



Institutional Self-Study for Reaccreditation

Western Connecticut State University

Submitted to:

New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc.
Commission of Institutions of Higher Education

August 2013



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CONNECTICUT
STATE UNIVERSITY

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Preface: The Self-Study Process

Western Connecticut State University's 2013 Self-Study reflects two years of preparation, fact-finding, interviewing, electronic networking, and meetings. Consistent with President James W. Schmotter's approach to governance, the Self-Study process was expansive and inclusive. It brought together members of the administration, faculty, staff, students and alumni to identify the university's strengths as well as areas in need of improvement. Over 100 were directly involved in the Self-Study process and many others provided data, completed surveys and responded to the Self-Study drafts.

In May 2011 President Schmotter appointed Provost Jane Gates and Vice President of Student Affairs, Walter Bernstein, to co-chair the NEASC reaccreditation process. In consultation with the President, a Steering Committee was appointed to oversee the Self-Study and preparations for reaccreditation. Dr. Bernstein stepped down from his chairmanship in Fall 2012 due to his impending retirement and the newly hired Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Ann Atkinson, accepted the position going forward.

During summer 2011 the Steering Committee reviewed the university's 2003 Self-Study, Fifth Year Report, and the new NEASC *Standards for Accreditation*. A preliminary timeline was established as well as a campus-wide communications plan.

To introduce the NEASC accreditation process to the university community and invite participation a letter from the co-chairs was sent to faculty and staff at the start of Fall 2011. Individuals were selected to chair each Standard from those who expressed interest in working on the Self-Study. Each chair identified volunteers who would join the team in addressing the Standard. A member of the Steering Committee served as a liaison to each Standard team.

In September 2011 the Steering Committee, Standards chairs and key stakeholders met to review the Self-Study timeline, share strategy and guidelines for drafts, clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Steering Committee, Standard chairs and the Steering Committee liaisons, and discuss the content for a faculty/staff survey.

The campus community was kept abreast of the Self-Study progress throughout the process. The existing NEASC webpage was updated with information on the 2013 reaccreditation. Progress reports were given regularly at the Vice Presidents' meetings, the President's Cabinet meetings, Deans Council meetings and the Provost's Direct Reports meetings. A progress report to the campus community was written and disseminated in Spring 2012.

In October 2011 all Self-Study Standard chairs attended a two-day NEASC workshop to acquaint them with the accreditation process and the steps involved in preparing a relevant, candid Self-Study report. Following the workshop they held the first meeting with their teams to discuss the process for data collection and analyses and the writing timeline.

Writing the Self-Study began in earnest during the Spring 2012 semester. Standards teams met monthly and progress reports were made to the Steering Committee in March. The Steering Committee developed and administered a survey to gather information on how well the

university is achieving its mission and Strategic Plan, in addition to other selected topics. Results were sent to Standard chairs to incorporate appropriate data.

Upon receiving the first drafts of the Standards, in June 2012, the Steering Committee members read and commented on the manuscripts, then met with the Standards Chairs in Fall 2012 to offer verbal feedback. Each Standard's strengths were identified, as well as areas that needed revision and additional supporting data.

After Standards were submitted for another revision, a working draft of the entire Self-Study was compiled and Steering Committee members, Standards chairs and Deans met in March at a retreat to critique the document. Findings were shared at the end of the retreat and Standards Chairs and their teams were then tasked with subjecting their Standards to another revision, incorporating comments and suggestions made by retreat participants.

The resulting draft was reviewed by Dr. Jean MacCormack, NEASC visiting team chair, prior to her campus visit in March 2013. Dr. MacCormack met with campus administrators and the Steering Committee members to discuss the site visit process and logistics and comment on the Self-Study draft. Her guidance regarding the draft led to the incorporation of more evidence to support the narrative.

In April the Self-Study draft was posted online, including a message box for feedback. A campus-wide email was sent to faculty, staff and students with a link to the draft encouraging them to review the draft and submit comments. In addition, they were invited to attend any of the three open forums hosted by the co-chairs of the Steering Committee to discuss and provide input into the document. Both the comments received online and those from the forums were posted on the NEASC web page and were taken into consideration for incorporation into the final draft.

Throughout May the editor of the Self-Study continued to polish the text and members of the Steering Committee re-checked facts and figures. The draft was sent to NEASC in June for review and comment.

In August, public notification of the upcoming evaluation visit was posted in the *News Times*, the alumni newsletter and on the university's homepage, encouraging public comment about WCSU.

Preparations for the site visit began in January 2013 with a member of the Steering Committee attending a NEASC workshop on preparing for the visiting team. The Steering Committee has identified workroom space, reserved meeting spaces, made hotel and travel arrangements and prepared and submitted a budget for site visit expenses.

Not simply a requirement to meet reaccreditation Standards, the Self-Study process has provided a valuable resource to guide the university in moving forward. Much like the university's Strategic Plan, the document acknowledges the advances the university has made over the past ten years, while recognizing that critical assessment of performance and deliberate plans to reach priority goals is essential for continued success in educating our students.

NEASC Self-Study Steering Committee

Dr. Jane Gates, Co-Chair, Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs
 Dr. Ann Atkinson, Co-Chair, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs
 Dr. Oscar De Los Santos, Chair/Professor of Writing, Linguistics & Creative Process, NEASC Self-Study editor
 Dr. Marcia Delcourt, Professor of Education & Educational Psychology
 Dr. Daniel Goble, Dean, School of Visual & Performing Arts
 Dr. Josie Hamer, Professor of Mathematics
 Dr. Carol Hawkes, Dean Emerita, senior advisor to the NEASC Self-Study Steering Committee
 Ms. Betsy McDonough, Presidential Assistant
 Mr. Charles Mullaney, Chair/Professor of Justice & Law Administration
 Mr. Paul Reis, Vice President for Finance & Administration
 Dr. Jerry Wilcox, Director of Institutional Research and Assessment
 Dr. Kathryn Wiss, Chair/Professor of Communication

Standards Chairpersons, Members and Steering Committee Liaisons

Standard I: Mission and Purposes

Chair: Karen Koza, Marketing
 Members: Michael Wilson, Education & Educational Psychology
 Steering Committee Liaison: Daniel Goble

Standard II: Planning and Evaluation

Chair: Karen Koza, Marketing
 Members: Scott McGregor, Accounting; Michael Wilson, Education & Educational Psychology
 Steering Committee Liaison: Daniel Goble

Standard III: Organization and Governance

Chair: Karen Koza, Marketing
 Members: Susan Maskel, Biological & Environmental Sciences; A. Ben Oumlil, Marketing
 Steering Committee Liaison: Daniel Goble

Standard IV: The Academic Program

Chair overseeing entire standard: Shane Murphy, Psychology
 Members: Lorraine Capobianco, University Computing; Pamela McDaniel, Theatre Arts; Todd McNerny; University Computing; Burt Peretti, History & Non-Western Culture; Bonnie Rabe, Education & Educational Psychology; Chuck Rocca, Mathematics
 Steering Committee Liaisons: Carol Hawkes, Kathryn Wiss

Undergraduate Degree Programs

General Education

The Major or Concentration

Chair: Chuck Rocca, Mathematics
 Members: Robin Flanagan, Psychology; Brian Kennison, Library; Abbey Zink, Interim Dean of Arts & Sciences
 Steering Committee Liaison: Josie Hamer

Graduate Degree Programs

Chair: Burt Peretti, History & Non-Western Culture

Members: Marjorie Callaghan, Music & Music Education; Pauline Goolkasian, Alumnus, Nancy Heilbronner, Education & Educational Psychology; Gabriel Lomas, Counseling; Shouhua Qi, English; John Ryan, Alumnus; Fred Tesch, Management

Steering Committee Liaison: Marcia Delcourt

Integrity in the Award of Academic Credit

Chair: Bonnie Rabe, Education & Educational Psychology

Members: Rebecca Diot, University Computing; Robin James, Education & Educational Psychology; George Kain, Justice & Law Administration

Steering Committee Liaisons: Marcia Delcourt, Daniel Goble

Assessment of Student Learning**Institutional Effectiveness**

Chair: Pamela McDaniel, Theatre Arts

Members: Jay Brower, Communication; Katie Lever-Mazzuto, Communication; Lisa Peck, Academic Advisement

Steering Committee Liaison: Jerry Wilcox

Standard V: Faculty

Chair: Bill Petkanas, Communication

Members: Melissa Fenwick, Justice & Law Administration; Tom Philbrick, Biological & Environmental Sciences

Steering Committee Liaison: Josie Hamer

Standard VI: Students

Chair: Walter Cramer, Student Affairs,

Members: Margie Aldrich, Mathematics; Michelle Bishop, student; Ayanna Bledsoe, student; Lorraine Capobianco, University Computing; Steve Goetsch, Admissions; Deb Hardy, Alumnus; Ron Mason, Residence Life; Dora Pinou, Biological & Environmental Sciences; Francesca Testa, student

Steering Committee Liaisons: Walter Bernstein, Jerry Wilcox

Standard VII: Library and Other Information Resources

Co-Chairs: Linda Forbes, Management and Kit Hinga, Social Work

Members: Jan Gangi, Education & Educational Leadership; Kara Kunst, student; Karin Mansberg, student; Jennifer O'Brien, Library; Joan Palladino, Nursing; Steve Veillette, University Computing; Rebecca Woodward, Media Services

Steering Committee Liaison: Kathryn Wiss

Standard VIII: Physical and Technological Resources

Co-Chairs: Veronica Kenausis, Library and Mitch Wagener, Biological Sciences

Members: JC Barone, Communication; Douglas O'Grady, Music; Jeff Postolowski, University Computing; Josh Salthouse, student; Peter Visentin, Planning & Engineering

Steering Committee Liaisons: Daniel Goble, Paul Reis

Standard IX: Financial Resources

Chair: Fred Maidment, Management

Members: Sean Loughran, Fiscal Affairs; Tom Monks, Accounting; Jane Von Trapp, Institutional Advancement

Steering Committee Liaison: Paul Reis

Standard X: Public Disclosure

Chair: Carolyn Lanier, Multicultural Affairs

Members: Fred Cratty, Human Resources; Truman Keys, Communication; Chuck Mullaney, Justice & Law Administration

Steering Committee Liaison: Charles Mullaney

Standard XI: Integrity

Chair: Carolyn Lanier, Multicultural Affairs

Members: Fred Cratty, Human Resources; Truman Keys, Communication; Chuck Mullaney, Justice & Law Administration

Steering Committee Liaison: Charles Mullaney

Standard I: Mission and Purposes

Description

Since its inception in 1903, Western Connecticut State University has evolved into an institution that comprehensively serves the intellectual, creative, and professional development needs of its community. The university remains true to its mission, providing a vibrant educational environment and active outreach programs and partnerships that have long-lasting benefits to its stakeholders.

The university's mission is published online and in print, including undergraduate and graduate catalogs and the faculty handbook. The mission statement is clear and distinct, defining educational and other dimensions, including instruction, scholarship and public service. In addition, it forms the basis for the mission statement of each of the university's schools and departments.

WCSU is one of seventeen members of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (ConnSCU). As a state university, its mission statement reflects the interests and needs of the people of the State of Connecticut. It was approved by the Connecticut State University System Board of Trustees in 1998 and affirmed by the current Connecticut Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR).

Mission:

The university serves as an accessible, responsive and creative intellectual resource for the people and institutions of Connecticut. We strive to meet the educational needs of a diversified student body through instruction, scholarship, and public service. Western aspires to be a public university of choice for programs of excellence in the liberal arts and the professions by providing fulltime and part-time students with the necessary background to be successful in their chosen careers and to be productive members of society. It accomplishes this by emphasizing:

- A strong liberal arts foundation
- Strong skills in communication, problem solving, and critical thinking
- Opportunities for experiential, cooperative, and internship experiences
- A strong background in information technologies
- Interdisciplinary programs
- A strong sense of commitment to public service
- A personalized learning environment

The mission statement continues to give direction to the plans and activities of Western Connecticut State University. In 2004, under the leadership of the newly appointed president, the university began a strategic planning initiative called "Values and Vision" to explore the strengths and challenges of the university and set future directions. This initiative included input from 76 focus groups engaging more than 650 stakeholders, and produced the Vision and a set of Strategic Planning goals, unanimously endorsed by the University Senate in 2007. These provide the fundamental framework that guides the actions and activities of WCSU as well as a basis for institutional evaluation.

Appraisal

The mission is effectively being realized through the 2007 Strategic Plan. This is the vehicle by which goals are set and progress measured. In 2012 Assessment Teams formally evaluated progress on the six Strategic Plan goals. In 2013 President Schmutter charged teams to address four priority issues and four signature programs, all of which are based on the Plan's vision. The Strategic Plan is a living document that has been internalized by the university community. This is evident in the results of the 2012 Faculty-Staff Survey. The highlights below illustrate that the mission is well communicated and well understood and that departments have aligned themselves with the university's mission statement.

2012 Faculty-Staff Survey:

Question	Yes	Agree
Are you familiar with the University's Mission Statement?	90%	
Are you familiar with the mission statement for your department/program area?	84%	
WCSU emphasizes a strong liberal arts foundation		93%
As indicated in the Mission Statement, WCSU emphasizes a personalized learning environment		90%
As indicated in the Mission Statement, WCSU emphasizes strong sense of commitment to public service		87%
WCSU uses its vision, mission and Strategic Plan to provide a basis for planning for the future		88%
WCSU uses its vision, mission and Strategic Plan to provide a basis for evaluation of its endeavors		80%

It is encouraging that a comparison of the 2012 survey with a similar survey conducted in 2002 shows significant improvement (greater than 20%) regarding WCSU's emphasis on a strong liberal arts foundation, emphasis on interdisciplinary programs, and commitment to public service.

While recent survey results show improvement over the last ten years, WCSU will need to better demonstrate the link between its mission and faculty staffing since agreement of faculty and staff regarding this issue is among the lowest scored of the questions (71%). The current fiscal crisis in the State of Connecticut demands that the university establish alternative sources for funding, in order to further enhance faculty hiring.

The President's Annual Reports summarize a broad spectrum of activities and actions defining the significant impact WCSU has in shaping a vibrant educational environment for its students and communities. Among these are the opening of the Science Building in 2005, and the establishment of the School of Visual and Performing Arts in 2006, both of which testify to a commitment to continually enhance the learning and instruction environment. Partnerships with regional businesses and organizations to produce the Western Connecticut Health Report Card and to bring to campus distinguished speakers such as author Timothy O'Brien, director Mira Nair, activist Sister Helen Prejean and His Holiness the Dalai Lama inform decision-makers and enrich the intellectual opportunities in the region.

Scholarship provides the support for quality instruction and academic programs. Both faculty and students present and publish research in their academic areas, garner awards and grants, spearhead learning initiatives, and represent the university in many professional organizations. Recent grants include funding for nanotechnology research and federal and corporate funding to reduce the number of university students requiring remedial classes. The first Fulbright Scholarship ever to be awarded to a Western student was celebrated in 2009; this has been followed by four additional Fulbrights.

NCATE accreditation for education programs was achieved in 2009 and the Nursing students' 100% pass rate on state board examinations for five of the last eight years illustrate excellence in professional programs, while creation of the Provost's position in 2006 and the proposal, passed by the Senate in February 2013, that General Education move to a tiered competency-based model support the mission's excellence in the liberal arts.

Public service is embraced throughout the university. From raising funds to build wells in Zambia to controlling the zebra mussels in area lakes, our faculty, staff and students are practicing civic engagement and service learning. This commitment was recognized nationally in 2013 when the university was added to The President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll, which recognizes higher education institutions that reflect the values of exemplary community service and achieve meaningful outcomes in their community.

To complement the effective implementation and assessment of the mission statement through the Strategic Plan, a communication plan to regularly inform the university community, as well as stakeholders, of progress would further integrate the university's values and goals.

Projection

Teams assessing Strategic Planning priority issues and signature programs report monthly progress and data to Vice Presidents and a summary will be provided to the university community starting in September 2013.

One component of the Capital Campaign, begun in 2013, will concentrate on obtaining unrestricted endowments to be used, in part, to defray university costs that declining budgets can no longer meet; this includes staffing.

Institutional Effectiveness

Western Connecticut State University has a process in place that applies and regularly reviews its mission in developing strategies, establishing goals and priorities and assessing progress.

Standard II: Planning and Evaluation

Description: Planning

WCSU has been guided by the current Strategic Vision and Plan since 2005. The Plan, passed unanimously by the University Senate in 2007, has been internalized by the university community and appears in operating procedures, departmental annual reports, performance appraisals, and financial planning. Progress is reported at semester opening meetings, periodic university-wide communication and on the website.

The development of the Strategic Plan attests to the cooperative and transparent nature of planning at WCSU. The process began in 2004 through a “Values and Vision” process which involved 76 focus groups and more than 650 university stakeholders.

The Strategic Plan has six goals:

- Attract and retain outstanding faculty
- Capitalize on the university’s location
- Embrace the diverse university community
- Offer a range of quality academic programs
- Foster an enriching and supportive student-focused environment
- Deliver outstanding value to students through financial planning

Since the adoption of the Strategic Plan several factors emerged that required adjustment in the plan to accommodate changing realities. From Fall 2007 to 2010, student FTE increased by 9.6%, but then decreased by 6.9% between 2010 and 2012. State funding for higher education was dramatically reduced in 2012. In addition the landscape of public higher education governance in Connecticut has been unsettled for several years, with a new Board of Regents replacing the four-year university and community college Boards of Trustees in 2010.

As new challenges occurred planning adapted. In 2011 the President formed strategic assessment teams to examine the progress made in meeting our goals, to consider the internal and external changes since 2005 and to provide a platform to launch the next phase of Western’s strategic direction. The reports of these teams were presented in Spring 2012, together with priorities for decision making in the next planning cycle. In Spring 2013, the President directed Cabinet members to develop plans to improve four areas critical to the success of the university going forward: retention, enrollment, process re-engineering and communications. Reports from each group are due in June 2013.

With the current economic landscape, there is a need to operate more like a private institution since the days of robust direct funding from the State of Connecticut appear to be dwindling. As one of the many ways to manage this economic and political reality, the Western Connecticut State University Foundation board voted to begin a capital campaign in 2011. The five-year campaign is expected to raise \$12.5 million for three major areas: student support, innovation and research involving faculty and students, and partnerships with the community.

Currently there are several planning initiatives underway to increase student enrollment and retention. In Spring 2013, the Interim CIO began a re-engineering project to map the complex

road students must traverse from admissions to financial aid to registration. Working with representatives from each of these areas, data have been gathered and are now being analyzed with the goal of streamlining processes and procedures to improve student service. Recommendations will be reported in August 2013. In addition President Schmotter has charged a team to develop a plan to increase enrollment by 4% in FY14 and FY15 and increase out-of-state enrollment by 5% in FY14 and 10% in FY15 and another team to develop a plan to increase first- to second-year retention by 3% in FY14 and 3% in FY15. Both plans will be finalized in Summer 2013.

As illustrated above, the cooperative, transparent process used to forge the Strategic Plan is ongoing in all university planning. This includes the University Planning and Budget Committee (UPBC), a standing committee of the University Senate. As part of our shared governance process, the UPBC provides a forum for administrators to share financial and planning information and for the Committee to affect budget and planning.

In addition to the Strategic Plan, the university has an Academic planning process, comprising accreditation efforts and program review, a Facilities Master Plan, discussed in Standard VIII, and financial planning detailed in Standard IX. Departments have also developed strategic plans, such as the Information Technology & Innovation Department's Technology Plan, discussed in Standard VIII.

Finally, in 2010 a task force drawn from across the spectrum of university operations—health care, police, facilities and environmental services, faculty, information technology, financial administration, student life and public relations—was charged with drafting a new unified Emergency Operations Plan. It is rooted in principles established in the National Incident Management System (NIMS) of the U. S. Department of Homeland Security and sets out planning and operational procedures for implementation in the event of a natural, technological, hazardous material or human-caused emergency. Further investment in security includes a campus-wide emergency notification system and the installation of internal locks on all classroom doors.

Description: Evaluation

To support and advance the planning and evaluation process, the university maintains an [Office of Institutional Research and Assessment](#), whose mission “is to improve the quality of information for problem solving, decision making, assessment, strategic planning, facilities planning, and effective management of the university.” Its duties include: producing faculty workload summaries, processing student evaluations of courses, analyzing third-week student data, collecting and disseminating admissions data, student performance data, and external information on trends in higher education. This office is also responsible for coordinating the administration of surveys to faculty, staff, students, and recent graduates.

Another evaluative arm of the university is the [Assessment Committee](#), a standing committee of the University Senate since 1994. It includes student, faculty, and administrative representation. The Assessment Committee helps facilitate program, school, and university-wide assessment. It also helps coordinate assessment efforts with the UPBC and the Student Life Committee.

The committee is also charged with monitoring the [Institutional Assessment Plan](#). The plan was developed and implemented in response to the 2004 NEASC reaccreditation report. The plan calls for ongoing collection, analysis and dissemination of information on student learning outcomes in every degree program. An assessment website was launched in 2007 providing a resource for faculty. Assessment data was used to support the university's first academic program review process approved by the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Curriculum and Academic Standards (CUCAS) in 2007. Implementation began in Fall 2008 with five programs.

[WCSU's academic program review process](#) is detailed in the Faculty Handbook. In 2007, it was the policy that all academic programs were to be reviewed every ten years. In Spring 2012, the scope of ten years was shortened to seven years. This change has been approved by CUCAS, the Graduate Council, UPBC, the University Senate, and the President. The President or a designee of the President can award reassigned time to faculty for activities related to program review.

The university is also committed to obtaining relevant national accreditation for academic programs, which normally entails comprehensive assessment. Of our 56 degree programs, national accreditation has been awarded to 12 degree programs in 6 major areas: Chemistry, Counselor Education, Education, Music, Nursing and Social Work. Ten additional degree programs in 3 major areas are seeking national accreditation: Business, Visual Arts and Theatre Arts.

An important step in ongoing assessment of Student Affairs services was initiated in 2005 using the standards of the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS). Every department within Student Affairs completed a self-study using the CAS Standards. The results have been employed for service improvement, the development of action plans and, in some cases, the development of learning outcomes.

WCSU uses information gathered from surveys of students, graduates, and employers to assess the success of its education and recent graduates. The university uses the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to help assess student involvement in activities shown to enhance learning. After a one-year hiatus, a fifth year of NSSE is underway in Spring 2013. In addition, the university administered the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE) for Fall 2009 through 2011 to help assess expectations of beginning students.

