

Standard One

Mission Statement and Strategic Plans

WSU serves a unique role in the state. The university, founded in 1890, is the state's land-grant university and, as mandated by its charter, fosters learning in the liberal arts and natural sciences, as well as in agriculture, home economics, engineering, business, health sciences, veterinary medicine, and education. All are essential in its comprehensive approach to higher education. WSU's uniqueness arises from its vision of teaching/learning, research, and service/outreach functions-interdependent, mutually supportive, and central to its land-grant mission.

The university consists of eleven major academic units: nine colleges, the Graduate School, and the University Honors College. WSU has a statewide presence with campuses in Pullman, Spokane, Tri-Cities, and Vancouver, and an Extended Degree Program that is offered throughout the state. As Washington's land-grant university, WSU includes the Agricultural Research Center with major centers in Puyallup, Prosser, and Wenatchee, smaller centers elsewhere, and Cooperative Extension programs in every county in the state. In addition, the university operates Small Business Development Centers throughout the state.

The full text of the University's Role and Mission Statement is made available to the university community and the public at large through WSU's Web site, and in the Strategic Plan for Washington State University. (See <www.wsu.edu/provost/roleandm.htm>.) WSU's mission informs and gives direction to all its educational activities. Further, the mission statement itself is the foundation for concrete formulations of short- and long-term goals for the institution as a whole, for its various units and subunits, for its admissions and faculty selection policies, for its allocation of resources, and for the strategic planning necessary to carry out those goals.

The integration of WSU's definition of its mission and its planning mechanisms is made explicit in the 1996 Strategic Plan for Washington State University. In light of the Role and Mission Statement, the strategic plan builds upon and revises various earlier planning documents: Institutional Planning: The Path to Excellence (1984); Planning for the Second Century-Common Understandings: A Context for Planning at Washington State University (1990); Academic Vision (1993); and the Role and Mission Statement (1994). The executive summary of the strategic plan outlines its major purpose and components:

The Strategic Plan for Washington State University (WSU) is designed to help chart the course for the University as it moves into the 21st century. The overall document contains a summary of WSU's role and mission, a statement of the values which lay the foundation for the Plan, a discussion of the external environment which provides a broad context for the Plan, and the Plan itself, consisting of the statement of an academic principle, a list of seven planning goals and a list of supporting goals. A set of strategies is provided for the principle and each goal (p. 3).

The strategic plan's introduction outlines the process of its development in consultation with the Faculty Senate, the graduate and undergraduate student associations, the Council of Deans, and the Board of Regents. It is a dynamic document that changes as the university community provides

input. The success of planning is dependent upon a systematic and continual program of assessment through which the institution gauges the effectiveness of its actions and makes changes necessary for improvement.

The academic principle advanced in the strategic plan reflects WSU's commitment to its role as a land-grant research university that continues to have a balanced program of teaching, research, and service/outreach to enhance the well-being of the state of Washington through the 21st century. At the threshold of the new century, the process of reviewing and revising or replacing the 1996 strategic plan has begun.

Planning and Support Goals

University-wide planning is guided by the strategic plan. Evidence of how the university is building this principle into definitions of faculty duties within units and how it is meeting the seven goals of that plan follows.

Planning Goals

Goal 1: Selective Excellence. WSU builds on its strengths, striving to enhance its reputation as a premier land-grant university, and will continue to sustain or attain eminence in areas appropriate to its mission. In 1996, the university examined the definition of the "academic core" both at the college and university levels and developed a plan for the periodic review of organized units such as centers, institutes, and laboratories. Through these periodic reviews, including internal and external assessment and accreditation activities, the university identifies programs for enhanced resources and also duplicative and other low-priority programs for consolidation, downsizing, or elimination. The programs encompassing the academic core are supported by budgets adequate to provide quality teaching, research, and service/outreach. WSU's recent Low Output and Duplicative Programs Report (June 1997) shows that, of the degrees noted in the Higher Education Coordinating Board's initial report, 21 already have been eliminated (9 of which have been replaced by other degrees), and 4 are under consideration for elimination or reconfiguration. Of the rest, 19 have increased their enrollments since the report years, 8 are recently approved programs with growing enrollments, 8 are master's degrees in programs that typically move directly from the B.S. to the Ph.D., 2 are critical programs in their units, and 1 has been reconfigured. These reviews-and action on them-will continue unabated with close attention to costs and benefits.

