access students' letters of recommendation on document imaging and send a thank you note to the recommender and request additional referrals.
7. Increase social media messaging – designate an assistantship as a social media graduate ambassador using Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.
8. Focus departmental/program website to include information on the a) quality of the program, b) cost/affordability, and c) pathways to doctorate or careers available
 - Testimonials from alums
 - Map or list of job titles obtained by alums
 - Description of opportunities to work with faculty
9. Use new and current students in recruiting by communicating with prospective students via handwritten notes, emails, social media, or phone calls.
10. Use new and current students in recruiting by connecting with personnel in their undergrad programs, school districts where they're employed, employers, etc. to build relationships.

2016-2017 Graduate Recruiting Plan – School of Graduate Studies

1. Providing a competition for 10 \$500 Graduate Recruiting Grants
 - a. 7 applications submitted and awarded
 - 1) College Student Personnel
 - 2) History
 - 3) Museum Studies
 - 4) Music
 - 5) Psychology – Clinical/Community Mental Health and General Experimental
 - 6) Psychology – School Psychology Specialist
 - 7) Sociology
2. Coordinating a pilot test of Gradschoolmatch.com with 12 programs:
 - a. Business Administration
 - b. Communication
 - c. Community and Economic Development
 - d. Economics
 - e. Engineering Technology Leadership
 - f. Geography
 - g. Instructional Design and Technology
 - h. Museum Studies
 - i. Music
 - j. Physics
 - k. Recreation, Park and Tourism Administration
 - l. Sociology
3. Using the McNair Scholars Directory to access approximately 1200 prospects for numerous WIU graduate programs
4. Attend graduate fairs typically attended and evaluate usefulness of each fair