Appraisal

In general, WCSU's planning and evaluation initiatives are interrelated and complementary. In recent years, alignment of the Strategic Plan with academic, financial and facilities planning has been strengthened. The annual Spending Plan required by the Board of Regents has been better integrated with the Strategic Planning process by creating a five-year plan with alternative financial scenarios. However, work remains to be done in several areas. The facilities Master Plan has gone nearly seven years without a major revision in the face of significant environmental changes. Data on student progression, retention, and graduation rates could be better utilized by the Cabinet, UPBC, and/or a campus-wide committee comprised of enrollment management and student affairs professionals.

The Mission and Strategic Plan have been assimilated throughout the campus community. In a [Spring 2012 survey of faculty and staff](#), 90% stated they were familiar with the Mission statement. There was also strong consensus that WCSU uses its Vision, Mission and Strategic Plan as a basis for future planning, budgeting and evaluation of programs.

WCSU uses its vision, mission, and Strategic Plan to provide a basis for...	Percent Agree
Setting priorities for planning for the future	87.8
Setting priorities for establishing a budget	81.1
Setting priorities for staffing	71.2
Setting priorities for technology	74
Evaluation of its endeavors	80.1

In addition 87.6% of respondents agreed that university leadership shows integrity in management of university affairs.

Our network of evaluative and planning processes yields a wealth of fruitful, if at times unsettling, [information](#). Using a newly developed five-year modeling tool for our finances, the Financial Rebalancing Assessment Team determined in 2012 that if recent slowing enrollment and shrinking state support trends continue, the university will experience serious financial challenges. For instance, the university must factor a shrinking number of high-school graduating seniors into its projections. In 2007 there were 43,405 Connecticut high school graduates, but in 2012 there were only 41,541 – a decrease of 4.3 percent. The number of graduating seniors is projected to shrink to 38,416 by 2022 – a decline of approximately one percent per year. This trend will unquestionably impact prospective applicants since WCSU draws over 90% of its students from Connecticut. New strategies and tactics will be necessary.

These demographic trends will have a substantial impact on numbers of fulltime undergraduates. However, we realize that approximately one-fifth of undergraduates are part-time students who are billed by the credit hour (between 20.7% and 17.7% from Fall 2007 to Fall 2012). First-time undergraduates are encouraged to attend fulltime, in order to keep pace with required course sequences. The academic progress of every WCSU student is tracked, whether she or he began as fulltime or part-time.

Most of our graduate programs are designed to accommodate part-time students, and the graduate percentage of part-timers has ranged from 83% to 87.2% over five years. Regional shifts in economic as well as demographic variables are likely to impact part-time enrollment patterns.

WCSU must anticipate the continued decrease of state funding. State revenue as a proportion of total revenue shrank from 41.50% in 2007 to 35.15% in 2012 and is projected to reach 34.87% in 2013. In addition, scheduled salary increases and other commitments to the collective bargaining agreements will impact future planning.

Opportunities also exist. Developing academic and support programs that recognize the changing population in Connecticut will attract more students from underserved populations and

communities. For example, Hispanic/Latino/Latina students will comprise an increasing share of college-aged students in the next decade, especially in WCSU's immediate geographic region.

In addition, the university must identify and develop its premier programs in concert with its sister schools, so that each of the four state universities can provide a select number of premier programs that allow for meaningful distinctions among them, beyond their locations. In [the new financial model](#), tuition, fee, and auxiliary revenue become much more important for recruiting efforts. Recruitment and enrollment must focus on developing a student body that is much more diverse, both in geographic and ethnic terms.

WCSU's methodical planning process has been tested by recent fiscal challenges faced by Connecticut public colleges and universities. In 2009, it became evident that the State of Connecticut was experiencing severe financial difficulties. In March 2010, the CSU System Office asked all four universities to submit a budget for FY2012 that included a 5%, 10%, 15% and 20% reduction as the legislature and the CSU System worked through the fiscal challenges. Instead of making arbitrary across-the-board cuts, WCSU reviewed its Strategic Plan, Mission, Vision and programs and actively engaged the campus community in assessing strategic priorities. Because of its careful approach to the crisis, the university has been able to weather reductions in state funding while maintaining and even improving students' educational experiences. (See also, Tables and Endnotes: Standard II: 1.)

An appraisal of WCSU's six strategic goals reveals the strengths of planning, as well as some aspects that need bolstering.

Attract and retain outstanding faculty

Despite the challenges WCSU faces, the university has been able to attract and retain high-quality faculty. (See Standard V for evidence of faculty degrees and other qualifications.) In 2012, one of the strategic assessment teams identified the challenges that the university faces in attracting outstanding faculty. WCSU is located in a high-cost-of-living area, while salaries are based on a state-wide university system and are not adjusted for cost of living within a given region or discipline. More specifically: The Cost of Living Index for Fairfield County is 42% greater than the overall U.S. Cost of Living Index and 12% greater than the overall Connecticut index. While WCSU faculty salaries are 14.4% greater than the national average, there is concern that its premiums do not adequately offset the region's cost of living factor. Also, since professors in business school disciplines earn approximately 33% more than the average of all disciplines; the Ansell School of Business faces an additional challenge in recruiting. (See the Institutional Effectiveness section of Standard V.)

The university recognizes the importance of this goal and the need to find solutions to the constraints it currently faces in light of the state-wide compensation system and existing collective bargaining agreements. (For more on faculty compensation, see Tables and Endnotes: Standard II: 2).

Capitalize on location

Many programs within the university, especially those in the visual and performing arts, enhance the teaching and learning environment by taking advantage of the [cultural riches of New York](#)

[City](#). For example, visits to Broadway theaters, Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center, the Museum of Modern Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, and art galleries in Soho all benefit WCSU students. We also capitalize on our location by hosting artists, performers and highly qualified speakers from the local area. These include CEOs, social activists, filmmakers, artists, musicians, actors, authors and politicians. Moreover, WCSU's location in the tri-state area makes it ideally suited for career development and placement opportunities. Students profit from university career fairs attended by over 50 local companies from the industry and business sectors. The university also uses co-op and internship programs it has established with Fortune 500 corporations, as well as small- and medium-sized businesses. Companies such as IBM, Boehringer-Ingelheim, Praxair, Sikorsky and Goodrich are among the businesses that host WCSU students.

Embrace the diverse university community

Students at WCSU represent the diverse backgrounds of the City of Danbury and the surrounding service area in western Connecticut, where the impact of immigration has been substantial. In Fall 2012, 19.1% of WCSU students were members of historically under-represented minority groups (1,182 of 6,176). For part-time undergraduates the percentage is 18, compared to 20.8 for fulltime undergraduates, 11.8 for fulltime graduate students, and 8.3 for part-time graduate students. A new but increasing population are veterans both those returning from active duty and those facing deployment while attending the university. In response, the university launched a robust website for veterans, established a Veterans Task Force, and created a Veterans Lounge among other support services. With increased economic instability causing many students to attend community college prior to a four-year university, WCSU has seen an increase in transfer students, comprising approximately 40% of all enrolling students, up from 30% in 2007-08. The institution recognizes that it will have to continue to foster strong relationships with the growing number of non-traditional students in order to retain them.

Offer a range of quality academic programs

Despite challenging fiscal circumstances, WCSU has utilized strategic planning to maintain and expand its areas of academic excellence. The university offers an increasingly popular [Honors Program](#) that incorporates an innovative interdisciplinary approach. In recent years, WCSU has added programs including a B.A. in Musical Theatre and an Ed.D. in Nursing Education. Several of WCSU's programs have earned national accreditation including those in nursing and teacher education. The Ansell School of Business is seeking [AACSB accreditation](#) and was accepted into candidacy in Spring 2013. The creation of the School of Visual and Performing Arts was the result of strategic planning, and its new building is under construction. The Theatre Arts Department is seeking accreditation from NAST for March of 2014.

Foster an enriching and supportive student-focused environment

A strategic assessment team of faculty and administrators evaluated WCSU's [student-centered focus](#) using information gathered from surveys of recent graduates (SOG), beginning student engagement (BCSSE) and engagement of seniors and first-year students (NSSE). The student focus was conceptualized as encompassing academic readiness, advising, obtaining a degree, obtaining employment and administrative decisions to support these outcomes. Students' readiness to be engaged and academically challenged in college was indicated by the difference between expectations and actual experiences. The study found that the learning experience at

WCSU was equivalent to other CSU schools by senior year; however, the First-Year Experience (FYE) was not as successful. To enhance the First-Year Experience, beginning in Fall 2013, there will be an online FYE component in classes taken by most new students, and students will be awarded certificates of FYE completion.

The performance of students' in co-op and internship programs is gathered from surveys of employers. The university also conducts surveys of recent graduates to ascertain their patterns of employment, graduate school activities and their evaluations of WCSU experiences. Fully 73.2% of WCSU baccalaureate recipients in 2010 obtained fulltime work or began graduate study. Unfortunately, this percentage is down from 91.8% in 2007, reflecting Connecticut's current economic problems. The percentage of graduates enrolled in further education declined from 28.7% in 2006 to 9.4% in 2010. Despite these declines, 89% were satisfied with their education at WCSU and about the same proportion would recommend WCSU to a friend.

Deliver outstanding value to students through financial planning

In spite of the fiscal strain that WCSU has faced in recent years, [the annual tuition, room and board, and fees](#) have been held to approximately \$20,000. This amount is slightly below the national average for public institutions (approximately \$21,000) and well below [the national average](#) for private institutions (\$36,000). Tuition at public institutions increased at a rate of 5.6% between 2011 and 2012 while WCSU's tuition increase was 3.8%. Through effective planning, the university has been able to maintain a lower than average tuition even with significant financial pressure and decreased state funds. Part-time tuition per credit hour remains attractive to out-of-state as well as in-state students at both the graduate and undergraduate level.

In response to concerns over the affordability of tuition, WCSU has made a concerted effort to enhance fundraising for student financial assistance. As a result, over the past four years there has been a 16.3% increase in the number of institutional grants (from 80 to 93), and a 33.6% increase in the total amount awarded (from \$463,719 to \$619,716).

WCSU maintains [assessment](#) and evaluation systems with periodic review of [results](#). These [procedures](#) provide a means of organizing and clarifying the data used in decision making. Accordingly, findings can effectively be incorporated in the Strategic Planning process. The widespread involvement of stakeholders, together with the vitality of their discussions provide compelling evidence that WCSU has made substantial progress in establishing evaluation as a priority.

Projection

Beginning in September 2013, the university will implement the recommendations of the enrollment report to increase by 4% overall enrollment in FY14 and FY15 and increase out-of-state enrollment by 5% in FY14 and 10% in FY15.

Beginning in September 2013, the university will implement the recommendations of the retention report to increase first- to second-year retention by 3% in FY14 and 3% in FY15.

By September 2013, the Vice President for Finance and Administration will oversee the construction of a five-year plan for revenues and expenditures. Funding for continued

accreditation efforts will be addressed in this plan, and preliminary results of the re-engineering of campus processes will be examined. As a result, the Spending Plan will be better integrated with the Strategic Planning process and several alternate scenarios can be explored.

Beginning in mid-2014, the Facilities Master Plan will be revised with the assistance of Board of Regents staff and a team of private consultants. A careful review of the plan will ensure that it is properly aligned with strategic priorities.

Demographic trends in the state's population and anticipated limitations on state funding necessitate that WCSU continue to effectively utilize the capabilities of the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment and incorporate the findings into the planning process. To that end, annual reports from each of the academic departments beginning in Spring 2013 will focus on enrollment goals, retention and graduation rate goals and numbers of graduates. This will necessitate support from the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment.

One of our key objectives is to provide students with a quality education at an affordable cost. This staple does not change, even in these challenging fiscal times. The university is taking steps to improve the student experience based on the information gathered from students. Examples of these initiatives include the software platform MAP-Works to be fully implemented in Fall 2013, other enhancements to advising include the Learning Commons, scheduled to be opened in Fall 2013, and the ongoing re-engineering of campus processes from student recruitment to alumni success, begun in Spring 2013. We are confident that these efforts will improve students' ability to be successful while at WCSU and after graduation.

Institutional Effectiveness

Structures and processes are in place to ensure the continued vitality of WCSU's transparent environment of planning and evaluation. The proposed changes for 2013-14 onward will strengthen the interrelationship and coordination of planning and evaluation. Statistical information will be used more extensively and rigorously to enhance outcomes assessment, program review, strategic planning and effective management of the university. Involvement of faculty teaching at both the graduate and undergraduate levels will be crucial to the development of a comprehensive approach to strategic enrollment management.

Standard III: Organization and Governance

Description

Connecticut has eighteen public institutions of higher education: the University of Connecticut, including its branches; the four Connecticut State Universities (CSUs), which include Central, Eastern, Southern, and Western; twelve community colleges; and Charter Oak State College, the state's online institution.

Until recently, a Board of Trustees (BOT) governed Western and its sister CSU institutions. In 2010, the Connecticut legislature established a Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR) to replace the BOT (see Tables and Endnotes: Standard III: 1). The BOR formally replaced the BOT in January 2012.

[The BOR](#) governs seventeen Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (ConnSCU) consisting of the four CSUs, twelve community colleges, and Charter Oak State College. The fifteen voting members of the BOR include nine gubernatorial appointees, four appointed by legislative leadership, and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Student Advisory Committee to the BOR. The Commissioners of Education, Economic and Community Development and Public Health and the Labor Commissioner serve as ex-officio, nonvoting members of the board. Beginning in October 2013, the chairperson of the Faculty Advisory Committee will join the board as an ex-officio, non-voting member.

[Duties of the BOR](#) are comprehensive. They include establishing tuition costs, student fees, and financial aid policies, the review and approval of new programs and, in conjunction with representatives from the ConnSCU campuses, conducting searches for presidents of the individual institutions. The BOR is charged with reviewing, approving and maintaining the individual missions of the ConnSCU campuses. In addition, the BOR is active in developing and coordinating policies for Connecticut higher education, including the creation and implementation of a strategic plan for its seventeen institutions.

The Board adopted by-laws in December 2011 (see Tables and Endnotes: Standard III: 2) and has developed a committee structure to provide for its normal operations. There are five standing committees of the board: academic & student affairs; administration; audit; finance, and the executive committee. The Board [meets regularly](#) in accordance with a schedule established and published on its website. Minutes of meetings and additional information can also be found on the website.

The ConnSCU System Office, headed by the President of the BOR, is the administrative arm of the BOR. A President of the Board of Regents serves as the chief executive officer of the BOR for Higher Education, who administers, coordinates, and supervises the activities of the board in accordance with established policies. In addition to the President, the executive staff includes the Vice President for State Universities and the Vice President for Community Colleges. Located in Hartford, Connecticut, the System Office consists of four departments which facilitate system-wide operations. Information Technology coordinates technology across the institutions; Human Resources oversees employment terms and benefits for ConnSCU employees; Government Relations works with members of the Connecticut General Assembly on issues pertaining to

higher education; and Public Affairs & Marketing advances initiatives and programs across the ConnSCU institutions.

The first President of the BOR, Dr. Robert A. Kennedy, resigned in October, 2012; Dr. Philip E. Austin, former President of the University of Connecticut, served as interim President until June 2013. The BOR requested special legislation during 2013 to allow for the appointment of a new president by the board rather than the Governor to make the appointment of the BOR president more analogous to the appointment of the President of the University of Connecticut; this statutory change was supported both by the Governor and both houses of the General Assembly and passed early in the 2013 legislative session. A national search for a new president resulted in the board's appointment of Dr. Gregory Gray, effective July 2013. Additional Board of Regents governance information is appended (see Tables and Endnotes: Standard III: 3).

At Western Connecticut State University, Dr. James W. Schmotter has been the President since August 2004. He is the official spokesperson for university policy and other university matters and reports directly to the President of the BOR.

Upon his taking office, the President initiated steps that led to the formation of a Strategic Plan, the basis of planning at the university. The process was transparent, involved all university stakeholders, and was unanimously endorsed by the University Senate in 2007. Major university decisions, including budget decisions and university hiring, are guided by the Strategic Plan.

The President exercises executive leadership at various levels of the university. During the academic year he meets weekly with a group that includes the Vice Presidents, the Associate Vice President for Human Resources and the Chief Information Officer. He meets monthly with his Cabinet, a group of twenty, composed of senior administrators and deans. In addition, the President annually attends at least one faculty meeting of each School within the university, and meets on a periodic basis and as needed with the leadership of Western's collective bargaining units. The President also regularly seeks advice through attendance and engagement at many of the University Planning and Budget Committee (UPBC) and University Senate meetings.

The President interacts with students at club events, student performances and athletic events. He meets with the leadership of the Student Government Association (SGA), the Pan Hellenic Council and the President's Athletic Advisory Council, which he established in 2005. Students are invited to attend several "Pizza with the President" focus group sessions each semester, which attract between twenty and sixty students.

Additionally, the President meets regularly with the Foundation Board, its Budget and Investment Committee, and the Alumni Association Board. He is readily accessible to all campus constituents via email or personal appointment.

Evaluating and monitoring Western's effectiveness is a charge given to the BOR in the Connecticut General Statutes. A yearly evaluation of the President was conducted by the BOT in the past, as well as a comprehensive four-year evaluation of performance which included an annual survey given to university faculty and staff that dealt with organizational and presidential

effectiveness. The last such evaluation of President Schmotter took place in 2011 and it is expected that the BOR will reinstitute a similar practice.

Western's governance is described in a number of key documents including the BOR bylaws, the collective bargaining agreements; and the Faculty Handbook, which describes the authority, responsibilities and relationships of the BOR and the administration, faculty and staff at Western.

Academic Affairs is headed by Jane McBride Gates, Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA), who serves as the chief academic officer of the university. She exercises leadership working with the deans of the four schools. She meets biweekly with the deans, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Registrar, Director of Admissions and Dean of Student Affairs. She also meets biweekly with her direct reports: Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Library Director, Media Services Director, Director of Admissions, Registrar, Director of Student Financial Services, Director of Academic Advisement, Director of Institutional Research and Assessment, and Director of Sponsored Research and Administrative Services.

Graduate Studies and External Programs are under the purview of the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs who reports directly to the Provost/VPAA.

The Provost/VPAA integrates and coordinates the academic activities of the schools and departments and makes recommendations to the President. She is responsible for academic assessment, coordinating the academic activities of departments and schools within the university, supervising academic personnel, allocating resources, executing Western's Strategic Plan, implementing both quality assurance and university policies, serving as a student advocate, and promoting the university to the public.

The organizational chart illustrates the operational structure of the university. In 2006 the title of Provost was added to that of Vice President for Academic Affairs. Recent administrative hires, over the past two years, include an Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, three Deans (replacing interim Deans), and a Director of the Office of Sponsored Research and Administrative Services.

The university has four vice presidents: Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice President for Finance and Administration, Vice President of Student Affairs, and Vice President for Institutional Advancement. Also reporting directly to the president are the Associate Vice President for Human Resources, the Chief Information Officer, and the Chief Diversity Officer in charge of Multicultural Affairs and Affirmative Action.

Academically, the university is divided into four schools and two divisions. The School of Visual and Performing Arts, established in 2006; the Ansell School of Business; the School of Arts and Sciences; the School of Professional Studies; the Division of Graduate Studies; and the Division of Justice and Law Administration. Each school is administered by an academic Dean. The Division of Graduate Studies is administered by the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs. The Division of Justice and Law Administration is administered by the Dean of the

Ancell School of Business. The Deans and the Associate Vice President are responsible to the Provost.

The School of Visual and Performing Arts is composed of three departments: Art, Music and Theatre Arts. The Ancell School of Business has five departments and one division. Arts and Sciences is made up of thirteen departments and Professional Studies has four departments. Each academic department has a chairperson, who is the official spokesperson for department faculty.

Through the Graduate Studies Division, the university is authorized to award Master of Arts, Master of Science, Master of Fine Arts, Master of Business Administration, Master of Health Administration, Master of Arts in Teaching, and two Doctorates in Education degrees. All graduate programs have a Coordinator who reports to their respective School Dean and serves on the Graduate Council. The Associate Director of Graduate Studies manages enrollment and admissions operations.

The Division of Justice and Law Administration offers a Bachelor of Science degree, and a Paralegal program.

Western operates within an effective system of shared governance. Students, faculty, staff and administrators have multiple opportunities to express their opinions and contribute to decisions being made at the university through participation in or by attendance at committees, the University Senate and the Student Government Association (SGA). Participation is also possible at the Board of Regents level through the Student Advisory Committee (SAC), Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC) and attendance at BOR meetings.

Faculty are represented by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). The [Collective Bargaining Agreement](#) guarantees academic freedom and outlines the faculty's professional rights and responsibilities. Five additional bargaining units that represent WCSU employees include the State University Organization of Administrative Faculty, Administrative and Residual, Protective Services, Maintenance and Service Unit, and the Administrative Clerical Bargaining Unit.

Western has a [University Senate](#) (as opposed to a Faculty Senate). The University Senate represents all professional employees (except the President); it was established in 1968 and last reorganized in 1991. Senators include one faculty member from each academic department, one librarian, one counselor, two administrators, two representatives from the Deans and Vice Presidents (only one of whom is a voting member), and one representative from the Student Advisory Committee of the BOR. All senators serve a two-year term and are either elected by their departments or serve on a rotational basis. Changes in policies at the institutional level are required to go through the Senate. In addition, the Senate serves as a forum for discussion of issues relating to the university. All Senate meetings are open, and all professional employees may raise issues or express concerns and opinions at its monthly meetings. Passed Senate resolutions are forwarded to the President of the university for approval. The Senate has two procedural committees (the Agenda and the Nominations and Election Committees) and seventeen standing committees. Committee membership is mixed (administrators, faculty and

students), and most serving on committees are elected to their positions. Through many of these committees, such as the Academic Leave Committee, the Assessment Committee, and the Committee on Undergraduate Curriculum and Academic Standards (CUCAS), faculty, staff and students participate in shared governance (see Tables and Endnotes: Standard III: 4).

The University President, Provost/VPAA, and other Vice Presidents attend Senate meetings on a regular basis. Western's representatives to the BOR's Faculty Advisory Committee and Student Advisory Committee are either Senators or attend University Senate meetings on a regular basis. These representatives inform the Senate of activities and issues occurring at the BOR. They also serve as Western's voice to the Board.