Goal 2: Expanded Access with Quality. WSU is developing into a university system with educational programs and students of the highest quality, offering a residential experience on the Pullman campus while providing access for placebound students at the branch campuses and other locations. WSU is committed to expanded educational opportunities throughout the state by modern telecommunications and computer technology. The maintenance and development of educational programs of the highest quality have accompanied expanded enrollment throughout the system. In keeping with its commitment to expand educational opportunities throughout the state, WSU continues to develop its offerings of continuing and extension educational programs. WSU also continues its cutting-edge programs in the use of telecommunications for instruction, extending the Washington Higher Education Telecommunication System (WHETS) to new sites as needed. Other

capabilities such as Internet and satellite are used to expand offerings as the enrollment in the Extended Degree Program is expanded.

Goal 3: Increased Diversity. Diversity continues to be a very high priority for Washington State University. The annual Report on Diversity Programs and the companion Diversity Plan show the extent of this commitment. The university, as reflected in all of its goals, is committed to global and cultural pluralism among the faculty, staff, and students. WSU is continuing its commitment to providing access to higher education for all students regardless of their economic or disability status, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religious background, or geographic location. As an example of the institution's accomplishments, its enrollment of multicultural students went from 1,356 (8%) in 1990 to 2,134 (12.3%) in 1996. Further, the university has strengthened its diversity and multicultural efforts in all aspects of university life, including the curriculum and campus-wide extracurricular activities, in order to foster understanding and provide cultural enrichment. The Cultural Pluralism Team! Diversity Committee worked to enhance diversity in the curriculum, in part through a five-year mini-grant program. Every student in the General Education core completes at least one intercultural course. [Note: In the Spring of 1998, the Faculty Senate, at the urging of the students, added a requirement mandating that the General Education core include at least one course that specifically addresses issues of diversity in the United States.] Each unit of the institution has developed, in accordance with the strategic plan, a diversity plan for which it is responsible. The Provost's ad hoc Diversity Assessment Committee continues to examine policy and climate issues.

Goal 4: Enhanced Graduate Education and Research. WSU has strengthened its graduate and professional education and research programs, accomplished by increasing enrollments and increasing externally sponsored activities. Anticipating economic and cultural needs and responding selectively, WSU has set a goal of doubling the enrollment of graduate and professional students by the year 2010, while maintaining high quality as substantiated through appropriate assessment activities. Much of the growth in graduate enrollment will be at the branch campuses. Accordingly, graduate programs are offered that meet the special scheduling requirements of students and economic needs of the regions served by each campus. WSU strives to recruit and retain underrepresented graduate and professional students. Indeed, currently WSU is among the top 100 institutions nationwide granting doctoral degrees to Hispanic students.

Goal 5: Enriched Learning. Students who graduate from WSU with a baccalaureate degree receive a liberal education along with specialized emphases provided by their majors. All undergraduate students at WSU participate in the university's General Education Program (or its analogue in the University Honors College), which has an increased emphasis on oral and written communication throughout the curriculum, quantitative skill improvement, computer literacy, and the World Civilizations courses. The goal is to enable students to express themselves both orally and in writing, think critically, and possess strong quantitative skills and computer literacy. As a means to this end, the university is and will remain dedicated to quality teaching and will facilitate faculty exploration of new ways of enhancing student learning including further integration of technology in the classroom. Further, since the 1995-96 academic year, all faculty under consideration for tenure and promotion are required to submit Teaching Portfolios to establish teaching effectiveness. Additionally, WSU has strengthened the interactions of students with faculty and staff through improvements to academic advising, student counseling, and mentoring programs.