In February 1988, the University Senate established the position of Ombudsman in response to a recommendation of then President James Roach. The Ombudsman is an AAUP member who is elected for a two-year term and can represent AAUP faculty, Administrative Faculty, and/or students.

The CSU-AAUP (Connecticut State University - American Association of University Professors) Collective Bargaining Agreement stipulates that the faculty within a department control the courses and curriculum of that department. Each school has its own curriculum committee, and there are two university-wide curriculum committees: the Committee on Undergraduate Curriculum and Academic Standards (CUCAS) for undergraduate curriculum and the Graduate Council for graduate curriculum. At the May 2012 University Senate meeting, a resolution was passed to streamline the process for departments to make minor curriculum changes. For example, a change in the title of the course will now go directly from the department to the Provost/VPAA, thus bypassing the UPBC and the School Program Review Committee.

The [program review process](#) is detailed in the Faculty Handbook. In 2007, it was established that all academic programs were to be reviewed every ten years. In Spring 2012, the time period of ten years was shortened to seven years; this change has been approved by CUCAS, the Graduate Council, the UPBC, the University Senate, and the President. The President or a designee of the President can award reassigned time to faculty for activities related to program review. By May 1 of each year, the Provost/VPAA will announce which programs will be evaluated the following year.

[Program discontinuance](#) can be initiated by a department (or departments if the program is interdisciplinary), CUCAS (undergraduate programs), the Graduate Council (graduate programs), the University Senate or the President. If initiated by the department(s) or the President, the request for discontinuance must be submitted in writing to CUCAS or the Graduate Council. CUCAS or the Graduate Council reviews the request and assesses the effect of program discontinuance in terms of student impact, accreditation, certification, licensure, faculty positions, budget issues, and other programs. CUCAS or the Graduate Council sends its recommendation to the University Senate which, in turn, considers the issue. Within sixty days of the submission of the written request for program discontinuance, the University Senate sends its recommendation to the President who, in turn, informs the University Senate and the BOR of his decision.

Programs that have persistently low or declining enrollments can be evaluated according to procedures outlined in the CSU-AAUP Collective Bargaining Agreement. This evaluation can be initiated by the President alone or by the President and the appropriate curriculum committee.

Students participate in shared governance and play a significant role in decision-making through the Student Government Association ([SGA](#)), their representative on the University Senate, service on eleven of the standing committees of the Senate, participation on departmental committees, and their representative on the Student Advisory Committee of the BOR.

All graduates of the university are members of the Alumni Association. The association promotes the educational and economic interests of the university. Its services and programs raise awareness of the university and foster and strengthen lasting relationships among Western's alumni, students, faculty, staff and the university's external stakeholders.

The Western Connecticut State University Foundation, incorporated in 1971, exists to support the university. A tax-exempt 501 (c)(3) organization, the Foundation raises funds and manages charitable gifts to benefit Western. The President is a member of the Foundation Board, which includes alumni, external community leaders and philanthropic supporters of the university.

Appraisal

Change in Connecticut's higher education governance structure, the amalgamation of the four universities, the twelve community colleges, and Charter Oak College into a single system, and the abrupt departure of the Board of Regent's first president, Robert Kennedy, have made for two years of adjustments and some amount of uncertainty. The Board of Regents remains organizationally a work in progress.

There is currently no mechanism through which the efficacy of the BOR is formally assessed either internally or externally. It is expected that this issue will be addressed in the near future under the leadership of the BOR's new president. (Dr. Gregory Gray began his presidency in July 2013.)

Shared governance at Western works well and is expected to continue to do so in the future. The relationship between the administration, faculty and staff is positive and interactive, and through our University Senate, its committees, and the university's bargaining units, it is anticipated that a cooperative atmosphere will be retained.

Administrators and faculty engage and work together effectively for the benefit of our students and our university. Two members of the University Senate and the NEASC Standard III team attended a conference on shared governance held by the AAUP in October, 2011; both members were astonished at how smoothly the administration and faculty at Western work together in comparison to many other schools attending the conference. As an example of collegiality and shared governance between the administration and the faculty, the President of Western signed all resolutions the University Senate sent him in 2011-2012 and all but one resolution sent to him in 2010-2011; these resolutions were varied and included (but were not restricted to) new and revised policies and procedures, the formation of review committees, the election of Western representatives to the BOR, and the approval of curricular matters.

The May 2012 University Senate-approved changes in the approval process for minor curriculum changes will ease procedural hurdles for departments. In addition, this change will allow curriculum and budget committees more time to spend on major issues.

The change in program review frequency to every seven years rather than every ten years will allow the university to identify program strengths and weaknesses sooner and to make the appropriate improvements in a shorter timeframe.

The implementation of a Provost model in 2006 was a major structural change designed to support the Strategic Plan and to strengthen academic leadership. It was imperative to place a sharper focus on academics and to undertake major transformations in ways to conduct teaching and learning, in the way the university relates to external communities, and in the ways vice presidents relate to academic affairs. As chief academic officer, the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs has demonstrated leadership in major initiatives such as prioritization of school goals and budget reallocation, course redesign, accountability and assessment, student retention, early alert and intervention processes, integration of learning and technology with Smartboards in classrooms, and automation of forms.

New administrative hires are expected to generate new ideas and initiatives at Western. The Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs enhances the ability of the Provost's office to lead academic pursuits. The hiring of permanent rather than interim Deans will solidify our academic advancement. (It should be noted that in July 2013, the Dean of the Ansell School of Business returned to the faculty after serving a long stint as Dean. An interim Dean will serve for one year.) The hiring of a new Director of Sponsored Research reflects the efforts made by Western's current leadership to help the institution generate more private funding and further stimulate scholarship among faculty, administrators, and university staff.

Projection

In 2013-2014, we expect to see the development of a mechanism to assess the efficacy of the BOR.

In 2013-2014, the Strategic Plan will continue to guide the university, and transparency and shared governance will continue to be the foundation for conducting Western's affairs.

In 2013-2014, a national search will be conducted to hire a permanent Dean of the Ansell School of Business.

In 2014-2015, findings of this NEASC review and institutional self-assessment will inform a planned comprehensive reassessment of the Strategic Plan launched in 2007.

Institutional Effectiveness

Program organization and governance are clearly outlined at both the system and local levels. Western's organization is meticulous and clear. Our governance is inclusive of faculty, staff, and students. It is transparent and driven by the university Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan. Our goals are clear and we constantly assess ourselves to identify and improve all areas of operation.

Standard IV: The Academic Program

Description: Academic Program

A quality academic program is at the heart of Western Connecticut State University's Mission and the Vision Statement that guides our Strategic Plan. We offer degree programs that embody a coherent course of study that is compatible with our Mission.

The University is comprised of [four academic schools](#), with 39 undergraduate degree programs and 65 majors offered by the School of Arts and Sciences; the School of Professional Studies; the Ansell School of Business; and the recently created School of Visual and Performing Arts (established in 2006). Students must complete a broad range of General Education courses (discussed in detail, below) and more extensive in-depth study within their chosen major.

[The Division of Graduate Studies](#) offers 15 master's degree programs, three graduate certificate programs, and two doctoral programs (Ed.D.) in Instructional Leadership and Nursing Education.

All programs are led by expert faculty and designed to provide “programs of excellence in the liberal arts and the professions” ([WCSU's Mission](#)). Planning, implementation, and assessment of academic programs are accomplished through a shared governance process. Programs and curricular changes are initiated at the department level based on documented needs and best practices in the field. Faculty are involved at all levels of academic oversight. Three University Senate standing committees—General Education, Committee on Undergraduate Curriculum & Academic Standards, and University Planning & Budgeting Committee—are charged with ensuring that undergraduate academic programs are consistent with WCSU's Mission. The faculty ensure curricular quality at the departmental level and assess student learning. Proposals are processed through the appropriate school and the University Senate for approval. For graduate programs, curricular proposals are reviewed initially by the Graduate Council.

Each program of study has a formal “program sheet,” available to students, documenting a recommended route through courses that constitute the program. These program sheets are utilized in academic advisement to guide students through the requirements of their major programs. [The BA in Communication](#) serves as a typical example. A collection of [program sheets](#) for all academic programs is available online.

The Provost collaborates with the President in setting academic priorities and provides leadership for the academic deans and the faculty. The [University Senate](#) serves as the ultimate forum for sharing information and raising issues of concern to the faculty. Through periodic program review, faculty examine programs of study in comparison to those of peer institutions and in light of local community needs and past experiences at WCSU to develop agendas for change that inform program-level strategic and comprehensive planning.

[Undergraduate](#) and [graduate](#) admission policies are described for students on the university website and in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs. WCSU admits undergraduate students who have graduated from high school with a cumulative grade point average of “B-” or higher, and a variety of courses in fields such as English, Mathematics and Social Sciences. Some programs have special criteria. For example, the Department of Music requires an audition for admission to any of its degree programs. All criteria for graduate programs include both

qualitative and quantitative requirements to ensure that applicants possess the educational preparation to succeed academically at the graduate level.

Faculty are continually monitoring goals and progress and the extent of student learning and achievement. Overall, learning outcomes for undergraduate and graduate programs have been identified and published in the online Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs. These efforts are summarized annually in the department annual reports. (Further appraisal of the work of the university in assessing its goals and progress is provided in the section on Assessment of Student Learning.)

[The Strategic Plan Assessment Team](#) assesses WCSU's quality standards on a university-wide basis. The 2012 report highlighted the university's change from assessing quality standards using an input model (emphasizing faculty, faculty qualifications, instructional resources, facilities, technology and quality of students) to an output model (emphasizing transformed learning, with a focus on assessment of student learning outcomes).

Consistency in quality across university programs is systematically achieved through shared governance and the efforts of the departments, the schools, the [Program Review Committees](#) (PRC), CUCAS, the Graduate Council, and the General Education Committee. Program Review Committees examine and when necessary suggest revisions of a program's mission, goals, and/or objectives to ensure congruence with the University's mission. Department Program Review Committees (DPRCs) conduct their work over three years and often all of the department's fulltime faculty work on the review process. DPRCs identify program goals and needs over the next seven years and delineate action plans for achieving the goals of quality academic programs. DPRCs make recommendations to the appropriate Dean for external evaluation, which may include on-site visitation.

To fulfill General Education requirements, students must successfully complete courses in the Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Math, Computer Science, and Exercise Science. Expectations for student learning and achievement are set by departments. Undergraduate students progress from introductory to advanced content in their major. Students are exposed to a broad range of disciplines and methods of inquiry as they fulfill their General Education requirements.

Since the last accreditation visit, WCSU has added a number of graduate programs, to include the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Certificate and the Ed.D. in Nursing Education. Students at the graduate level are held to academic standards emphasizing greater mastery of the knowledge and skills of their discipline and more exposure to professional development opportunities.

When courses on similar topics are offered to both undergraduate and graduate students, student learning expectations are more rigorous at the graduate level. Examples include HIS 206 and 598 (History 1914-1939); HIS 318 and 536 (The Civil War); and HIS 212 and 507 (History 1945-present).

A policy establishing standards for faculty who teach graduate-level courses was [approved](#) in 2009.

Specific academic skills and knowledge to be acquired are listed in the university catalogs by program as student learning outcomes. For example, whereas the English (Literature) program emphasizes in-depth study of significant works in English, American and Western literature and development of critical thinking and writing skills, the newly-developed Musical Theater program offers a variety of experiential learning opportunities in musical theater that develop domain-specific knowledge, analytical skills, technical proficiency, career preparation and creativity.

WCSU's Banner Web system features a [Curriculum Advising and Program Planning \(CAPP\)](#) program, allowing faculty advisors and students' to assess student progress towards their major degree program requirements at any time. In addition, the university has launched MAP-Works, an early alert and early intervention tool, to assist students with their first year on campus and to assess the challenges students face.

Advising students is the responsibility of faculty within a student's major, while undeclared students receive advising from the [Academic Advisement Center](#). Career-preparation requirements are clearly described to students at the beginning of their WCSU studies.

The WCSU undergraduate curriculum is designed to provide breadth and depth of knowledge in a given field, as well as a general education component that offers diverse learning opportunities. The graduate programs are designed to strengthen the academic and professional abilities of students by increasing their knowledge of specific subjects and improving their capacity for independent study.

A wide range of instructional methods is utilized including lectures, class discussions, student independent studies, internships, service learning and cooperative learning, teaching and research assistantships, experiential learning and field studies, recitals, rehearsals, master classes, demonstrations, public performances, theatrical productions, exhibitions, critiques, group projects, and technology-enhanced instruction (see Standards VII and VIII for additional information on technology). Student instruction in information literacy is a priority, as made clear in the [Principles of the University Mission](#). Teaching students information literacy skills is the responsibility of faculty, who build learning opportunities into their courses.

Support for faculty in enhancing information literacy is provided by the [Information Technology and Innovation Department \(IT&I\)](#), which provides training and follow-up help for faculty at all levels of programs and systems use. Moreover, the [Instructional Technology Center](#), a collaborative effort of Academic Affairs and IT&I, assists faculty in learning new technology and making better use of classroom-related technology. The Student Technology Training Center provides assistance and training for students in the use of university software and technology. IT&I also offers students program and technology assistance.

In addition, the Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching ([CELT](#)) offers a variety of faculty-led peer training sessions in the use of classroom and educational technologies. CELT has been charged within the newly revised Online Policy with providing training opportunities and support to faculty.

At the undergraduate level, college-ready skills in the English language are assessed before a student begins classes via high school transcripts and placement exams. Development of college-level skills is emphasized via [writing intensive \(WI\) courses](#) and through an introductory course in Communication which all students take as part of their general education requirements.

The WI courses have specific criteria that emphasize the production of texts that have undergone careful analysis, research, critique, review, and revision. Most Writing Intensive courses are offered by the Writing Department.

English language skills are also promoted through a variety of challenging writing and speaking assignments across all departments and in many courses. Undergraduate and graduate capstone projects in many departments usually require substantial writing and speaking expectations, such as completing a thesis, an original research project, or a public presentation.

All undergraduate and graduate degree programs have been approved by the Connecticut Board of Regents for Higher Education and all academic program options with program sheets undergo review every seven years. This review begins with a faculty-led self-study and involves a departmental program review committee and an external evaluation.

Academic planning is coordinated by the Office of Academic Affairs, with the Provost, working with the deans and faculty. Existing programs are reviewed by departments, schools, and governance committees. Standing committees of the University Senate, review programs for assessment of student learning.

The Committee on Undergraduate Curriculum and Academic Standards (CUCAS) is charged with reviewing undergraduate programs; the Graduate Council is responsible for review of graduate programs.

Programs with external accreditation are reviewed by their accrediting bodies. In addition to accreditation by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, the Connecticut Board of Governors for Higher Education, and the Connecticut State Department of Education, several graduate and undergraduate programs (e.g., Administration and Supervision, Chemistry, Counseling, Music, Nursing, Social Work, and Education) are accredited nationally and reviewed by discipline-related agencies.

[A Spring 2012 survey](#) indicated that 62.5% of faculty and staff agreed that “WCSU provides sufficient resources to improve programs and instruction” – in spite of the fact that Connecticut’s fiscal crisis and budget constraints have impacted WCSU significantly in recent years (for instance: TK20 expenditures, money spent on accreditation, faculty development grants, CELT grants, and more).

We have made many changes to courses and processes over the past 10 years. While few fell within the boundaries of “substantive change” which required Commission communication and approval, two that did were the creation of the Ed.D. in Instructional Leadership and the Ed.D. in Nursing. The first was accredited by NCATE in Fall 2009 and is described in more detail in the Graduate Degree section; the second was begun in Fall 2012.

Procedures for discontinuance of undergraduate and graduate programs and options are in place and have been reviewed.

WCSU offers students alternate education sites. The Western at Waterbury off-campus site is on the grounds of Naugatuck Valley Community College (NVCC) through a Memorandum of Understanding that is signed annually by the two chief executive officers. Two programs are offered there—Management and one of our Nursing programs, the RN to BS. In addition, general education courses that support these two programs are offered. The RN to BS is the larger of the two programs, with three faculty members dedicated to delivering the program at this site. One Management course per semester is provided. The online Learning course management system provided by Blackboard, as provided in the state contract for the ConnSCU system is used as a course delivery platform.

Appraisal: Academic Program

WCSU is proud of the quality of its undergraduate and graduate academic programs. Current challenges include the university's commitment to full implementation of the Strategic Plan, the state budget crisis, changes in the state's higher education governance, and changing state demographics.

As state aid to the institution declines, efficient and effective resource allocation grows more challenging and more crucial. Examination of the Data First forms shows a total undergraduate population decrease of 4.9% between Fall 2009 and Fall 2012 (from 5,869 to 5,583). Nonmatriculants decreased by 12.1% (from 348 to 306), while Associate degree candidates increased by 38.2% (from 34 to 47) and Baccalaureate candidates decreased by 4.7% (from 5,487 to 5,230). Between FY 2010 and FY 2012 enrollments in the individual schools have fluctuated between -7% and +2%. While the university and individual schools did not show significant change, some individual programs have changed significantly (see Tables and Endnotes: Standard IV: Table 2). The 2012 report of the WCSU Strategic Plan Assessment team concluded that: "Using a newly developed five-year modeling tool for WCSU's finances, the Rebalancing Committee determined that if recent enrollment, state support and other trends continue, WCSU will experience serious financial challenges. It will face successive years of significant deficits, forcing staff and service reductions. These, in themselves, will prevent any further realization of the Strategic Plan's vision of providing the best of a private liberal arts education at a public-education price point."

If a program has too few students the department may have trouble offering necessary classes. Our university policy has been that classes with fewer than 12 students are subject to cancellation. However, low enrollment in a program does not necessarily mean that resources are being wasted or that a student's progress is impeded. While there was only one BS Elementary Education and Political Science major in FY 2012, there were 52 Political Science majors and 270 Elementary Education majors. Since all the courses taken by that one student are also taken by the other Political Science and Elementary Education students, the university can efficiently provide for some low-enrollment programs (see Tables and Endnotes: Standard IV: Table 3).

Advising is an area that can be improved, as indicated by the results of an electronic survey sent to all students in the Spring 2012 semester by the Strategic Plan Assessment team. Of

respondents to this survey (mainly undergraduates), 24% identified better advisement as the major vehicle for providing better academic programs at WCSU.

[The Academic Program Review Process](#) recently became a focus of the university. In Spring 2011, an Ad Hoc Graduate Committee conducted an initial review of each graduate program. WCSU's Provost reviewed the committee recommendations for each graduate program and requested that all programs be reviewed on a five-year cycle, rather than on the former 10-year cycle. Guidelines approved by the University Senate in April 2012 established that all programs will be reviewed on a seven-year cycle.

As detailed in Standard IX, the State of Connecticut's support to WCSU was relatively stable between 2007 and 2011, and then dropped dramatically for 2012 (-15.2%), as Connecticut experienced financial difficulties. State support for FY14 is lower than it was in FY11 (from \$45.8 million to \$40.8 million). Constant budget reductions place a strain on resource planning, which is coordinated through [Finance and Administration](#) and described in detail in Standard IX. Nevertheless, WCSU has significantly increased support of student learning, as reflected in the number of funded fulltime faculty lines. In FY03, WCSU had a total of 191 funded faculty lines. In FY13 (the current budget year) 232 faculty lines are fully funded in the approved budget. This represents a 21% gain of 41 funded faculty lines in the 10-year period since the last Self-Study.

In spite of fiscal strains, the level of new program funding reflects WCSU's commitment to enhance programs. The university has committed significant resources to developing new programs, especially at the graduate level, to include the Ed.D. in Nursing Education, our first program that is exclusively online. We are also supporting efforts to upgrade existing programs to meet relevant national accreditation standards and workforce needs. To that end an average of \$158,000 per year was spent for direct accreditation expenses for FY03 to FY12, for a total of \$1,586,214 over this 10-year period. These numbers include the expense for fees paid to the accrediting body, work by consultants and faculty on accreditation reports, travel expense, etc. It does not include program costs or staff enhancements that were incurred to meet accreditation standards. If these were included, the total would be far greater.

Projection: Academic Program

The academic program is the strength of our university but it must continue to evolve dynamically and flexibly to address issues of student graduation rates, student retention, and student attainment of desired competencies. Subsequent sections in Standard IV will address the academic programs and processes which are being evaluated and revised, including:

- A reassessment of the General Education program, ensuring that it is responsive to the needs and resources of WCSU and is also effectively aligned with the needs of students transferring from other state institutions of higher education (by Fall 2013).
- A revised First-Year Experience (FYE) program that includes and meets the needs of all incoming first-year students. Arts and Sciences faculty will pilot three areas in Fall 2013: 1. University Navigation Skills: Extended Orientation (FYE: University Success Factors) 2. Core Academic Competencies completed in the first year and 3. Orientation to Major: Introductory course in major or a specific

seminar. (Deans are currently working with faculty and will submit recommendations at the end of the Fall 2013 pilot studies.)

- Effective oversight of academic advising, addressing student concerns that advising not be a pro forma process as well as faculty expectations that students commit to and complete the advising process every semester to facilitate effective academic planning (by October 2013 and March 2014).
- More effective design and implementation of the program sheets used by students to assess their graduation requirements and progress (January 2014).
- Greater access to all course syllabi by students and faculty and the continued improvement of syllabi to clearly state learning outcomes, demonstrate the academic content of courses, and provide clear assessment criteria upon completion of process re-engineering (launched in March 2013).
- Automation of electronic signatures and submission of forms to provide a seamless process to navigate institutional processes and procedures (September 2013).

Description: Undergraduate Degree Programs

In order to achieve WCSU's Mission, academic programs require students to complete a broad range of General Education courses and also in-depth study within their majors. Students must complete their [major's course work](#) at the intermediate and advanced levels. Programs have published appropriate rationales which demonstrate clarity and order. Most offer adequate space for students to take unrestricted electives, though state and accreditation requirements in some majors leave little room for elective courses (e.g., elementary education). All undergraduate [program sheets](#) are available online.

The General Education Task Force developed a definition of “The Educated Person” based upon the essential learning outcomes for college students enumerated in the AAC&U LEAP initiative. The General Education Committee adopted this definition, which was approved by the Senate, and used it to develop objectives for the existing General Education program. However, the definition needs greater attention and publication in order to be fully effective.

A student's General Education curriculum accounts for 42 credits of the degree program. These credit hours are drawn from and include at least one course from each of the following areas: 3 credits in Oral Communication skills, 15 credits in Humanities, 12 credits in Social and Behavioral Sciences, 10 credits in Natural Sciences, Mathematics, and Computer Science, 2 credits in Exercise Science. These areas prepare students for life-long learning. Course credit is documented by way of the standard Carnegie credit-hour metric, regardless of venue (classroom, distance education, summer, intersession, accelerated, etc.) and is generally expected to be completed (but is not required) prior to undertaking major program course work.

In Spring 2012, the ConnSCU Board of Regents for Higher Education approved a new [transfer articulation policy](#) which calls for common general education competencies, in alignment with NEASC Standards and with AAC&U LEAP competencies across all Connecticut state universities, community colleges, and the Charter Oak College. Secondly, to ensure that students

transferring from the community colleges to any of the CSU's can do so smoothly, the new policy requires establishment of common "pathways" to graduation for each major. WCSU is utilizing this opportunity to revise curricular practices with respect to general education, majors, and assessment.

Expectations for catalog descriptions have been developed. All departments will have clearly defined student learning outcomes for their programs. These are necessary for program and course development, clear and organized instruction, and proper assessment. (The process was approved by CUCAS on October 18, 2012.)

Major programs provide graduates with breadth and depth of knowledge in their chosen field. Majors at WCSU, including options, require between 33 and 70 credits of concentrated study. Students are asked to demonstrate an in-depth understanding of their major and its connections to the world. In order to help students synthesize their coursework and experiences and demonstrate in-depth knowledge, most majors offer a capstone course (a senior research seminar) or require completion of a major project or subject-related experience. For example, education majors participate in a student teaching experience in their last semester which counts for 12 academic credits.

Appraisal: Undergraduate Degree Programs

For all 25 academic units with degree programs, student learning outcomes (SLO) are published online and in the Undergraduate Catalog 2012-2014 (see E-Series, columns 1 and 2). In all 25 cases, evidence of student achievement of the stated outcomes is derived from analysis of data (see E-Series, column 3). In 23 cases, evidence is interpreted by groups of faculty, and in 10 cases there is a clear process for reviewing assessment evidence (with procedures and rubrics; see E-Series, column 4). In 22 cases changes were made to curricula, procedures and/or instruction as a result of analysis of assessment evidence (see E-Series, column 5). In one case, no changes were considered necessary after review of the evidence. In 20 cases, reviews of programs occurred in 2006 or later (see E-Series, column 6). In one case, a thorough review occurred in 2005. Significant progress was made in 2012-13, as departments refined their learning outcomes and added them to the new catalogs. The prior Undergraduate Catalog (2010-2012) contained expected educational outcomes which tended to be vague and not clearly measurable. Effective in 2012, the Academic Program Review process mandates a review every seven years for programs without external accreditation.

A sample of program sheets reveals that most programs allow students 17 to 51 credits of unrestricted electives. In some cases, such as Elementary Education with a major in Anthropology, a requirement of over 90 credits of specified work beyond general education requirements leaves little or no room for free electives; this is due to the need for these students to develop both a breadth and depth of knowledge in education as well as in their chosen areas of concentration. All the sampled programs had made at least minor updates within the past 10 years. The format of program sheets hasn't changed in over 20 years and includes outdated information, often resulting in confusion of students and faculty. It is recommended that program sheets be redesigned for clarity (See Tables and Endnotes: Standard IV: 1).

In recent months, changes instituted at the Board of Regents provided impetus to review moving General Education to a competency model to clarify and be more consistent with the university's mission. A systematic assessment of the General Education program is in progress. Tiered-competency models will be submitted to the General Education Committee by Fall 2013.

The Self-Study survey of syllabi for 2011-2012 conducted by the Standard IV Self-Study committee indicated that 83% of syllabi showed alignment with the content listed on the official course outline; 28% of the courses listed learning outcomes on both the course outline and the syllabi; 48% of syllabi contained learning outcomes that were clearly connected to the content; and 100% of the syllabi were in alignment with WCSU's Mission. The Self-Study assessment found that many of the course outlines had not seen any significant changes in some years. In some programs course outlines had been recently updated within a department but the current updates were not on file with the university. Moreover, the content listed on syllabi was not always in alignment with the content on the course outlines.

Student surveys were examined to determine students' satisfaction with their WCSU experience. Eighty percent of seniors surveyed between Spring 2008 and Spring 2011 evaluated their experience at WCSU as excellent or good, and 75% stated that they would probably or definitely go to WCSU if they could start all over again (WCSU NSSE Surveys). These numbers are similar to those from the other Connecticut State Universities (76%) but are below the average of universities in the same Carnegie Class (83%). When first-year students are surveyed, 76.5% rate their experience at WCSU as excellent or good, and 72% would definitely or probably go to WCSU again if they were to start all over. These numbers fall below those of the other CSU's (76%) and also below the average for universities in the same Carnegie Class (85%).

Student attitudes toward our General Education program mirror those toward the university: 81% of seniors felt that WCSU had contributed to their acquisition of a broad general education which is similar to the attitudes of seniors at other Connecticut State Universities (CSUs) and slightly lower than other universities in the same Carnegie Class (see Tables and Endnotes: Standard IV: Table 1). Meanwhile, 77% of first-year students agreed with this statement which is slightly lower than the average of 81% for the other CSUs and similar Carnegie Class universities.

Faculty perceptions mirror those of the students: 92.8% believed that WCSU provides a strong Liberal Arts foundation to students; 88.6% felt that students developed strong skills in communication, problem solving and critical thinking; and 75.9% felt that WCSU emphasizes a strong background in information technologies. Only 53.1% said WCSU provides an effective first-year experience for incoming freshmen; 65.2% felt that mathematics and writing placement procedures are transparent and easy to understand for faculty advisors. The results of these surveys informed these changes: Design of the Math Emporium to provide tutorial assistance, conversion from distribution to competency-based programs to further emphasize the importance of problem solving and critical thinking, and a renewed emphasis on FYE.

One-year retention rates for the four most recent bachelor-seeking first-time fulltime cohorts range from 69% to 75% (S-Series Form S1, line 2), while nationally the rate at comparable institutions is 78.2%. However, a focus on students completing their first year in good standing reveals a range of 84% to 88% retention (at least 24 credits completed with a cumulative GPA of

2.00 or higher). To address concerns with respect to the first-year student perceptions, success, and retention, we are considering a number of possibilities including student success factors in existing 100-level courses and learning communities. The faculty bolstered the First-Year Experience and strengthened first-time student retention. In February 2013, WCSU faculty endorsed a tiered-competency approach to general education. A number of FYE enhancements have been drafted and are currently being piloted (see “Projection,” below). Additionally, on May 13, 2012, the Institutional Policy, Procedures, Practices and Audit Review Committee (I3PARC) recommended elimination of policies and practices that impede retention and graduation rates.

In the case of fulltime transfer students, retention ranged from 77% to 81% for those entering with at least 30 credits, compared to 63 to 73% for those entering with fewer than 30 credits. These patterns suggest the desirability of recruiting transfers who have completed at least one year of college-level work.

Projection: Undergraduate Degree Programs

The General Education Committee will develop a complete proposal of a redesigned competency-based General Education curriculum during Summer 2013. The proposal (and likely a few variations) will be vetted by the full faculty in Fall 2013, and implementation will take place in Fall 2014. Alongside these efforts a new First-Year Experience will be created. WCSU has piloted several small versions of an FYE and the lessons learned from those pilots are central to the new design.

In the first FYE pilot, a small group of students took part in a college skills seminar developed by the psychology department. Among the topics in this course were basic academic skills like time management, study skills, critical reading skills, and essential college navigation skills such as registration processes and schedule planning. Results of this pilot suggested that while some of the topics were a benefit to the students, one size does not fit all. Several students felt it was too basic and others needed more time on study skills.

In the second FYE pilot, faculty developed a larger program that was based on reconfiguring selected freshman-level classes to include three of five academic skills (information literacy, critical thinking, research, writing, and ethics) and at least two university success factors (co-curricular involvement, support services, organizational skills, technology skills, working in groups). Students were to take three FYE courses in their first year. This program had a minor positive impact on retention if students enrolled in one of these courses, but there was no added benefit if they enrolled in two. There were no measures of the success of the academic piece (no assessment) and no student ever completed three.

WCSU has tried variations on learning communities in two separate initiatives. In both cases, students expressed some frustration with this model (it was too much like high school, they couldn't change any classes) and in the second iteration, Explorers, the impact on retention appears to have been negative. However, in the Explorers program students did express a desire for more information on topics like registration processes, planning their education, finding advisors and finding support.

In each of these pilot studies, one hindrance has been the inability to test it university-wide, due to budget constraints. Accordingly we have now combined lessons learned with knowledge of best practices to develop a single cohort model that is both financially sustainable and likely to facilitate student success. The details are as follows:

1. University 101: University navigation skills are essential to support progress toward degree, learning how to navigate basic registration processes and learning how to get the support needed throughout a student's career at WCSU. Many students take a first-semester writing course, so this is a natural location that does not impact budget or scheduling. UNI101 will be largely developed by student services professionals, with guidance from faculty. Essential to the success of this embedded experience are the following: a. points must be attached to the assignments, b. some of the content will be based on the writing placement (more advanced students will be able to opt out of some of the study habits, for example), c. assignments will require students to meet with people around campus (advisors, career center, tutors, and so on) so that they familiarize themselves with their resources.
2. Under the new model of tiered competencies, first-year competencies will be identified and assessed. These competencies will likely be writing tier 1 and tier 2, quantitative reasoning, information literacy, critical and analytic thinking. These will be defined by the General Education Committee in the new curriculum. Clear definitions of learning outcomes will be included and assessed.

In order to address these issues, WCSU will take the following actions:

- Syllabi will be in compliance with requirements and expectations by September 2013.
- Program review procedures adopted in 2012 will be used, and a schedule of course outline review has been written.
- In order to comply with state articulation requirements and to facilitate assessment and curriculum development, a tiered-competency based General Education program is being proposed and considered by the faculty. If this process moves forward, it will be developed by September 2013 and implemented by September 2014.
- A new First-Year Experience program with clearly stated outcomes and a University 101 course will be developed by September 2013 and implemented by September 2014 (see above).

Description: Graduate Degree Programs

The Graduate Mission Statement guides Graduate Studies at WCSU. [Seventeen graduate programs are offered](#), including the recently developed and jointly offered (with Southern Connecticut State University) Ed.D. in Nursing Education, which launched in Fall 2012.

Expectations of graduate programs regularly exceed those of undergraduate offerings in the same departments. Courses are more theoretical and are presented at more advanced levels, often in accordance with the requirements of accrediting bodies. The MA in Counselor Education, for example, fulfills Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs

(CACREP) requirements. Fulltime faculty in the Ed.D. in Instructional Leadership program are granted reassigned time for research in their field. Campus wide, graduate faculty are expected to conduct research and produce scholarship that informs their graduate teaching. WCSU librarians work with departments and faculty to ensure sufficient library holdings and electronic databases for graduate programs.

The Division of Graduate Studies oversees Graduate Admissions, supports Graduate Council and reports to the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs. The Division maintains a [website](#) containing comprehensive information about graduate admissions, degree programs, and courses. The Graduate Catalog (available in print and [online](#)) also contains this information. A Graduate Open House is held every April. The Division also supports recruitment efforts for the [Ed.D. in Instructional Leadership](#) and the Master of Arts in Teaching.

The Graduate Council, a standing committee of the Senate, recommends graduate policy, approves programs, and maintains academic standards (see Tables and Endnotes: Standard IV: 2).

Graduate Admissions and the departments follow standards published in the Graduate Catalog in admitting graduate students. Requirements concerning undergraduate GPA, major subject area, writing ability, and special prerequisites in the discipline are upheld.

The rationale for graduate degrees is stated in the Graduate Catalog, on university and department web pages, and in course outlines and syllabi. Individual graduate programs are designed to advance students substantially beyond the requirements of corresponding undergraduate programs.

All graduate programs at WCSU require at least one of the following for the degree: a comprehensive examination, a capstone course, or another culminating experience in which students demonstrate successful learning. For example, the MBA emphasizes demonstration of diverse skills in business research; science courses require lab work; and the MA in History has a required research course. Master's programs also ensure the development of research skills at an appropriate level.

The Ed.D. in Instructional Leadership program develops students' research skills sequentially, culminating in a dissertation, and instructs students in the methods employed by instructional leaders and researchers in the field. Most of the graduate degrees prepare students for careers and professional practice. The two MFA programs instruct students in professional practice as well as in creative genres and methods.

Student learning outcomes are defined for all graduate degrees and listed in the Graduate Catalog, course outlines, syllabi, department handbooks, and online. Accrediting bodies have judged that learning outcomes in some departments, have been met by far as evidenced by specialized accreditation approval. Forty-two percent of a total of 17 graduate programs are accredited by specialized bodies. In others, course and program requirements match or exceed the expectations found in graduate programs at comparable institutions. For example, the MFA in Writing reported "among graduates, 55% are employed as writers, educators, freelancers,

magazine writers and editors, entertainment writers, and public relations specialists, 14% have earned book contracts; and 10% have been admitted to Ph.D. programs and graduate or terminal degree programs in other fields.”

Program coordinators maintain contact with alumni/ae of graduate programs. The Ed.D. in Instructional Leadership and MFA in Writing programs in particular make use of graduates as instructors and visiting lecturers for future cohorts. The Counselor Education program tracks the licensure of its graduates. Such indicators measure the success of degree recipients in subsequent licensure, certification, and career advancement.

In 2010 the Graduate Division established general guidelines for departments to determine the qualifications for faculty teaching at the graduate level, and many departments have developed and now enforce their own special guidelines. Departments expect that graduate faculty will be productive scholars. The Ansell School of Business, for example, adheres to the AQ (academically qualified) and PQ (professionally qualified) designations recommended by [AACSB](#).

Appraisal: Graduate Degree Programs

While the growth of graduate programs at WCSU is indicative of development, this growth has placed additional pressure on university resources. Since the opening of the Science Building in 2006, laboratories have been adequate for graduate-level research in Biology and in Earth and Planetary Sciences, but these programs are constrained by budget and space limitations.

Most departments have adequate fulltime faculty for graduate instruction. Exceptions include the Biology graduate program, which is currently not admitting MA students, and the Finance Department, which is conducting searches for new tenure-track faculty. Some of the most successful programs, such as Counselor Education and Nursing, need additional resources. Economic conditions over the past several years adversely affected decisions to recruit and employ needed faculty. Programs had to limit expansion. Due to its shortage of faculty, Counselor Education has a multi-year applicant waiting list.

Holders of graduate degrees have succeeded in the workforce and in doctoral studies. Graduates of the [MFA in Creative and Professional Writing](#), for example, have published books and been featured in anthologies and journals. Others have accepted positions as communications executives, speechwriters and advertising consultants at major companies; still others have found success as playwrights, screenwriters, and teachers. Three recent MAs in English and History have completed their Ph.D. study and have accepted academic positions. MBA graduates have gained positions of high responsibility in businesses around the world. Ed.D., MS, and MA recipients in Education have in many cases advanced. MS in Music Education recipients constitute half of the public school music teachers in Connecticut. MFA in Visual Arts graduates have obtained teaching positions and have given individual shows in prestigious Manhattan galleries. These graduate success stories should be more widely disseminated and a more systematic collection of data on graduates needs to be implemented and analyzed.

Projection: Graduate Degree Programs

Since 2011 the university has examined the future of graduate education at WCSU, determining the place of graduate learning in the Strategic Plan, the relative size of the graduate student population within the institution, and the future configuration of the Division of Graduate Studies. In response to a report from the Ad Hoc Graduate Studies Committee comprised of faculty, the Division of Graduate Studies was restructured in 2011. The position of Dean of Graduate Studies was eliminated and its responsibilities and duties were transferred to the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs.

During 2013-2014, we will:

- Explore ways to expand budgets and space use for graduate-level research in Biology, Earth and Planetary Sciences
- Explore ways to expand graduate faculty in such areas as Biology
- Do a better job of collecting and analyzing graduate data and publicizing our graduates' success stories
- Insure greater focus and intentional strategic planning of our graduate programs under the guidance of the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs

Description: Integrity in the Award of Academic Credit

WCSU is authorized by the ConnSCU Board of Regents to confer undergraduate degrees (BA, BS, BBA, and BM in a variety of academic and professional disciplines), and graduate degrees (MA, MAT, MS, MHA, MBA, MFA, MSN and the Ed.D.). All programs follow Connecticut's Office of Financial and Academic Affairs for Higher Education, Connecticut State Office of Finance, and Academic Affairs for Higher Education's official Program Inventory and are in compliance with the Rules and Regulations for Licensure and Accreditation of Institutions and Programs of Higher Education outlined by the state of ConnSCU Board of Regents for Higher Education. The three certificate programs offered are appropriately named for their specialization (The Certificate for Intermediate Administration and Supervision, the new Online Applied Behavior Analysis Graduate Study Certificate, and the Certificate for Clinical Mental Health Counseling).

A review of undergraduate programs reveals that 100% of the programs meet the minimum of 120 credits and a number of majors require additional credits for graduation. Programs exceeding 125 credits include: Elementary Biology (126), Music: Jazz and Classical Voice (127), Elementary Education: English, English Writing, and History/SS (128) and Music Education (131). Medical Technology (129) is being phased out due to changes in the Connecticut health care system, the administrative structure, and Danbury programs beyond the university's control. All graduate degree programs require at least 30 credits.

All courses required for graduation are listed on the [program sheets](#). Departments establish course rotation plans in order to guarantee that courses will be available for students to graduate in four years if they attend school fulltime.

The university has an established governance process for oversight of degree programs and courses, approval of new courses and programs, and changes to existing courses and programs.

Specific roles and responsibilities are clearly articulated by the university and published in the Faculty Handbook.

The Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs has overall responsibility for the entire area of [academic affairs](#) and the total instructional program of the university, as well as enrollment management. [The school deans](#) oversee and assess the curricula and quality of instruction and the assignment of duties to personnel within each school.

In 2011-2012, 145 undergraduate and graduate program and course changes were logged in the WCSU Curriculum Development SharePoint. The process of governance became bottlenecked with proposals, creating an impetus for change in curricula review. As a result a redesign of SharePoint was commissioned and was carried out effectively.

In Fall 2012, WCSU and Southern Connecticut State University began jointly offering the Ed.D. in Nursing Education. This Ed.D. has been licensed by the ConnSCU Board of Regents and approved by NEASC.

The evaluation of student achievement is based on successful course completion and meeting graduation requirements. The award of degree credits is appropriate to the degree level to which they are applied. Graduate candidates must take all course work at the graduate level. Advanced undergraduate candidates may take graduate-level courses on a limited basis with permission from their department.

The course syllabus is a critical instrument for sharing clearly stated learning outcomes. In 2011 a syllabi template was developed and disseminated university-wide. Departments ensure that assessment of learning objectives and award of course credit are consistently applied across the discipline.

WCSU policy stipulates that [Writing](#) and [Mathematics skills](#) are assessed after a student is admitted, but before s/he begins classes. A student who needs remedial work in one or both areas must arrange to complete it during the summer or at another institution before completing 24 credits at WCSU. Faculty across the ConnSCU system are now meeting to establish clear guidelines and processes to support students on this path.

Students are not permitted to enroll in advanced courses until they complete basic courses. In Summer 2011 all courses were reviewed for alignment with the [NEASC Policy on Credits and Degrees](#). The university has adopted the NEASC Commission and Federal definition of the credit hour (one credit hour is equal to one hour of classroom time and two hours of student work outside of class). All academic units of WCSU adhere to this definition of a student credit hour. While the credit-hour issue has been addressed, the Self-Study review of sample WCSU syllabi indicated that while all syllabi list class dates and times, some do not clearly articulate out-of-class assignments and activities.

WCSU provides students with a variety of opportunities to go beyond the classroom such as Study Abroad and Service Learning. The appropriate level of academic content is built into all such experiences. For example, the Department of World Languages and Literature facilitates

[faculty-led Short Courses Abroad](#) in Italy (Spring 2012) and Spain (Summer 2012). Candidates may also participate in the [International Student Exchange Program](#) (ISEP) and may qualify for [Scholarship for Study Abroad](#). The Ed.D. in Instructional Leadership offers optional coursework leading to Intermediate Supervisor and Administrator endorsement (#092), including a clearly defined two-semester administrative internship at a school and district office location. The Master of Arts in Teaching program requires 20 hours of service learning in an urban school as part of ED 571 Urban Education Experience. Evaluation of service learning focuses on knowledge, skills, and dispositions aligned with Connecticut's Common Core of Teaching. The university participates in the [College Board Advanced Placement Program](#) and awards college credit to entering undergraduate students with qualifying scores. Transfer credit for experiential learning may be accepted from Connecticut's Charter Oak College, after the appropriate department chair assesses the appropriateness and relevance of the learning. Students may earn credit through the [College Level Exam Program](#) (CLEP).

Undergraduates whose GPA falls below a 2.0 are placed on academic probation. Students who withdraw from the university in good academic standing may apply for readmission. Students who were academically dismissed, however, need to attain probationary status before the university will consider re-admitting them for fulltime status. WCSU has a Fresh Start Policy that provides eligible students who initially struggled academically to have a second chance at graduating with a GPA unaffected by the below-average grades of their initial enrollment (see Tables and Endnotes: Standard IV: 3).

Degrees awarded reflect distinctions achieved by students (Cum Laude, Magna Cum Laude, and Summa Cum Laude). Student achievement is also recognized through the Dean's List and admission into the competitive [Honors Program](#).

Faculty members are responsible for the academic integrity of the award of grades ([Collective Bargaining Agreement](#), 4.2.2.2, p. 13). An established and published system exists for students to appeal a grade in case of [palpable injustice](#). Students may use the appeals process when they believe there is evidence that shows: a) a final grade was determined by methods and criteria different from those used for determining final grades for others in the same class, or b) the evaluation was made as the result of bias or caprice.

Identifying plagiarism is an individual faculty member's responsibility. The university provides the Turnitin online tool to assist in this process (see Tables and Endnotes: Standard IV: 4). The library provides an online page called "Plagiarism (and how to avoid it)".

[The Academic Honesty Policy](#) is clearly listed in both printed and online versions of the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs. A review of sample course syllabi conducted for the Self-Study found that 63% of the syllabi included a description of or link to the Academic Honesty Policy.