WSU is ranked among America's 100 "most wired colleges" and values technology education. From 1996 to 1999, the percent of the freshman class being served by at least one technology enhanced course is expected to increase from 50% to 100%. By 1999, 40% of the overall curriculum will include enhanced technology in the classroom. WSU's exemplary Writing Program, the reform of General Education, increased use of instructional technology, implementation of Teaching Portfolios, increased emphasis on student development, establishment of the Center for Teaching and Learning, and widespread availability of faculty development workshops on assessment-related topics are a few of the changes initiated or influenced, to date, by a commitment to enriched learning and by assessment activities and data.

Support Goals

Goal 6: Diversified Funding Base. While the core activities at the institution will continue to require state funding, WSU is seeking to further diversify its funding base in order to significantly enhance its non-state resources. WSU has explored novel and nontraditional granting processes for entering into partnerships with industry. In ongoing assessment, the university is examining how the Research Foundation's mission could be more responsive to faculty's changing needs and demands. WSU continues to improve its communications with all key constituencies who influence decisions about funding, especially taxpayers, legislators, media, and donors. Progress in this regard is periodically assessed, not only by looking at the levels of funding but also through appropriate surveys and opinion polls. WSU continues to work with the state legislature to establish maximum flexibility for managing its resources. Finally, the university is offering incentives to individual units to increase their funding base through donations, grants, and other extramural sources.

Goal 7: Effective Personnel and Resource Management. WSU strives for the recruitment and retention of the very best personnel. Attention is paid to promoting collegiality; creating opportunities and resources to increase educational, professional, and personal development; addressing issues of appropriate recognition and rewards; and maintaining an attractive quality of life at WSU. Because WSU is a university system with many locations, efforts are made to integrate faculty members into the university system, regardless of geographic location. It is an effort that, while essential, is sometimes difficult.

WSU works to effectively manage its resources in order to support its teaching, research, and service/outreach programs, including the maintenance, improvement, and/or replacement of capital facilities as necessary, to preserve and enhance the unique physical character of each WSU campus. External constituents (including legislators, state and federal officials, alumni, donors, corporate and community leaders, the media, and Washington citizens generally) are a valuable resource to WSU. The university is expanding its efforts to build supportive relations with these groups and to seek their views and ideas.

Further detailed action items set forth in the Strategic Plan regarding these goals can be found in the exhibits for Standards 2 through 9 in this report. Exhibits under Standard 2 through 8 should be consulted for related mission statements and planning documents for all the components of WSU's academic community. Additionally, unit strategic plans developed in accordance with the university's Strategic Plan are available in the exhibits. Documents particularly relevant to Goal 2: Expanded Access with Quality (found in Enrollment Management Plan for Washington State

University, 1995-2010). and Goal 3: Increased Diversity (found in Goals for Diversity) are included in the exhibits for this standard.

Institutional Assessment

Assessment of Outcomes

Assessment at WSU is intended to support the University's mission and goals, particularly in teaching and learning. It serves three primary purposes for the institution: (1) as a catalyst for programmatic changes (e.g., curriculum, instruction), (2) as a tool for institutional self-reflection, and (3) as an influence on measures of accountability. WSU practices a systematic and continual program of assessment to track the effectiveness of its activities, planning, and development, and to make changes necessary for improvement.

Budget policies are informed by assessment data to support the allocation of new resources to areas of high

Satisfaction Surveys. The Office of Student Affairs Research recently conducted a survey of satisfaction levels of first-year undergraduate students related to their academic affiliations by college, to the WSU Pullman environment, and to their residence halls. Results of the survey are included in the exhibits as well as information on students leaving WSU without degrees. WSU's record percentage of graduates who donate to the University is an indirect evidence of satisfaction.

The assessment indicators included here are resources that the university uses to continuously improve the quality of education for its students. However, WSU is working toward more systematic and effective paths of assessment.