Distance education and [online learning](#) were recently reviewed by the Senate Distance Education Committee to ensure compliance with NEASC guidelines. In 2012 a [Distance Education Policy](#) was submitted to the Senate by the Distance Education Committee and approved on May 8, 2013.

Online learning programs are subject to the approval of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, CUCAS, and Graduate Council. WCSU adheres to the policy that all courses of the same prefix and number are equivalent, regardless of mode of delivery, online or on ground, or period of delivery. It is the responsibility of the faculty to ensure that the rigor of programs and quality of instruction are maintained within their courses. Assessments of student learning are equivalent to those employed in traditional instructional modalities. Faculty regularly meet with IT&I staff to discuss assessment issues and share best practice strategies. Faculty members desiring to change a traditional course into an online course follow the [Online Course Approval Process](#), which requires submission of a request by a faculty member, review and approval by the appropriate Dean, and approval by the Provost. New online courses may also be designed and offered by following regular course development policies as well as the university's online course policies.

WCSU offers programs and courses for abbreviated or concentrated time periods during Spring and Winter Intersessions, three 5-week summer sessions, and through online learning. Online courses are designed to offer equivalent experiences to on-ground, face-to-face courses and the process and mechanisms for achieving equivalency must be described in the [application process](#) in order for faculty to offer courses through online education. Some hybrid courses, comprising regularly scheduled classroom time with both face-to-face meetings and online learning, are offered. All face-to-face meetings for a hybrid course are announced prior to registration. The online component is delivered via the university's online course management system, currently Blackboard Learn. Hybrid courses are comprised of electronic participation and at least 70% on-campus meetings. They are designed to assure that all students have access to appropriate services.

Instruction in all courses, whether campus-based or online, is reviewed by the same criteria set forth in the AAUP-CBA, the Faculty Handbook and Departmental Bylaws. Fulltime faculty design and implement WCSU online courses. Review of online courses includes evaluation of teaching effectiveness and student satisfaction.

WCSU strives to ensure that students enrolled in distance learning courses have sufficient opportunities to interact with faculty regarding course content and related academic matters. For example, the Ed.D. program has a Wiki where candidates can sign up for office hours. Faculty must clarify in their syllabi and course policies the nature of planned interaction, feedback timelines (like grading or email turnaround), as well as appropriate modes of communication (email, phone, fax, chat, or discussion board). Faculty must ensure clear responses to students, within a student-friendly timeframe (e.g., 24 hours). Complete and detailed feedback is provided via the discussion board, individual email, or other appropriate means. Learning outcomes are appropriate to the rigor and breadth of the degree or certificate program.

Certificate programs are approved through the governance process and are held to the same standards as other academic programs. WCSU offers a limited number of certificates based on online courses offered for credit. The academic quality of these certificates is consistent with our degree programs. For example, our new online Applied Behavior Analysis certificate has been approved by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board®, Inc.

According to the Board of Regents' [Transfer and Articulation Policy](#) (TAP), transfer Associate Degrees will be common to all of the Connecticut Community Colleges and will include at least 30 credits of transferrable general education, liberal arts core or liberal education program courses that address the core competencies. The remaining credits will be articulated with degree programs at the respective Connecticut State Universities and Charter Oak State College. The TAP Framework was designed by a representative group of faculty members from all 17 campuses. WCSU is currently participating in the second phase of the articulation process to establish pathways to majors across all departments with the community college and CSU institutions.

Potential transfer students may access and examine [admission information](#) on our home page. All courses equivalent to those taken at Connecticut community colleges are identified. The Connecticut State Colleges and Universities offers a [Transfer Compact for Dual Admission](#) to students who are planning to enroll at one of the four CSUs after completing an Associate's degree at one of Connecticut's 12 community colleges. The university is actively involved in the TAP process to ensure a smoother path of access for all students within the CSUs and Connecticut community colleges.

Undergraduate students complete at least one-fourth (30 credits) of their program at WCSU, including advanced work in the major, with the exception of students transferring under articulation agreements. For transfer students, there is the following residency requirement: All students must complete a minimum of one-half of their credits for their major at WCSU; all students must complete a minimum of 30 credits at WCSU; to graduate with High Honors, students must complete a minimum of 45 credits at WCSU; to earn a minor, students must complete a minimum of 9 credits in their minor at WCSU.

Graduate credit transfer is accepted on a limited basis to preserve the integrity of the degree awarded. All transfer credits must represent satisfactory work (a grade of "B" or better) at the institution where the work was completed and must be in accordance with a planned program of study. Transfer credits older than ten years are not accepted toward any graduate program.

A major effort is underway in the Office of Academic Affairs to synchronize and update the print and online catalogs.

A fully revised and updated WCSU Online Policy from the Distance Education Committee, a Senate standing committee, was adopted by the Senate in 2013.

In 2013 the university began a review of policies at like universities for an identification process that provides safeguards to insure that a person who registers for a course or program is the same person who participates in and completes the course or program. This process is expected to produce concrete recommendations at the end of 2013.

Appraisal: Integrity in the Award of Academic Credit

An "orientation to online learning" course is in development and has not been offered to WCSU students as required by the university Online Policy. Moreover, the Self-Study indicated that

there are inconsistencies among departments in design and implementation of online courses and in their oversight.

For Education candidates, where the Educational Unit may be made up of faculty from three different schools and over 16 departments, better articulation needs to be configured across department lines in order to improve candidate advisement.

Faculty make inconsistent use of plagiarism programs and the training provided by MIS and Library personnel.

The print and online catalogs need to be updated more consistently.

Listings of upcoming course offerings are published and made available to students by departments, but the practice is inconsistent. Many departments rely solely on Open/Close to showcase the next semester's offerings.

Fiscal constraints have shortened operating hours of the WestConnect Card Center and staffed Computer Centers. The Library's extensive Fall and Spring operating hours are abbreviated during the summer.

Projection: Integrity in the Award of Academic Credit

An "orientation to online learning" course will be offered each semester beginning in Fall 2014. Also in Fall 2014, Academic Affairs will check to see if inconsistencies in the design and implementation of online courses and their oversight have been eliminated.

The Distance Education Committee's revised and updated WCSU Online Policy will be further disseminated to all fulltime and part-time faculty during 2013-2014.

By the end of 2013, the university will complete its review of policies and processes at like universities concerning student-authentication and identification. Recommendations for implementation of such safeguards at WCSU will be prepared.

By the start of 2014, WCSU will ensure that the "T" on transfer students' program sheets will identify the grade earned for each transfer course. This process will be completed by the Registrar.

By Spring 2014, Academic Affairs will ensure that a clear process exists for updating and uploading undergraduate and graduate catalogs each September. Departments will be encouraged to publicize their next semester's offerings beyond listing them on Open/Close. The university will work to extend the operating hours of the WestConnect Card Center and staffed Computer Centers during 2013-2014 and the Library during Summer 2014.

Description: Assessment of Student Learning

Since 2001, faculty and Student Affairs professionals have been charged with the responsibility of identifying what and how students learn within the individual academic programs and through experiences outside the classroom. The university's assessment plan calls for ongoing collection,

analysis and dissemination of information on student learning outcomes in every degree program in order to assist faculty in meeting the university's goals.

WCSU has provided guidelines to help academic departments and their Chairs implement an effective assessment policy in compliance with NEASC standards. These standards apply at course, program, and institutional levels.

Two standing committees of the University Senate advise the Provost and Senate on assessment of student learning and related matters: the [Assessment Committee](#) and the [General Education Committee](#). Additionally, each school has a committee responsible for integrating curriculum development and assessment of student learning outcomes. The university has worked consistently and successfully to implement assessment of student learning outcomes across the curriculum as stipulated by the NEASC reaccreditation report of March 2004. Beginning in 2004-2005, each academic Dean was charged with reviewing the assessment status of all programs in the school or division; providing copies of the NEASC statements on evidence to all department Chairs; asking departments which were already successful in assessing learning outcomes to agree on a common format for reporting assessment results; conferring with the Chairs of departments judged to be in need of assessment and explaining the procedures; and ensuring annual reporting of assessment findings, including changes in instruction and curricula. Evidence of the degree to which WCSU students achieve student learning outcomes is compiled by the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment and made available to departments, Deans, and the Provost.

The WCSU mission emphasizes preparing our students to be productive members of society. We meet the educational needs of a diverse student body by providing programs of excellence in the liberal arts and by providing students with the necessary background to be successful in their chosen careers. Academic departments are required annually to provide evidence of program learning outcomes that articulate the fulfillment of the institutional mission.

WCSU's Assessment Plan calls for ongoing collection, analysis, and dissemination of information on student learning outcomes in every degree program, together with annual reporting of the status of program assessment. The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs requires departments to submit plans for the assessment of student learning outcomes. All new program proposals submitted to governance review are also required to include assessment plans. The university-wide Assessment Committee develops guidelines, reviews plans, and issues reports of good practices in several departments. The Assessment Update for each degree program is now an integral part of the annual report of each school, department, and division. Administrative implementation of policy on learning outcomes assessment begins with the academic Dean, is carried out by department Chairs, is reported to the Dean, and finally goes to the Academic Vice President, with a copy to the Assessment Committee for policy review. In 2011 the Division of Student Affairs completed its three-year project to have all departments conduct self-studies using the national assessment standards developed by the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS). CAS is nationally recognized for its work in providing assessment standards specifically for departments that fall within the purview of Student Affairs. Each department director has formally presented her/his respective CAS findings to all directors. Every area now has an Action Plan based on self-study analysis. Several departments worked

with the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment to design new measurement tools that focus on student learning.

The university's [assessment plan](#) provides for gathering direct and indirect evidence of student learning outcomes (SLOs), for interpreting the evidence, and for documenting levels of student achievement by program. This information is a critical part of the periodic review of academic programs. Of our 56 degree programs, national accreditation has been awarded to 12 degree programs in 6 major areas: Chemistry, Counselor Education, Education, Music, Nursing and Social Work. Ten degree programs in 3 major areas are seeking national accreditation: Business, Visual Arts and Theatre Arts. Each degree program at WCSU, graduate and undergraduate, is designed so that students learn the critical skills in their major or graduate degree program via a systematic and sequential learning experience tailored to the specific needs of the program. Class discussions, exams, writing assignments, performance evaluations, creative activity, and oral and written feedback from instructors and peers provide students with regular and constructive information to help them improve their learning.

A diversity of approaches to the assessment of student learning outcomes is utilized at WCSU. For example:

- The Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences uses the nationally-normed ACT Major Field Test in Biology to assess students' skills in relation to student performance at peer institutions. This tool is an embedded component of two senior-level capstone courses required of graduating majors.
- In the Ansell School of Business, the departments of Marketing and Management have implemented assessment instruments that require students to apply knowledge of key concepts from discipline-specific areas of study that measure achievement at the conclusion of the program.
- The Department of World Languages and Literature assesses student performance at the "novice," "intermediate," and "advanced" levels of language comprehension. In corresponding courses, rubrics are applied to student projects that clearly characterize the level of learning students have achieved.
- The Department of Social Work has an extensive capstone assessment that is based on nine core competencies that speak to the range of profession-specific skills required for graduates to achieve success in the field.

WCSU utilizes a variety of methods, including external review of programs, to ensure that its methods of understanding student learning are trustworthy and provide useful information for continued improvement of programs and services for students.

Appraisal: Assessment of Student Learning

Many WCSU programs are doing an excellent job of preparing our students not only academically but also for work and educational experiences after earning the undergraduate degree. The following departments and programs reflect the institution's mission in preparing students for effective citizenship, further study, and future employment:

- While the Music-Bachelor of Arts strives to prepare students for careers in music and arts-related professions, a supplemental goal of the department is to instill in its students

an appreciation of the arts in relation to society. The Music Department also emphasizes the importance of exploring other academic interests throughout the university.

- The Communication Department offers degrees in communicative processes and media arts and production. The program helps all undergraduate students improve their ability to engage in and evaluate the communication process, an essential aspect of fulfilling the university's mission.
- The Health Promotion Studies Bachelor of Science provides students with a comprehensive approach to health and fitness education. Students are encouraged to examine the connection between individuals, careers, family, and community.
- The History Department "introduces students to the framework of American, European and world history." This student learning outcome helps to foster students' understanding of the world around them.

Moreover, the Self-Study team identified several departments and programs with exemplary assessment policies which illustrate the systematic involvement of WCSU faculty in using assessment results to improve student learning:

- The Department of Music provides a clear definition of each degree, the objectives and student learning outcomes for each, an alignment of the courses to the outcomes, and a student guide that clearly explicates each of the degrees, the requirements and the assessment criteria. The Department of Music leads the School of Visual and Performing Arts as an example through its full accreditation from the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM).
- The Department of Psychology administers a general discipline content exam to students at the beginning and end of their PSY 100 course and again at the end of their senior year. The Department assesses Proficiency in Experimental and Statistical Methods in the first week of the semester following completion of PSY 201 and 204; and they conduct a rubric-based assessment of a sample of capstone projects submitted by students in their senior seminars. Assessment results have had a significant impact on the design of the Psychology program leading to increasing the number of required courses, standardizing course outlines, using standardized content from computerized statistical analysis programs across course sections, and using the model goals for Psychology undergraduates developed by the American Psychological Association (APA) in curriculum development. The most recent external review of the Psychology program, conducted in Fall 2008, highlighted the department's "commitment to assessment of student learning" as a strength of the program.
- The Department of World Languages, with its B.A. in Spanish and B.S. in Secondary Education and Elementary Education, has included program assessment since its 2006-2007 inception. World Languages identified three levels of language preparation within the student base: true second language learners, heritage Spanish speakers and native speakers. As the program was assessed on a yearly basis, adjustments were made within the curriculum for courses at the 200-level so that the needs of all three groups could be met within the areas of conversation, critical thinking, composition, and standard Spanish vocabulary. Simultaneously, all students were led to explore cultural, linguistic and literary issues in preparation for the in-depth studies of the upper-division classes. Faculty delivering the Spanish curriculum have conducted an annual assessment of oral and writing proficiency of Spanish majors modeled according to national guidelines

established by ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages). In 2012-2013, further revisions were made because assessment of the 300-level courses indicated a need for greater structural linguistic development.

The Standard IV Self-Study committee examined drafts of the E-Series Data Forms in Spring 2012 to assess the clarity and accessibility of statements of student learning outcomes (SLOs) by program. Clearly stated SLOs provide for more effective assessment of learning outcomes. However, approximately half of programs did not have clearly stated and measurable SLOs. After this group identified weaknesses and inconsistencies in use of SLOs, most departments re-wrote their SLOs. Significant progress was made in 2012-2013, as departments refined their learning outcomes and added them to the new catalogs. These improvements are reflected in the current collection of E-Series documents.

For WCSU's approach to assessment to function effectively, programs must have both clearly established goals and clearly described SLOs. These outcomes help determine the effectiveness of the program map and accurately assess student competency at program completion.

There is a need for those programs lacking curriculum maps to better utilize the WCSU assessment process in order to establish clear statements of student learning outcomes and to determine the best curriculum path to achieve those outcomes.

Projection: Assessment of Student Learning

Improving our academic assessment process is an ongoing effort. The work continues today with the support of the Provost leading a 12-month initiative facilitated by membership in the New Leadership Alliance for Student Learning and Accountability. Their efforts will help to strengthen program mapping through the development of clearly stated student learning outcomes on program and course levels.

The Provost's 2013-2014 Action Plan stipulates that the Provost will work with the WCSU Assessment Committee and the ConnSCU (statewide) Council of Academic Officers to refine and publicize student learning outcome statements that clearly articulate what students should be able to do, achieve, demonstrate, or know upon graduation. The Director of Institutional Research and Assessment, with faculty assistance, will assemble narratives and tables to identify the places in the curriculum and in co-curricular initiatives where students encounter and/or achieve each student learning outcome. The Action Plan further provides that the university's annual report of assessment of student learning outcomes will be made available to the WCSU Assessment Committee and the Connecticut Board of Regents for Higher Education for recommendations for improvement. The Provost and academic deans will review departmental updates and make recommendations to department and division chairs. Additionally, the Vice President of Student Affairs will review annual updates for the relevant departments and make recommendations to directors.

Support of the Provost's Action Plan requires that evidence-based changes be periodically reviewed and evaluated by the University Senate and its constituent committees (General Education, Assessment, UPBC, CUCAS, and Graduate Council) to determine the level of improvement of student learning. Review of these changes will begin in 2014-2015.

Institutional Effectiveness

WCSU's academic program is current and expansive. Many of our majors are accredited by top specialized agencies. The majors prepare students to apply their acquired knowledge, skills, and talents locally, nationally, and internationally. All programs undergo regular assessment. In 2011 the President appointed six Strategic Assessment teams to assess WCSU's Strategic Vision, Plan, and Progress. The 2012 Report of the Public/Private Team noted that "Western provides a culture of learning for the purpose of innovating because we see our students as creators as well as consumers of knowledge. A WCSU education is the blending of the scientist with the artist and the philosopher with the practitioner to create scholars that are engaged citizens."

Standard V: Faculty

Description: Faculty

Fulltime and part-time faculty categories are clearly defined in the 2007-2011 CSU-AAUP Collective Bargaining Agreement (in effect through 2016) (Articles 1.6.1 and 1.6.2). Fulltime faculty members are contractually obligated to teach, advise, assess students, develop curricula, conduct research, engage in creative activity, participate in professional development activity, and participate in shared governance, all of which contribute to the systematic understanding and implementation of effective teaching and learning processes. The function of part-time faculty members is primarily to teach courses, both general and specialized.

WCSU maintains a sufficient number of qualified fulltime and part-time faculty members to achieve its mission and purposes. As shown in the Data First tables, WCSU employed 228 fulltime instructional faculty members in FY13. The total number of fulltime faculty remained stable in FY11 (228), FY12 (225), and FY13 (228), but is likely to decrease in FY14 due to decreased enrollment and budgetary considerations.

Although part-time (adjunct) faculty outnumber fulltime in terms of head counts, their fulltime equivalent (FTE) is much smaller: 129; 117; 110; and 115 in FY10 through FY13, respectively (where 12 credits per semester equals one FTE). There are budgetary and contractual limitations to the employment of part-time faculty. The CSU-AAUP Collective Bargaining Agreement states that the percentage of part-time faculty for each university should not be more than 21% of total faculty workload after adjusting for replacement of fulltime faculty, such as those on sabbatic leave, or receiving reassigned time for research and administrative duties (Article 10.8).

Faculty roles are clearly articulated in the Collective Bargaining Agreement and the Faculty Handbook, including the criteria for evaluation (see Tables and Endnotes: Standard V: 1). Faculty qualifications are monitored by academic departments and Human Resources and meet or exceed expectations for degrees held in appropriate disciplines to ensure quality instruction, research, and professional development.

Fulltime faculty members are recruited and appointed according to documented procedures outlined in the CSU-AAUP Collective Bargaining Agreement, Articles 4.4-4.15, and the WCSU Faculty Handbook. When a new faculty position is made available to a department, the department elects members to a search committee. The Executive Assistant to the President/Chief Diversity Officer gives the search committee a training session to ensure that the committee operates in accordance with university policies and legal responsibilities.

Once a suitable candidate is identified through the search process, the nature and terms of the initial appointment are articulated through a Letter of Appointment, which is tendered by the President, in accordance with the policies outlined in the CSU-AAUP Collective Bargaining Agreement, Articles 4.7-4.10.

The Faculty Handbook and the Collective Bargaining Agreement specify faculty responsibilities, recruitment, appointment, evaluation, promotion, and tenure. Renewal, promotion, and tenure evaluation procedures are defined and enumerated in the Faculty Handbook and in the CSU-AAUP Collective Bargaining Agreement. The documents also detail a grievance procedure and the AAUP provides a grievance officer to assist in this process.

Departments elect tenured faculty to departmental evaluation committees each year. These committees conduct annual evaluation of untenured faculty and periodic professional assessments of tenured faculty. Evaluations are structured by the Faculty Handbook, per the Collective Bargaining Agreement (see Tables and Endnotes: Standard V: 2). They include load credit activity (teaching, advising, departmental administration, or other activities carrying load credit), scholarship or other creative activities appropriate to the field, service, and professional activity/development. Part-time faculty are evaluated at the department level only. Department Chairs determine the method and frequency of part-time faculty evaluation.

Faculty classifications are published in the CSU/AAUP Collective Bargaining Agreement, Article 5.3.

Salary at the time of initial appointment is determined based on the candidate's prior experience and expertise according to the WCSU New Faculty Hire Salary Chart, which correlates with the salary structure defined in the [CSU-AAUP Collective Bargaining Agreement, Article 12](#).

Faculty workloads are established and reviewed each semester by the Department Chair and Dean in consultation with each fulltime and adjunct faculty member in accordance with workload formulas set by the CSU-AAUP Collective Bargaining Agreement and in specialized side-letter agreements as appropriate (Article 10; pp. 64-75). Twelve (12) workload credits per academic semester constitute a fulltime faculty teaching assignment (24 per year). Overloads reassigned must be alleviated within three semesters of their accrual; however, a maximum of nine (9) workload credits may be reassigned in any one semester to address a previously accrued overload. The minimum allowable workload for a fulltime faculty member is three (3) credits. Faculty assignments for graduate courses are in accordance with policies published in the Faculty Handbook.

Fulltime faculty members may receive credits of reassigned time for research and curriculum development as well as administrative and professional duties. Criteria and policies governing reassigned time are articulated in the CSU-AAUP Collective Bargaining Agreement, Articles 10.6.4, 10.6.5 and 10.10. All independent coursework by students including Student Developed Studies generates workload credit of one-ninth (0.11) credit per student credit hour. Graduate Thesis Direction generates one (1) workload credit per student enrolled. Additional provisions for specialized instruction are articulated in Article 10 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement as well as in individual side-letter agreements.

Part-time faculty members may be assigned a workload not in excess of eight (8) workload credits per semester if they are teaching two courses or six (6) credits per semester if teaching two or more courses. Part-time faculty members teach between 3 and 8 credits per semester, with a median of 4.5.

A limited number of Graduate Assistants (GAs) support faculty in such areas as Visual Art, English, History, Music, and Writing. Prospective GAs must submit an application, resume, letter of interest and letters of reference to the Office of Graduate Studies.

Graduate Assistants receive stipends of varying amounts depending on their assigned workload, which may include teaching (supervised), classroom management, assessment assistance, and

tutoring in the Writing Center. Graduate Assistants are monitored and their performance evaluated by the graduate faculty and/or the Graduate Coordinator in the respective departments.

The ways in which the faculty are organized to include the shared governance process is derived from the CSU-AAUP Collective Bargaining Agreement and is articulated in the contract and in the Faculty Handbook. The core element of the WCSU Governance structure is the University Senate, which is comprised of an elected member of each academic department, as well as other members of the university community, including staff members, library faculty, coaches, students, and administrators.

All university-wide committees have membership allocated to the four schools and school-wide committees have membership allocated to divisions within each school. Faculty members are elected by their departments to serve on the University Senate, and faculty are elected and/or appointed to serve on Senate standing committees and centers, as well as committees for each school. Department Chairs are fulltime faculty elected by their respective departments and serve terms typically lasting two to five years, in accordance with departmental bylaws.

Faculty are responsible for the development and oversight of course content, methods of delivery, assessment, and adherence to professional standards. The role of faculty in these areas is clearly defined in the 2007-2011 CSU-AAUP Collective Bargaining Agreement, Article 5.17, which states that *“The department shall have responsibility for the content and development of courses, curriculum and programs of study within its discipline, research and service within its area, and for evaluation of the performance of all department members, subject to all other provisions of this Agreement.”* Faculty responsibilities and procedures for curriculum and program development are also articulated in the Faculty Handbook.

Course content is expected to conform to the outline for each course, which has been approved by the Department, appropriate School committee and the Committee on Undergraduate Curriculum and Academic Standards (CUCAS) or the Graduate Council. Department Chairs are responsible for ensuring that course syllabi reflect the approved outline and contain relative assessment criteria specific to the discipline.

The commitment to academic freedom is expressed in the 2007-2011 CSU-AAUP Collective Bargaining Agreement. Academic freedom extends to research, writing without threat of censorship, classroom teaching, and grading. The Collective Bargaining Agreement provides a process for the investigation and resolution of complaints of violations. The AAUP leadership assigns an Academic Freedom Officer to assist faculty in this area. The Academic Freedom Officer reports five formal filings over the last few years and several issues that were resolved without a formal filing. One case in 2012 has gone to a system panel for review.

Professional rights and responsibilities are articulated in the 2007-2011 CSU-AAUP Collective Bargaining Agreement. Faculty are expected to promote the truth as they see it, develop and improve scholarly competence, exercise critical self-discipline, and practice intellectual honesty. They should encourage free pursuit of knowledge in students, hold students in respect, and foster the same sense of intellectual honesty in students as in faculty. All faculty must understand and adhere to the ethical guidelines of employees of the State of Connecticut, as well as the Connecticut University Sexual Harassment Policy.

Appraisal: Faculty

The number and distribution of faculty allows the institution to fulfill its mission and purposes, in some cases in exemplary fashion, while in others, only at the threshold level. Various factors such as fluctuating economic conditions, hiring freezes, and untimely retirements have created an imbalance between fulltime and part-time faculty. In many areas (the Division of Justice and Law Administration and the Department of Art, for instance), high fulltime faculty to student ratios require a significant time commitment from fulltime faculty to advise students and provide service to the department and university.

The CSU-AAUP Collective Bargaining Agreement mandates that part-time instruction be limited to 21% of total teaching load, unless special circumstances exist. In light of special circumstances, many departments exceed this 21% level, while others fall well below it. In some areas that require part-time faculty for specialized instruction (such as in the departments within the School of Visual and Performing Arts and the School of Professional Studies), extensive use of part-time faculty is not only justified, but provides students with the opportunity to study with highly skilled practitioners.

Due to the variety of methods of delivering instructional programs, the number and distribution of faculty does not often correlate to the number of majors within a specific program. WCSU's outstanding Nursing program, for example, requires sufficient fulltime faculty to maintain small class sizes and offer clinical and lab experiences. The same is true of Music, Biology, Chemistry, and other specialized programs. Many programs with large enrollment, such as Justice and Law Administration, Communication, and Marketing, have grown at such a rapid rate that the institution has not been able to add fulltime faculty fast enough to meet demand. In such cases, the use of specialized part-time faculty allows the institution flexibility to meet fluctuations in student demand.

In this regard, WCSU's pool of part-time faculty is a tremendous asset. Many WCSU part-time faculty have been teaching at WCSU for 10 or more years. This longevity gives students a sense of faculty consistency, although as contingent faculty they are not guaranteed future employment and generally do not participate in governance or in the day-to-day work of their specific departments.

Represented among our faculty are regional, national, and/or international leaders in their respective disciplines. Consider the following sampling of our faculty:

- Kevin Gutzman (History): author (*James Madison and the Making of America; The Politically Incorrect Guide to the Constitution*)
- James Greene (Music): renowned jazz musician and composer
- Casey Jordan (JLA): criminologist with appearances on ABC News 20/20, NBC Today Show, Good Morning America, CNN, CBS Early Show, and other news programs
- Marjorie Portnow (Art): artist whose paintings are exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (NYC)
- Wynn Gadkar-Wilcox (History): author (*Allegories of the Vietnamese Past*)
- Julio Agustin Matos Jr. (Theatre): Broadway Casts of Chicago, Fosse, Steel Pier
- Brian Clements (Writing): founder of award-winning prose poetry journal, *Sentence*

Eighty-five percent of fulltime faculty hold the appropriate terminal degrees in their fields. Over the past four years, the number of fulltime faculty members with doctorates averaged 177 and the number with Master's degrees, 44. In addition, three members hold professional licenses. Part-time faculty members typically hold Master's degrees and/or have significant professional experience in specialized areas.

Recruitment of new faculty is orderly and effective. Eighty-two percent of the faculty reported that their departments used WCSU's Vision, Mission, and goals to set staffing priorities. WCSU's strategic location near New York City and Boston offers a clear advantage for the recruitment of outstanding faculty as articulated in the Strategic Plan (Goals 1 & 5). Conversely, our location in the tri-state area is a potential liability when recruiting faculty, given the area's high cost of living.

The combination of the Collective Bargaining Agreement, the Faculty Handbook, the evaluation process, and the bylaws of the various committees and centers make for a transparent set of procedures for university activities. Faculty evaluation follows a clear set of guidelines. The Promotion and Tenure Committee (P&T) holds several open sessions for candidates and members of departmental evaluation committees to make clear how to present material for consideration. These meetings are well attended.

The record of awarding of tenure and promotions is consistent with selecting quality faculty in well-run searches. Between FY 2010 and FY 2013, the number of tenured fulltime faculty remained virtually unchanged, rising from 152 to 157, falling to 151 and then rising to 152. However, the composition of the tenured population changed: the number of Associate Professors decreased by 10.2% while the number of Assistant Professors increased by 25% and the number of Full Professors increased by 3.2%. In any given year, there may be departures of 12 to 14 Assistant Professors, and retirements of 3 to 9 Full and Associate Professors.

In FY 2012, tenured faculty comprised 67% of the total. Of the 228 fulltime faculty, 43.4% were Full Professors, 24.1% were Associate Professors, 29.4% were Assistant Professors, and 3.1% were Instructors.

The data show gender parity among our fulltime faculty, but not at rank. Full Professors are currently 60% male (a 2006 study reported only 24% of Full Professors nationally were women). Fifty-six percent of Associate Professors were women at WCSU; and 60% of Assistant Professors were women. As the current faculty moves toward tenure and promotions, we should achieve gender equity in the next 10 years (information from Data First, Standard V, "Rank, Gender, Salary"). The racial-ethnic composition of fulltime faculty is approximately 82% White, 4% Black, 4% Hispanic, and 9% Other, which includes Asian, American Indian, and Pacific Islanders (Workforce Analysis, Form 33A).

In Fall 2012 there were 399 part-time faculty members (adjuncts), of whom 42.1% were women. Between 2009 and 2011 the number of women increased by 8.4% while the number of men increased by 10.5%.

Security/consistency increases with rank at WCSU. Full Professors are tenured at 99%, Associates at 86%, and Assistants at 17%. Special appointments are employed for one-year periods and often stay for two (the maximum in a six-year period).

Faculty at WCSU enjoy the benefit of a strong collective bargaining agreement that provides both security and stability. Salaries are an important aspect in acquiring and keeping the best faculty. Compensation for faculty is within the norm for the area – more than area public institutions of the same category; less than some private institutions. There is high retention at WCSU, which may be attributed at least in part to generous compensation and a collegial institutional environment. The turnover rate from 2001 to 2011 averaged 17% per year, a relatively low figure. To reiterate, the cost of living in Fairfield County is a factor in recruitment and retention of faculty in certain areas, especially within the Ansell School of Business.

Salaries have remained flat over the past several years due to negotiated concessions as a result of the budget crisis in the State of Connecticut. Salary increases in the range of 4% are scheduled to be implemented in Fall 2013. Mean salaries for Full Professors increased by 2.5% over the four years previous to the salary freeze (from \$96,766 to \$99,160), compared to 3% for Associate Professors (from \$75,443 to \$77,681) and 4.8% for Assistant Professors (from \$62,230 to \$65,195). There were no fulltime faculty at the rank of Instructor in 2009, but there were seven in 2011 and 2012. The average salary for Instructors was \$60,710. No adjustments to these comparisons were made for inflation. The average part-time faculty member earned \$5,246 in FY13. While the contract provides security and stability, it also allows little or no flexibility for performance-based salary increases.

The March-April 2012 issues of *Academe* provide “The Annual Report on the Economic Status of the Professions.” Eleven Category IIA public and private Connecticut institutions were compared, along with one nearby SUNY IIA college. WCSU ranked fifth of twelve in Full Professor and Assistant Professor salary categories (see Tables and Endnotes: Standard V: 3).

As is the case with salary and benefits, the CSU-AAUP Collective Bargaining Agreement provides faculty with clear parameters for workload assignments within their departments, so there is very little room for variance within the established system. As a result, WCSU remains primarily a teaching institution where research expectations are tempered with the demands of teaching and advising, in accordance with mission and purposes.

Evaluation of workload credit is weighted toward teaching, which is the primary mission of the university. Responses to the [Spring 2012 Faculty-Staff Survey](#) indicate faculty agree that the four-course-per-semester (or equivalent) teaching load is acceptable for providing time for quality teaching, advising, and evaluating students; however, less than half of the faculty agreed that the workload allowed adequate time for research and scholarship. The latter raises three possible questions about this aspect of the workload:

- Are expectations for creative activity too high across the university?
- Are expectations too high in some departments (but not others)?
- Is this perception the result of personal expectations among half the faculty? (That is, are some faculty expecting too much of themselves without pressure from the university or their departments?)

The four-course (12-credit) per semester workload is typical for a teaching university, so it is likely that one, or some combination, of the above is causing 51.4% of the faculty to disagree with the idea that current workload assignments allow adequate time to participate in scholarship and research.

Part-time faculty are not required to advise students or serve on committees although some do, leaving most of this important work to fulltime faculty.

University citizenship in the form of contributing service is a priority where shared governance is practiced. WCSU faculty devote considerable effort and time to centers, committees, and other units of service at all levels of the university and the greater Danbury area. Taking the 2011-12 University Senate membership and committee roster as an example of service, we see a high percentage of participation. There were 194 positions listed (combining membership in committees, centers, etc.), with 23 vacancies (“TBA”). Some faculty serve on multiple committees, resulting in 118 people serving in various capacities. This does not include the many school committees and departmental sub-committees on which faculty members contribute service to the institution.

Description: Teaching and Advising

Faculty employ a variety of techniques and delivery systems to meet the mission and purposes of the university while meeting academic program goals and course objectives. Instructional techniques include traditional lecture courses as well as those supported by online resources such as Blackboard Learn. Faculty access Blackboard Learn via the Banner web portal. In addition, specialized instruction in small classroom and studio courses occurs in many areas such as Nursing, Education, Social Work, and in all programs within the School of Visual and Performing Arts (Art, Music, Theatre). Examples include nursing clinical experiences, applied music lessons and ensembles, studio art courses, theatre productions, and student teaching. Many upper division courses within the Ansell School of Business are delivered through seminar-style experiences, as are the majority of courses in the Honors Program. Courses at the graduate level are typically delivered through seminars as well as through online systems and one-on-one thesis direction. Assessment of instructional techniques occurs during individual program review as well as in discipline-specific accreditation review.

Typically, students are taught by a variety of faculty with different viewpoints. When feasible, multiple sections of the same class are distributed among more than one faculty member (see Tables and Endnotes: Standard V: 4). Where a specialization is important, one faculty member may teach multiple sections. WCSU’s location allows for the hiring of part-time faculty from the New York City metropolitan area to provide specialized instruction, providing for a diversity of viewpoints in virtually all programs within the institution, with an emphasis on the arts, business, science, and technology.

The university supports a [Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching](#) (CELT), which holds workshops and demonstrations to enable faculty to share teaching methods and techniques. Experimental methods are presented at these events. Faculty who choose to utilize these methods are invited back to report to colleagues about the results of implementation. In addition to CELT-sponsored Friday Afternoon forums for the sharing of teaching ideas, Information Technology & Innovation (IT&I) provides training in Blackboard Vista and Blackboard Learn course management systems.

Academic advising by faculty is essential to student success. Advising is considered a part of a faculty member’s workload under the 2007-2011 CSU-AAUP Collective Bargaining Agreement. Each student with a chosen major is assigned an academic advisor in the major department upon matriculation, with undeclared students assigned to the Academic Advisement Center. The

[Advisement Center](#) also provides assistance and information resources to all students and faculty. The Academic Advisement Center website contains information for undeclared students as well as general advising resources for all undergraduate and graduate students. Since 2007 a Director of Faculty Advising assists advising efforts across the university.

Advisors and students utilize Banner as a tool in the advising process, both for course selection and for unofficial degree audits. Courses are listed via BannerWeb at the Open/Close web portal. Unofficial degree audits, used primarily for advising, are available in Banner using the Current Degree Evaluation (CAPP). Advisors use Banner for early attendance recording (first three weeks of each semester), entering grades, and accessing the Banner Curriculum, Advising and Program Planning feature to track student progress. In Spring 2013, the university added MAP-Works, a web-based application, which asks students to complete a survey and tracks survey answers, mid-term grades, and GPAs. Effective use of MAP-Works will help identify at-risk students. Faculty volunteers are piloting the program.

Departments utilize individual advising, group advising, and combinations of these as appropriate to the disciplines. Undergraduate education students in the School of Professional Studies are assigned two advisors, from Education/Educational Psychology and the School of Arts and Sciences, for their academic major. In some departments, hard-copy program sheets are maintained in departmental offices and are updated manually each advising session. Many departments use a standard advising checklist for their programs that is stored on a shared computer drive to allow access to student advising records by all department faculty members, making it possible for students to receive effective advising if their primary advisor is unavailable.

Advising at the graduate level is facilitated primarily by Graduate Coordinators in consultation with graduate faculty in each discipline. As is the case with undergraduates, advisors utilize Banner in nearly all aspects of the advising process. Program sheets for all degree programs are available on the website.

Appraisal: Teaching and Advising

[The Spring 2012 Faculty-Staff Survey](#) reveals that three quarters to nearly 90% of our faculty agree that WCSU emphasizes its mission and purposes in setting priorities for staffing, establishing a budget, technology, enrollment goals, planning for the future, and self-evaluation. There have been improvements in technology throughout the institution over the past five years that have enhanced its ability to deliver course content through a variety of means. There remain, however, areas within some departments that hold to traditional delivery systems (e.g., lecture/demonstration). Some departments have yet to implement and utilize Blackboard Learn in their mainstream curricula. Other areas utilize technology to enhance traditional forms of delivery and/or assessment. For example, the Department of Education and Educational Psychology utilizes the TK20 system to serve as a repository of assessment data, much of which is collected and analyzed using traditional assessment tools (written exams, essays, etc.) The Department of Music employs digital video technology to record performance examinations (juries). While technology enhances the assessment process, the content of the course remains traditional, based on the fundamentals of the discipline.

Advising at WCSU is critical for student success and is articulated as such in the Strategic Plan. Academic advising continues to be a prominent issue at WCSU; there is much departmental

discussion, mentoring of new faculty, and continued emphasis on improving advising, the techniques and mechanics of advising, and educating students to be effective advisees. The CAPP degree audit is updated as needed so that Banner can produce accurate reports to students and advisors; however, it is extremely difficult to keep the system 100% accurate, which results in a few inaccurate degree evaluations. The MAP-Works system is new to the university and currently in the implementation phase. The expectation is that this program will contribute to more intensive advising for at-risk students, as it has at other universities.

Issues related to academic integrity – especially with regard to academic honesty as defined by the institution – continue to provide challenges to students, faculty and the administration. Although WCSU’s Academic Honesty Policy is published both in hard copy and online, many students and faculty members, especially part-time faculty members, remain confused about the policy. The policy for grade appeals is also presented clearly, yet many students and faculty have difficulty following the procedures in a timely manner.

Description: Scholarship, Research and Creative Activity

The active pursuit of scholarship, research, and creative activity is essential to the mission and purposes of the institution, which articulate that effective and excellent teaching and learning require that faculty be active, engaged, scholars and practitioners in their disciplines. All faculty are expected to pursue scholarship, research, and/or creative activity appropriate to the discipline and degrees offered. These expectations are articulated in the 2007-2011 CSU-AAUP Collective Bargaining Agreement. Scholarship, research, and/or creative activity are assessed regularly as part of the faculty member’s continuing appointment evaluation, promotion/tenure evaluation, and professional assessment.

The same commitment to academic freedom that exists for curricular offerings is also in place for scholarship, research and creative activities and is expressed in the 2007-2011 CSU-AAUP Collective Bargaining Agreement, Article 4.2, pp. 12-15.

WCSU provides resources for continued professional development of fulltime and part-time faculty members through faculty development funds to enhance teaching (see Tables and Endnotes: Standard V: 5); CSU/AAUP Research Grants to support individual faculty projects and enhance the educational mission, visibility, and research stature of the Connecticut State University units of ConnSCU; reassigned load credit for research to contribute to the body of research, creative or pedagogical knowledge of the applicant's discipline; sabbatical leaves to support scholarly and creative endeavors that strengthen the professional competence or enrich the teaching or equivalent professional responsibilities of faculty members; summer curriculum related activities; grants for curriculum development of courses and programs; and faculty retraining grants.

Appraisal: Scholarship, Research, and Creative Activity

WCSU faculty are actively engaged in relevant scholarship, research, and creative activity. Faculty publications, exhibitions, recordings, performances, conference papers, and other creative activity are reported to the Provost and President annually by department. Many faculty have secured grants from outside organizations to support their research. External grants in 2011-2012 ranged from \$2,000 in Social Work to \$97,654 in Chemistry and \$189,135 in Biology.

Projection: Faculty, Teaching and Scholarship

WCSU Faculty members are supported by a very strong collective bargaining agreement that remains in effect through 2016. The collective bargaining agreement and its provisions for salary, benefits, evaluation, academic freedom, professional development, and shared governance have established an atmosphere of stability and trust, even in a less than optimal economic climate. Although financial constraints and diminished student enrollment have curbed hiring, we will continue to provide the best fulltime and part-time faculty for our students, and continue to use our Mission and Vision to guide our growth. To that end, immediate future hires will center on majors that are growing and that the university has decided represent signature programs. These include: Nursing; Biology and Chemistry; Music; and Justice and Law Administration.

Faculty hiring salaries will remain competitive, with the institution being mindful of the area's high cost of living. After being frozen for several years, salaries will increase by about 4% in Fall 2013. Faculty evaluation, advancement and retention are solid and we will continue to use the processes that are in place to ensure they remain strong. We estimate that the gender parity at rank issue will be resolved in 10 years, as more junior faculty are promoted. The Affirmative Action Officer will be asked to study the issue in Fall 2018.

In Fall 2013, The Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) will be asked to help resolve the perception among some faculty that the four-course teaching load is sufficient to teach, assess, and advise students, but too great to allow adequate time for research and scholarship. In Spring 2014, CELT and IT&I will be asked to deliver more workshops on utilizing technology resources in the classroom for those faculty still not taking full advantage of our expanding teaching resources. Also in Spring 2014, CELT and Academic Advisement will provide more programs concentrated on improving academic advisement by fulltime faculty.

Institutional Effectiveness

In the broadest sense, WCSU, as a member of ConnSCU, periodically evaluates the sufficiency and support for the faculty during contract negotiations related to the CSU-AAUP Collective Bargaining Agreement. The effectiveness of individual faculty members in teaching, advising, scholarship, service, and professional development is evaluated in annual non-tenured faculty evaluation and professional assessment of tenured faculty. Short-term support for faculty is evaluated by Department Chairs and Deans in consultation with faculty members and is directly related to the Strategic Plan and the mission and purposes of the institution, school and department. Formal program review provides specific review criteria relative to mission and purposes, student learning outcomes, resources, viability, and public disclosure/integrity.

Standard VI: Students

A Profile of Our Students

Our students are organized into four schools: Ancell School of Business; Arts and Sciences; Professional Studies; and Visual and Performing Arts. Undergraduate students can select from a total of 39 programs. In the Ancell School, Justice and Law Administration is the most popular choice. In our largest school, Arts and Sciences, Psychology is selected the most often. In Professional Studies, Education is first. In our smallest school, Visual and Performing Arts, Music Education heads the list. As of Fall 2012, we enrolled a total of 6,200 students—4,577 fulltime and 1,599 part-time. We are primarily an undergraduate institution with 4,501 of those students attending fulltime and 76 graduate students attending fulltime (Enrollment Trends from 2007-2008 to 2012-2013).

Many of our fulltime undergraduate students commute, 67.6% to be exact. Of this group, most, 91.7 %, are 25 years of age or younger. In our part-time undergraduate population, 43.2% are 25 years of age or older.

Most of our students come to us from Connecticut with 18.1% hailing from Danbury and a total of 75.4% coming from other communities in the state. New York State students represent 5.3% of our population. Only 1.2% of our students are from other states and countries.

For Fall 2012, 5,136 students applied for undergraduate admission, including 1,120 transfers, as shown in the Data First forms. The acceptance process yielded 3,199 first-time students, including 831 transfers. Of that group, 1,283 first-time students enrolled, including 441 transfers. The mean SAT composite score for all first-time, fulltime students was 986 (Mathematics 490 plus Verbal 496). The entering class is comprised of 58.3% women. Members of traditionally under-represented groups comprise 24.6%.

At the Master's level, an average of 320 applications were accepted annually over the last four years, and 290 enrolled. The corresponding averages for Ed.D. programs were 18.3 and 17.7.

Our graduate programs, with one exception, are intended to serve students who want to attend part-time. While some students choose to design a fulltime schedule, it is not possible to do so in all of the graduate programs. Our MFA program in Visual Arts is offered as a fulltime program. Our part-time programs number 16, with one, the Ed.D. in Nursing Education, being delivered exclusively online. We offer two Ed.D. programs and 15 masters-level programs. Three of the most popular masters programs are Counselor Education, Education and Nursing.

Description: Admissions

Admissions counselors meet with prospective students, parents and guidance counselors in the Admissions Office and at various high school visits, open houses and college fairs. Admissions criteria and requirements are published in both print and electronic versions. In addition, information is sent to high schools and community colleges in Connecticut, New York and New Jersey. The Admissions Office and faculty both individually and through the Enrollment Management Committee continually address the qualifications of the incoming class as they

relate to standards. The university administers placement tests in Mathematics, Writing, Chemistry and foreign language.

As shown in the Data First tables, we became slightly more selective in first-time freshman admissions, accepting only 59% of those who applied in 2012, compared to 62.4%, 63.4% and 62.2% in the prior three years. We use the SAT Composite Score (Critical Reading plus Mathematics) as one indicator of the quality of first-time students. (This measure decreased by 1.8% between 2009 and 2012.)

In the area of transfer admissions, applications increased by 1.4%, acceptances increased by 4.5%, and enrolled students decreased by 2.9% between 2009 and 2012.

The Associate Director of the Division of Graduate Studies works with the program coordinators in each of the graduate programs to accept and enroll graduate students. Admissions requirements are published in both print and electronic versions. The Associate Director sits on the Enrollment Management Committee.

In Fall 2012, an Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs was hired to facilitate graduate studies, as one area of responsibility. Prior to her arrival, there had been a Dean of Graduate Studies and External Programs. This change will require the four deans to assume more responsibility for program evaluation and to direct the Associate Vice President regarding recruitment efforts.

In Spring 2013, Information Technology and Innovation facilitated four days of meetings as a start to a Re-engineering Project to determine how to better serve students from the time they express interest in attending Western to the day they become alumni. Once the processes have been mapped, there will be discussions about designing better recruitment strategies and student service protocols.

In Spring 2013, a new Director of Admissions was hired. He brings a fresh perspective, having experience with marketing, recruitment and enrollment at private post-secondary institutions.

In Spring 2013, the President charged an Enrollment Team, led by the Director of Admissions, to increase entering student enrollment by 4% in FY14 and 4% in FY15 and increase out-of-state enrollment by 5% in FY14 and 10% in FY15.

The Communications Team, led by the Interim Vice President for Institutional Advancement, was charged with looking at ways to be more innovative in our communication with prospective students to include increased use of email and social media. The team will also prepare a plan which employs more targeted and tiered communication.

Appraisal: Admissions

Enrollment at the university grew and then began to decline since the 2007-2008 Fifth Year Report. The high point in fulltime undergraduate enrollment was Fall 2010 with 4,905 students, and part-time undergraduate enrollment peaked in Fall 2008 at 1,170. Graduate enrollment, primarily part-time, peaked at 748 in Fall 2009. Efforts to support enrollment include

introduction of an SAT-optional program, social media marketing, direct-mail advertising, Fall and Spring open houses, Accepted Student Day, bus trips from urban centers, a student shadow program, two high school counselor lunches and campus tours throughout the year. The SAT-optional program is an internal Admissions option which allows Admissions to look at students in the top 30% of their class with a B+ average and consistent high school performance and offer university acceptance without the minimum SAT requirement.

As enrollment increased over the years leading up to 2010-2011, funding levels of federal, state and institutional money remained constant. More recent years have seen a reduction which can be attributed to the State of Connecticut's current financial situation. Staffing has remained below the current NAASFAA-Staffing Predictor Model which should be 10 FTE. (WCSU is currently at 5 FTE.) These deficits continue to pose a challenge to providing adequate service to our students.

Additional recruitment and service challenges stem from our split campus. We have a 34-acre main campus in downtown Danbury called Midtown and a 364-acre campus, about three miles from the main campus, called Westside. While residence halls and student centers are located on each campus, athletic facilities are located primarily on the Westside. Shuttle buses run to deliver students to classes on both campuses.

Projection: Admissions

In looking at State of Connecticut demographic projections for the next several years, the Admissions Office recognizes a forthcoming decline of graduating high school seniors. Therefore, enrollment projections will need to be made with caution. The SAT-optional admission program implemented quietly in Fall 2012 for incoming freshmen will be expanded with the anticipation that it will provide greater access for targeted students likely to be successful at the university. This two-year pilot program is designed to address the changing demographics within the State of Connecticut. The implementation of the program is based on findings regarding the lack of correlation between student success and their standardized test scores, positive correlation between high school GPA and student success indicators, research into the bias of standardized testing against students of diverse ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds, and the changing demographics of the State of Connecticut.

The Re-engineering Project will present initiatives to improve marketing, recruitment and enrollment efforts during Spring 2013 and Fall 2013. Although admissions efforts historically have focused on fulltime undergraduates, we must expand the conversation to include other populations.

The Director of Admissions has been charged by the President to improve the conversion rate by 4% for Fall 2013. The Admissions Director's Enrollment Implementation Team will present action steps to the President at the end of June 2013. During the same month, the Communications Team, also a part of the Cabinet implementation teams, will present a plan for communicating more effectively with prospective students.

In Fall 2013, the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs will meet with the deans of the four schools to determine how best to strategize about graduate study and to facilitate recruiting and enrollment efforts with the Division of Graduate Studies.

Description: Retention and Graduation

Over the last four years, the FTE of first-year students decreased by 22.9%, compared to a negligible decrease (0.3%) for second-year, an increase of 7.3% for third-year, and an increase of 13.7% for fourth-year (Data First forms, Standard VI, Enrollment, Fall Census Date). The FTE of unclassified undergraduates (nonmatriculants) decreased by 3.7%. Over the same period, undergraduate FTE decreased by 4.5%, graduate FTE decreased by 25.1%, and total FTE decreased by 5.9%. Total FTE peaked in Fall 2010 and then declined by 3.4% and 4.3% in the two succeeding years.

S-Series tables reveal the one-year retention rate at 69% for the first-time fulltime (FTFT) cohort matriculating in Fall 2011 (596 of 870). The six-year graduation rate is 42% for the FTFT cohort matriculating in Fall 2006.

The S-Series also illustrates that the university has yet to implement a systematic gathering of data regarding the success of students pursuing higher degrees; rates at which graduates pursue mission-related paths; rates at which students are successful in fields for which they were not explicitly prepared and documented success of graduates achieving other mission-explicit achievement.

The freshman-to-sophomore retention rate for male and female athletes (80% and 85%, respectively) exceeds the rate for non-athletes (66% for males, 72% for females). Approximately three hundred athletes participate in varsity sports annually. The Educational Achievement and Access Program (EAP), a joint program of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, provides underprepared students with the opportunity and support they need to enroll in college and persist to graduation. This program provides a challenging five-week residential summer program which includes academic classes, skills development programs and continued support throughout the academic year.

As part of the NEASC Fifth Year Report, the implementation of a First-Year Experience Program was recommended to help students to persist.

In 2012-2013, the University made available more single rooms in residence halls. Beginning in Fall 2013, the Office of Residence Life will offer academic-year housing contracts, thus ending the practice of semester-long contracts.

The Provost leads the Retention Team which will create a plan to reach out to non-returning students in order to explore the possibility of their staying. Additionally, MAP-Works will be launched in Fall 2013 and coordinated by Academic Advisement. MAP-Works surveys students, identifies those at at-risk and connects them with members of the university who can best help them to be more successful. The program cites a 4% retention-improvement rate.

Appraisal: Retention and Graduation

On average 35 students are enrolled in the EAP program annually. Retention rates have been increasing with the past few cohorts. Academic success data are also encouraging. At the end of the Fall 2009 semester, 64% of the 2009 cohort maintained a GPA of 2.0 or higher. Another indicator of the success of the EAP program is the 44% graduation rate of the Fall 2006 EAP cohort: 2 percentage points better than the overall rate and 11 points better than a similar group with high school GPA below 85 on a 100-point scale (Comparing EAP Graduation Rate).

In their May 2012 preliminary reports, campus teams explored our level of success in achieving six strategic goals. Reflecting on the goal to be an affordable public university with the characteristics of New England's best small private universities, the team found that we are on the path of fostering student scholars who are also engaged citizens. While academic teaching and performance is largely responsible for moving us closer to fulfilling this goal, the team pointed out that our extensive extra-curricular activities and programs also contributed. Of the goal to be a more student-centered campus, the team recommended that we continue to promote Residence Life programming, Clubs' Carnival (part of Welcome Week for all new students in the fall) and other events that enhance student engagement.

Consistent with the report about achieving strategic goals, more than half of the seniors responding to the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) in 2011 indicated that their participation in co-curricular activities contributed to their total educational experience. Specifically 54% of seniors indicated that their participation contributed to their intellectual growth; 56% indicated that their participation contributed to their making career choices; and 58% indicated that their participation contributed to their educational goals.

The team also found that only 52% of seniors indicated that their primary source of academic advising during the current academic year was their assigned academic advisor. To address this issue, the team made several recommendations which focused on creating a stronger relationship between the student and his/her advisor.

While six-year graduation rates have improved by seven percentage points since the last NEASC report, the 42% rate of first-time fulltime undergraduates remains a concern (Series S-1, line 4). The team recommended that the university implement a First-Year Experience Program as well as develop learning communities/cohorts. We have found that students completing the first year with at least 24 credits and a GPA of 2.0 are much more likely to persist to graduation than their counterparts (Series S-1, line 8). Therefore, our commitment to improve these two measures of academic progress will likely result in improved graduation rates.

The group most likely to graduate in six years (66%) is transfer students with at least 30 credits at entry who are enrolled fulltime in their first semester (Series S-1, line 9). A study of students who matriculated as part-time bachelor degree-seeking students in 2003-2006 reveals a combined six-year graduation rate of 35.1% and an eight-year rate of 37.6%. Most of these part-time students were transfers (334 of 404, or 83%; Part-Time Student Graduation Rate Study).

Students entering colleges and universities today face challenges of new intensity and some that were previously unseen. Therefore, the development of "at-risk" support programs is crucial.

The team that examined strategic goal attainment recommended increasing resources in such support areas as counseling; reviewing university processes that concern student needs, and providing consistent information across the university.

Despite these concerns, there is much good news: 89% of recent graduates report being satisfied or very satisfied with their experience at WCSU and 89% would recommend WCSU to a prospective student.

Tracking student success following graduation is done by some departments, but this data needs to be collected systematically throughout the university in order to demonstrate the value of a WCSU degree.

A number of issues have impacted the Office of Residence Life's operations. Facilities need renovation, as do the programs offered and their delivery method. Staff training should be modified and the department's budget needs bolstering. (The budget has actually decreased over the last ten years.) Academic year 2012-2013 marked the first time that part-time matriculated students were allowed to live in on-campus housing. Unfortunately, there was little interest. The other major issue facing the office is its cost structure. As changes are considered, Residence Life needs to address the question of whether or not its price point is getting too expensive for WCSU students. Although the Residence Life Office is facing a number of challenging issues, it has implemented a number of operation-enhancing systems, including development of Unimatrix to cover for areas Banner misses; an ARM program that focuses on academic coaching; development of a newsletter; and use of Facebook and Twitter to enhance communication with students and potential residents.

The Athletics Department and head coaches continue to experience difficulties in the recruitment of prospective student athletes who are likely to be successful in both the classroom and competition. These efforts are economic and financial-aid based. More athletes are choosing to commute rather than live on campus. Long term, this decision presents problems with levels of participation. Recreation currently faces two main issues: inadequate funding and lack of available appropriate facilities. Lack of funding results in inadequate programming. Facilities are less than one-third of the recommended square footage for an institution our size.

Parent involvement in student education is an area of recent emphasis. We are actively working to connect our parents with university programs and resources. This will not only have an impact on retention efforts, but it will also allow us to assist parents in helping students work toward degree completion, graduation and ultimately a professional career.

Projection: Retention and Graduation

The retention goal is to increase first to second year retention rate by 3% points in FY14 and 3% points in FY15.

The Retention Team will present an action plan to the Cabinet at the end of June 2013. On the strength of the discussions about the importance of MAP-Works, an additional Assistant Director will be added to the staff of the Advisement Center in June 2013 to provide the structure

necessary for this new initiative to be successful. MAP-Works will also be used to begin to collect evidence of the success of our graduates.

In Fall 2013, the First-Year Experience Program will provide students with important information about navigating the university and will serve as a way to launch MAP-Works. Academic support centers will be opened in Fall 2013. On the Westside campus, the Learning Commons to be located in the Classroom Building will provide tutorial services and advising to students in the Ansell School of Business. The Math Emporium to be located in Higgins Annex on the Midtown campus will provide self-paced tutorial assistance from 85 computer stations. This support center will be open 24/7. During a portion of those hours, tutors will be available to provide individual help.

The Registrar's Office will work to further help students achieve their academic goals and complete their degrees. Course sequencing, registration processes, and student progress toward graduation will be evaluated during 2013-2014 to pinpoint support solutions that will improve graduation rates.

Concerning student housing, the university recognizes that decreased occupancy is reflective of the state's – and nation's – unstable economic conditions, as well as increased competition from local entities. In an attempt to halt this decline, we are changing from a one-semester housing contract to an academic-year contract starting in Fall 2013 and implementing a campaign to educate students on the hidden costs of living off campus and the advantages of living on campus. Instituting the academic year contract will place us in alignment with best practices and will help manage retention rates. Over the past few years, we have aggressively begun the process of renovating residence halls which have been long overdue for updating. Details of residence hall renovations are described in Standard VIII. Renovation of one of the oldest facilities, Litchfield Hall, is currently being planned with expected completion in 2014. Expansion of theme housing is also anticipated for the 2014-2015 academic year.

Description: Student Services

Admissions, Student Financial Services, Advising, the Registrar's Office and Academic Support Services report to the Provost. Other departments report to the Vice President of Student Affairs.

During academic year 2005-2006, the Division of Student Affairs revised its mission and vision statements to build on the university-wide Values & Visions work initiated by the university president in the previous year. The goal of the revised mission statement was to direct us to become a more student-centered, service-oriented campus; to increase student retention; to emphasize the role of leadership in transforming lives; and to focus on working more closely with Academic Affairs. To that end, the Academic Vice President and the Vice President of Student Affairs sought greater collaboration on many levels. These included expansion of the Student Concern Team (threat assessment) to include faculty and academic deans; the development of the Hancock Student Leadership Program; and the agreement between the two vice presidents to have the Dean of Students join the Provost's regular meetings with the academic deans.

All first-time and transfer students are invited to attend an Orientation to the university. Students entering in the fall are encouraged to attend a one-day program in June which focuses on getting students registered, meeting other students and faculty, obtaining student IDs and taking care of other details that will advance a seamless integration into university life. Additionally, a four-day Orientation in the fall focuses on social activities and addresses a wide range of transitional issues relevant to first-semester needs. Orientation for students entering in January is less extensive but still attempts to help students integrate smoothly into university life. The orientation programs are a collaborative effort of academic and student affairs and other administrative units of the university. A standing Orientation Committee chaired by the Dean of Students oversees these efforts.

Student financial aid is administered by the Office of Student Financial Services which is responsible for managing all federal, state and institutional grants, loans and scholarships as well as the University Student Employment Program. The Office is also responsible for certifying the Veteran's Educational Benefits Program. Additional support to assist veterans with this certification is provided by the Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs.

Annual expenditures for student financial aid totaled approximately \$40 million in FY12. Three-quarters of the aid comes from federal sources, including \$21.7 million in loans, \$6.2 million in grants, and \$251,000 in work study funds. State aid comprises \$5.3 million, private grant aid \$1.3 million, private loan aid \$4.2 million, and institutional grant aid \$620,000. Student aid expenditures from all sources increased by 7.8% from FY10 to FY11, but then decreased by 10.1% from FY11 to FY12 as enrollment declined.

As shown in the Data First tables, approximately 69% of undergraduate students and 44% of graduate students graduate with debt. Between FY10 and FY13, the average amount of debt for students leaving with bachelor's degrees increased by 52% (from \$12,402 to \$18,850), and the comparable increase for masters students was 29% (from \$7,418 to \$9,579). Similar increases were observed for students leaving without degrees (62% and 22%, respectively).

All students admitted to the university are provided with academic advising. Students who have not declared a major are advised through the Academic Advisement Center while students who have declared their major will work with a fulltime faculty advisor from their major department.

Developmental courses, defined as courses which do not count toward the credits needed for graduation, help students who are not fully prepared to complete college level work in Writing and Mathematics. In Fall 2009, the percentage of students in developmental courses was 38 in Mathematics and 7 in Writing (English). In Fall 2010, the percentages were 30 and 13, respectively. In subsequent years the percentages dropped sharply as a direct result of a State mandate (Connecticut Public Act 12-40) for colleges and universities not to offer remedial or developmental courses.

The Dean of Arts & Sciences oversees a Math Clinic (to be the Math Emporium in Fall 2013), a Writing Lab and a Tutoring Resource Center. These facilities provide one-on-one and group tutoring. There is also a Computer Science Clinic located on the Westside campus for students needing assistance in computer science courses.

The Office of AccessAbility Services coordinates and provides accommodations and support services to students with all types of disabilities that impact their educational experience. Permanent staffing includes a fulltime coordinator, a secretary, and three part-time university assistant positions that provide individual academic coaching, accommodation coordination and writing assistance. The efforts of this office reflect WCSU's overall commitment to diversity. Each semester, the office works with approximately 400 students with documented disabilities in order to provide reasonable accommodations, advocacy, academic coaching, assistive technology, writing assistance, and support for foreign language alternatives (where appropriate). Professional development workshops and individual consultations are provided to faculty and staff. Topics range from disability laws to best practices for creating an accessible and inclusive classroom environment. Programs are publicized in admissions materials, at open houses, and at university orientations, including a specialized orientation program for incoming students with disabilities and their parents. AccessAbility Services moved to new office space in Higgins Annex 017 during Fall 2010 in an effort to better accommodate the growth of its programs and services.

The university strives to offer services that address students' physical, mental and spiritual concerns. WCSU provides primary health care (Health Service), mental health care (Counseling Center) and Substance Abuse Prevention Services (CHOICES Program). CHOICES works closely with Judicial Affairs, other campus departments and the broader Danbury community to identify at-risk students and provide assessment, screening and intervention services. The university also provides spiritual support for students through an Office of Campus Ministries.

The university houses approximately one third of its fulltime undergraduate students in on-campus housing. There are three residence halls on the Midtown campus and three apartment style residence halls on the Westside campus. The combined residence halls can accommodate 1,675 students.

Although residence halls provide the primary source of activities and programs for residential students, the Student Center on the Midtown campus and the Campus Center on the Westside campus serve as hubs of campus life for both residential and commuter students. Student Center and Campus Center staffs are responsible for the administration and operation of the buildings as well as the auxiliary services.

The Department of Residence Life, along with the Campus and Student Center (CSC) staff, work closely with the University Police Department to create safe living and safe learning environments across the two campuses. The fully certified Police Department is responsible for maintaining a safe and secure environment on campus and educating the community in campus safety. University Police provides 24-hour coverage to both campuses through the use of vehicle, foot, and bicycle patrol units.

In addition to participation in campus activities and organizations, students have many opportunities to serve in leadership positions and campus governance. These include the Student Government Association (SGA), Inter Residence Hall Association (IRHA), and Greek Council. Each of these organizations serves as the governing body of its respective area. Other student leadership opportunities include representation on University Senate committees, the selective

Hancock Student Leadership Program and the Student Athletic Advisory Committee. The Student Life Office also provides leadership training, as do the Residence Life Office (resident assistant, academic resource mentor), Information Technology & Innovation (student employees), and the Campus Center/Student Center (student employees).

The Career Development Center (CDC) provides a wide range of programs to approximately 2,400 students annually. The CDC assists students with career planning and job searches. The Center hosts workshops on job search strategies and conducts a cooperative education program to provide students with experience related to major or career interests, an annual career fair, an etiquette dinner and other events.

Western Connecticut State University and ConnSCU have adopted certain institutional values and expectations. All members of the university are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with these values and expectations. The Office of Judicial Affairs is responsible for administering the student discipline system. All students are expected to adhere to the policies and procedures outlined in the [Student Code of Conduct and Statement of Judicial Procedures](#).

Following the violence at Virginia Tech and other universities around the country, WCSU organized a risk assessment committee comprised of both academic and non-academic staff. Formed in 2007, the Student Concern Team (SCT) is charged with responding to faculty and staff concerns regarding student behavior and offering programs and workshops designed to heighten awareness of behavior that may signal serious problems.

One of the most important steps in ongoing assessment of Student Affairs services was initiated in academic year 2005-2006 using the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS). The results have been used for service improvement, the development of action plans and, in some cases, the development of learning outcomes. Every department within Student Affairs completed a self-study using the CAS Standards.

Appraisal: Student Services

Over the past few years the Orientation Committee focused on refining the process of getting students connected to the university on both an academic and non-academic level. All fulltime students have been pre-registered for the fall prior to their June orientation arrival. At the orientation, students meet within their departments to learn more details about their programs. Students also have an opportunity to make appropriate adjustments to their schedules.

Additionally, a new program, “Voices of Students,” introduces incoming students to a wide range of scenarios they may experience on campus and serves as an introduction to a series of information sessions, workshops and speakers provided over the course of the fall semester. Parent programs were also introduced at the June orientation and Welcome Week meetings to provide parents with information about student services and available programs. Parents have responded very favorably to all these programs.

The Registrar’s Office recently implemented the Ad Astra Scheduling module, which optimizes class assignments and better utilizes classroom space to distribute the classes more evenly and increase student enrollment in various sections. A bonus for students is their continued ability to

register for classes electronically once they have obtained a Personal Identification Number (PIN) from their advisers.

A new coordinator to work with students with disabilities was hired in August 2012. She discovered that current practices, policies and procedures are not up-to-date with best practices outlined in the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) Program Standards and Performance. Additionally, as is common with many university offices that serve students with disabilities, WCSU harbors a growing population of students with psychological disabilities and students on the autism spectrum. A university assistant currently provides mental health related counseling to these students; however, such services would be more appropriately centered in the Counseling Office. Related issues concern auditory confidentiality, office space, and physical safety of students and staff, especially in light of recent incidents at other schools and colleges. Also, the number of exams proctored in the office simultaneously is limited due to limited space in the office conference room.

A permanent office for the Academic Advisement Center was established in Higgins Hall in 2003 and is staffed with three fulltime professional advisors, a fulltime director, a fulltime secretary and several part-time workers. The center has expanded services to include counseling on change of major and has added computers for students to self-register. A new "General Education Requirements" flyer provides students with a simple, easily accessible summary of all such information. The center also provides online testing to help students identify majors and career paths and follow-up sessions to review results. Facebook and Twitter accounts have been established in an effort to get more students involved with academic advisement. To meet the need of students taking only evening classes, the center offers evening advisement by appointment.

The Career Development Center (CDC) evaluates the quality and effectiveness of its services through a number of surveys and instruments including student and employer evaluations. Students and employers generally rate CDC programs and service very positively. Helping with assessment of learning outcomes has also been a goal of the CDC. The Center has assisted the Ancell School of Business in assessing business students who were involved in Co-op programs. Unfortunately, the CDC staff size has remained the same for over twenty years while enrollment has increased dramatically and with it, increased demand for individual student services, special programs, data collection, and employer development. This imbalance presents a major challenge to the implementation of CDC initiatives.

Opening in the Fall 2009 semester, the veterans' lounge in the Midtown Student Center has become a key location for vets to come together. Attendance in the lounge has been steadily growing with continued support from external groups and the university. Each semester a welcome mailing goes out to all veterans informing them about services, resources and a list of the key offices on campus with their location, liaison, and telephone information. This single correspondence has played a major part in enhancing connections to the vets.

Over the past several years, Campus and Student Centers/Auxiliary Services have expanded to include the opening of the new Westside Campus Center, the expansion of hours and services at The Daily Grind, and management of the university box office. Campus and Student

Centers/Auxiliary Services also acts as liaison between the bookstore, food service, vending and shuttle service. In Fall 2011, the department resumed responsibility for testing services. Connections with the bookstore, food services and shuttle services have improved and resulted in higher levels of satisfaction among students. Accomplishments of this department include:

- leadership in the development of an assessment program that has been built into student leadership training using Blackboard
- expansion of services in the Bookstore, including expansion of used textbook buybacks and sales, exposure on Facebook, web orders and assistance with meeting HEOA requirements
- collaboration with campus activities such as the Health Fair
- improved dining services with an expanded website that includes menus, an increase in the number of theme nights, and expansion of services for students with dietary needs.

The shuttle service has been one of our main challenges. Previously, there was no direct day-to-day liaison between the service provider and students. With the CSC taking over contact of the shuttle, student complaints have declined, new initiatives such as GPS have been explored and ridership is strong.

The primary activity of Campus Ministries revolves around two organizations – the Newman Center/Newman Club and the Protestant Campus Ministries. The Jewish Student Organization has had difficulty garnering enough student support to be active. Bi-weekly Newman Dinners serve as a major attraction to students of all faiths. Students gather for a free meal and meet and talk with other attending students, faculty and staff. The Newman Club (funded by SGA) and Newman Center provide regular services and programs that meet the needs of the campus. Protestant Campus Ministries has also had an active Wednesday evening program.

In recent years, physical and mental health services (including substance abuse services) have focused on assessing student learning outcomes and on wellness options. Of all students participating in the Fall 2011 Health Fair, 86% indicated that they were considering a lifestyle change. Recreation, Health Service, the Counseling Center, CHOICES and other organizations have worked collaboratively to provide “Student Health 101” to all undergraduate students as part of their wellness outreach. Departments will continue to collaborate to educate and bring wellness programming to the student body.

In the Counseling Center, caseloads remain high and have grown significantly over the past few years not only in terms of number of students seeking support but also in the increasing intensity and multiplicity of issues students face. A total of almost 1,800 student sessions were held this past academic year.

Other recent accomplishments include the purchase of the software package Titanium, which will allow computerization of transactions and records. A 24-hour, “on-call” emergency response system is ready for implementation. With the increase in student needs in recent years, outreach to faculty for consultations and support for the Residence Life staff continue to be expanded. Campus and Student Centers/Auxiliary Services has also built a strong relationship with Danbury Hospital in terms of providing support for students who need prescriptions as well as

creating greater connections for students who are transported to the emergency room for mental health emergencies.

During calendar year 2012, the Police Department actively participated in over fifty personal safety and security educational programs with over 1,100 face-to-face contacts with students, staff and faculty. The department has also collaborated with the CHOICES Office, Health Service, AccessAbility Services and Residence Life to present community awareness and safety initiatives. Since 2003, CHOICES has received over \$800,000 in federal grants and state contracts to develop, implement and evaluate effective prevention and early intervention programs for college students.

The challenges that face Student Life/Activities center on staffing and budget. Although the department now includes the merged Recreation and Student Life Departments, there is still no secretarial support. Although the Associate Director for Student Life/Activities is the head of the department, the actual position of Director has been vacant for six years (since the separation of the department from the Student Center and Campus Center programs). Regarding finances, there is no department budget to speak of which means that the department is not able to fund programs or training beyond the most basic. And the department does not oversee the management of the student activities fee as is typical on most college campuses. (This oversight is currently under the management of the Director of Campus and Student Centers.)

The vacancy rate in campus housing has become a matter of concern. From 95% of capacity (or more) in fall semesters from 2007 through 2011, the occupancy rate decreased to 87.8% in Fall 2012 (Residence Hall Occupancy table). Typically there is a decrease of five to ten percent in occupancy from fall to spring, but the Spring 2013 resident population was 12 % smaller than in Fall 2012. In 2007-2008, 34% of fulltime undergraduates lived on campus, but the percentage is now closer to 30.

There has been a commitment across WCSU in the last few years to help commuter students feel more a part of the university. Recently the SGA recognized and funded the Commuter Student Organization which sponsors multiple programs and holds bi-weekly meetings, established a Commuter Student web and Facebook page, and produces the Commuter Student E-Newsletter.

Greek Letter Organizations (GLO), with one hundred seventy-five members, have witnessed various cycles of high participation followed by difficult recruiting years. GLO remain a major way in which commuter students “connect” to campus and remain visible and active across campus life. With the creation of the Assistant Dean of Students position in 2006-2007, the GLO have had a real link to university administration.

The SGA has achieved much in recent years. With the assistance of Information Technology & Innovation, the SGA has created an online election system where students can vote in SGA elections from their own computer. The SGA has redesigned the budget request process, thus allowing clubs more opportunity to better plan events. Also, SGA took the lead in creating stronger campus pride by creating a “WestConn Pride Campaign” and “WestConn Wednesdays” when students are encouraged to wear WCSU shirts and other “WestConn” gear.

Over the last several years the Office of Judicial Affairs has created a University Judicial Board system with three-person panels that are comprised of faculty, administrators, and students. There are currently 30 members of the university community on this board who are available to serve at any hearing. Board members receive training about student rights.

Another recent initiative is the Judicial Advocates program. Composed of student volunteers, Judicial Advocates provides support for the accused student and the victim prior to, during and/or following a hearing. Since completing the CAS Standards, the Office of Judicial Affairs has put into place several assessment pieces. Most recently, the office has focused on conversations with students who have encountered the judicial process in order to help them gain a better understanding of the process, accept responsibility for their behavior and learn from past mistakes.

Projection: Student Services

Although enrollments have fallen off recently, the Office of Student Financial Services is still below the current (NAFAA-Staffing Predictor Model) standard of FTE staffing to students. In response, the university has received approval to hire two additional staff members, one of whom will work with veterans to certify GI Benefits. In addition, the university has contracted with the CT DLS Call Center to respond to general questions about student financial services effective July 2013.

A dual-advisement program providing every student with both a faculty advisor and a professional advisor is also being planned for implementation in Spring 2014. All first-year students would be provided dual-advisement or be included under the Advisement Center regardless of declaration of major.

The Career Development Center (CDC) will continue to stay abreast of technology and social media innovation in order to better network with our students and academic departments. Implementation of new social media connections with CDC activities and website will be conducted throughout 2013-2014. The CDC will continue to utilize its online career system and new features to provide even more access to career services. New features are being developed by the software vendor over the Summer and Fall of 2013.

Also in development and scheduled to be in place by Fall 2013 are revised policies and procedures, written in consultation with Best Practices as defined by the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD), Program Standards and Performance Indicators. AccessAbility Services is now providing academic related coaching, rather than counseling. By Spring 2014, the office expects to increase student retention and success rates by 2% and provide one-on-one academic coaching for students with disabilities. (Students in need of non-academic related counseling are referred to the Counseling Center or to outside providers.)

For various socio-economic reasons, more students are choosing to commute. In Fall 2013, the Office of the Assistant Dean of Students will implement a series of new one-off and semester-long programs that will engage commuter students and connect them more firmly to campus life.

The university's health and mental health services also faces significant hurdles in the coming years. Health Service anticipates moving toward electronic medication prescriptions by 2016-2017. The dramatic increase in the number of students arriving at school with personal issues presents the greatest challenge to the Counseling Center. Despite the Counseling Center's success in meeting students' needs, there has been rather high turnover of counselors and directors. This instability is due in part to attrition and lifestyle decisions, but the transitions have been too frequent for the Center to "settle in" and build on its successes. In Fall 2013, once all positions are filled, the Counseling Center can gain greater stability and build on its accomplishments.

Institutional Effectiveness

Western Connecticut State University regularly assesses the effectiveness of its student services, academic support programs and student achievement using a combination of surveys (BCSSE, NSSE, CORE, EBI, NCAA), the CAS Standards, etc. to allow it to review trends, identify strengths and weaknesses, and prioritize allocation of resources. Additionally, many departments included in Standard VI are developing assessment instruments and procedures to evaluate and improve their services. (For example, the Office of Student Financial Services has implemented bi-annual Satisfactory Academic Progress evaluations and the Academic Advisement Center uses anonymous surveys when students transition from Exploratory/Undeclared to an academic major.)

Standard VII: Library and Other Information Resources

Description

Library and information resources are primarily provided to students and faculty by two libraries (Ruth A. Haas Library and Robert S. Young Library) and the Information Technology & Innovation Department (IT&I). The libraries and IT&I work in concert with Media Services to deliver resources, technology, services and instruction to support a learning environment.

The Media Services and Library Policy Committee (M&LSPC), with representation from Media Services, the Library, faculty and students, develops and recommends policy concerning Media Services and the Library and advises on matters concerning the delivery of services.

Resources and Access

Library faculty and staff adopted a mission statement in 2013 to formalize their service commitment to students, faculty and the university's academic program.

The library faculty and staff of Western Connecticut State University are committed to providing high quality academic library services and to ensuring access to collections in a variety of formats. Information resources are designed to meet the curricular, intellectual, and professional needs of students and faculty and are intended to enhance the learning outcomes and teaching environment of the university.

The mission statement is posted on the library's website as are library policies, services and collections.

The mission of IT&I is "to provide an information technology environment that delivers a seamless learning atmosphere for students and faculty while also meeting administrative needs. The university will be a leader in using technology to enhance teaching and learning to meet the educational needs of a diversified student body, faculty and administration. IT supports the university mission of empowering students, assuring effective teaching, strengthening partnerships with people and institutions while supporting continuous improvement and intellectual integrity."

Libraries are a portal to global resources and information. They are dynamic and responsive, ensuring that resources change in format and delivery as the learning styles of today's technologically savvy college students evolve. Working in partnership with academic departments and student services, the libraries collaborate to advance the university's mission.

There are two libraries at Western Connecticut State University; the Haas Library on the Midtown campus and the Robert S. Young Library on the Westside campus. The focus of the Young Library is to support the degrees offered by the Ansell School of Business. In addition, staff provide many of the same services found at the main library for students from other disciplines, such as circulation of materials, reference assistance and interlibrary loans.

Both libraries are staffed by professionally qualified librarians and support staff. Personnel include the Library Director, who reports to the Provost, the Associate Library Director, eleven professional librarians and support staff. Fulltime librarians are faculty members with all faculty rights and responsibilities and are active in the university's governance.

The Media Services Department has two media centers. One is located on the Midtown campus with two viewing rooms and a production studio and the other on the Westside campus. Services are also available to faculty who teach at Western's Waterbury site (Naugatuck Valley Community College's Founders Hall).

The library's budget decreased by 5% between 2010 and 2013, with the personnel budget increasing by 8% and the remaining operating expenses, the majority of which is used to purchase materials, decreasing by 2%. Funding from gifts and endowments helps support the collections. Total personnel FTE was 24.7 in FY10, and remained at 22.7 from FY11 through FY13. Expenditures per FTE student increased between FY10 and FY13 by 48% due to decreasing enrollment (from \$496 to \$732, as shown in the Data First form).

To support the university's teaching, scholarship and research, the libraries provide resources in myriad formats, from the traditional printed book to streaming video. Collections reflect the increasing use and popularity of electronic resources. Total print volumes have not significantly increased since 2010. This is due to weeding 50% of the reference collection in 2012-2013, and shifting to expend more of the materials budget on electronic resources. Electronic books and full text electronic journals are increasing, while outmoded formats, such as microforms, and expensive print serial subscriptions are decreasing.

Collections	2010	2013	% change
Total print volumes	222,860	223,084	.01%
Electronic books	10	1,443	143%
Print/microform serial subscriptions	3,712	570	-85%
Full text electronic journals	0	382	NA
Microforms	510,746	465,354	-9%
Total media materials	13,968	18,899	35%

Electronic collections are supplemented by the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (ConnSCU) database purchases and the databases provided by ICONN, the Connecticut Digital Library Program. The libraries offer a total of 74,692 full-text journals. Additional print collections can be accessed through a link on the libraries' homepage to CONSULS, the shared catalog of ConnSCU and the Connecticut State Library.

The library's collection development program is accomplished through a liaison program. Each librarian is the subject specialist for several disciplines. Each academic and administrative department has a library liaison that works closely with the subject specialists. Individual departments and faculty members select over half of the books purchased to support courses being taught. An extension of this collaborative collection development was initiated for e-

books in 2012. The e-book collection is now one of patron-driven access. The collection is listed in the online catalog, but purchases are only made when three individuals access the title.

Library hours have remained constant over the past four years, 84 hours a week at Haas Library and 61 per week at Young Library. Hours are extended at the end of each semester. Although students continue to come into the library, and most reference questions are still asked in person, access to library resources is now dominated by the changing way students conduct research. Librarians now deliver more online and on-demand point-of-need reference services using email, chat and mobile technology, as illustrated below.

Reference and In-House	2010	2013	% change
In-person reference questions	14,000	11,830	-16%
Virtual reference questions	600	801	34%
Gate counts/year-Haas Library	384,654	288,431	-25%
Gate count/year average-Young Library	21,119	21,632	2%

It is an anomaly that the shift to virtual access is not reflected in the number of hits to the library website, which have decreased by 23% since 2010.

The libraries institute new programs and services that support both the university's larger mission, along with its more focused curriculum. For example, a university digital repository system managed by the library began in 2010. The repository contains books, journal articles and presentations by faculty, citations for master's theses and a student journal. It is an effective means to showcase the intellectual scholarship and research done at the university.

Funding from Information Technology & Innovation (IT&I) that directly supports students is made available through a Technology Fee. It has remained stable each year during fiscal years 2010-2013 at \$1.2 million. These funds are principally used to purchase, support and maintain technology and software in classrooms and labs and to pay for student lab assistants who staff the computer centers.

The university provides the necessary equipment and facilities to deliver hybrid synchronous and asynchronous online courses. Three video conferencing rooms are available on campus: two traditional rooms at Midtown and a new one at Westside. The Westside facility utilizes next-generation Vidyo HD video conferencing technology that works seamlessly with most existing video conferencing systems as well as with most desktop and laptop computers equipped with a webcam and a broadband Internet connection. The Vidyo infrastructure at Western can support up to 55 concurrent users with HD quality and can be expanded easily for future growth. Over 100 faculty, staff and students are enrolled and using the system, including students in the Honors and the Ed.D. in Nursing Education programs.

Computers with Internet access are available in several computer labs on campus for students who may need to use campus facilities for distance learning purposes. All courses that require laboratories and clinical site visits that cannot be completed via technology-based distance learning are handled with special arrangements made by the faculty in consultation with the Dean and Information Technology & Innovation.

In July 2012, Information Technology & Innovation began working with students in the Ed.D. program in Nursing Education and the Ed.D. program in Instructional Leadership. The students were provided with Android tablets to use as a tool for mobile, off-campus learning and to experiment and become familiar with them as a teaching and learning tool for educators.

Information Technology & Innovation is training faculty to move from Blackboard Vista to the newly adopted ConnCSU-wide learning management system, Blackboard Learn. The transition should be completed by June 2013. Blackboard is used widely at Western. In FY 2012, 783 classes on the main campus, 21 courses offered off campus and 146 online courses have used Blackboard Vista/Learn. In FY13, those numbers increased slightly.

The Instructional Technology Center (ITC) is a collaborative effort between Academic Affairs and Information Technology & Innovation. The ITC went operational in October 2009.

The Media Services Department complements library and computing services' provision of technology through the delivery of media production services and equipment. Central to its role is the support of the technological aspects of the Media Production degree. Several new and significant technological upgrades have been recently completed or are in progress.

In September 2011 an online equipment reservation system was implemented. In the year following, the department checked out/in almost 2800 pieces of equipment. It provided media support for over 350 events (equipment includes LCD projectors, flat panel displays, DVD players, overhead projectors, voice recorders, cameras, tripods, portable screens, laptop computers, portable sound systems, microphones, microphone stands, and a document camera).

During the 2011-2012 year Media Services worked with the Communication & Media Arts Department to install equipment for a new, shared studio space (following joint research in the selection of equipment) which is crucial for the student learning outcomes of the Media Production degree. The staff provides maintenance and repair for all approved media equipment at the university and manages the Communication & Media Arts Department's editing lab.

In addition, the Media Services staff has planned, purchased and is in the process of installing new, campus-wide digital signage. This multi-year initiative involves placing computer screens throughout the campus to provide information to faculty, staff and students (e.g., upcoming events, weather, emergency announcements, etc.). Media Services is also working with the library staff, the Media & Library Services Policy Committee (MLSPC), and IT&I to aid in the coordination of streaming resources from the library's collection.

The Media Services staff is actively involved in the production of videos for the university for instruction, coverage of events, and the promotion of the university (e.g., October 2012 videos produced for and of the Dalai Lama's visit – available on YouTube; a video about the new School of Visual & Performing Arts, preproduction & production of a pilot series of videos that demonstrate proper Microbiology Laboratory Technique and Safety 2011-2012; a video of the Connecticut Supreme Court Civil and Criminal Appeals held on Western's Westside campus in

October, 2011). The department owns high quality digital editing and camera equipment used in production.

Information and Technological Literacy

Library instruction is dependent upon requests from each teaching faculty member. These requests have dropped significantly over the past three years. In the Haas Library, sessions decreased by 24% and the Young Library saw a decrease of 49%.

The libraries collaborate with other departments to enhance student experiences and facilitate faculty scholarship. In 2013 the Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) was relocated to Haas Library. CELT provides the university community with a nexus for the collection and dissemination of information and scholarship to facilitate the delivery of high quality education to students. It offers faculty and staff opportunities to increase their knowledge of best practices, current research on teaching, learning and student assessment, and strategies for enhancing the education experience of students. The synergy of these two educational resources, CELT and Haas Library, will offer convenient, integrated resources for students and faculty.

Appraisal

The library staff anticipates and responds to a rapidly evolving environment in which forms of media are changing and expanding, costs of library materials are escalating, and the university's range of courses and course delivery methods are broadening (e.g. online undergraduate and graduate programs).

The library's materials budget declined 2% or \$25,000 between 2010 and 2013. Although not a considerable decrease, when combined with rising material costs and the need to support collections in a variety of formats, the impact is compounded. Book budgets are the hardest hit because of standing subscription commitments to journals and databases. It is anticipated, however, that the library moving forward with just-in-time document delivery will ease some of the fiscal pressures that have historically been associated with journal subscription costs. Future funding does not look brighter, as Connecticut's economy continues to struggle and state direct support for higher education declines.

Despite these challenges, responses from faculty and staff in the Spring 2012 survey reveal a positive perception of the libraries' allocation of resources; 88.1% agree that WCSU allocates library resources sufficient for instruction and 83.1% agree that WCSU allocates library resources for the support of scholarship compatible with instructional programs.

There have been some noteworthy changes in library usage. Although over 90% of reference questions are in person, the number of online questions increased 34% from 2010-2012. During the same period the number of in-person reference questions declined by 16%. This trend most likely will continue. How this will impact reference materials, space and staffing needs and modes of delivery needs to be explored. Librarians have begun to address these issues. The reference area in Haas, now available due to the weeding project, will be repurposed for a Learning Commons; a flexible learning space for students equipped with whiteboards and comfortable seating. Adapting the space to support students' learning style, away from formal study carrels to informal, hi-tech group collaboration will encourage engagement with librarians

and library resources. A similar repurposing of space to create a Learning Commons for students in the Ansell School of Business is occurring in the Young Library.

A 25% drop in gate count since 2010 at Haas Library and a 30% drop in circulation calls into question library hours, staffing, space utilization and the use of housed collections. Although total FTE enrollment decreased by 6.2% between Fall 2009 and Fall 2012 (from 5,425 to 5,089), this decline cannot completely account for the pattern of declining use. These declines, in addition to the 23% decrease in website hits, may be attributed to general changes in library usage such as students accessing library resources directly through course materials (e.g. links on Blackboard) or students directly seeking material via the Internet, bypassing Western's libraries. Both have implications for the future of library service.

The decrease in demand for formal library instruction is an area of concern worthy of scrutiny by library staff, because bibliographic instruction has been central to the libraries' outreach to increase library skills and information literacy. The decrease in demand for formal session instruction may be offset to some degree by the use of library guides available on the library's website.

Aging department hardware and the lack of a consistent cycle to refresh faculty hardware have become issues. This is especially problematic as faculty attempt to enhance their courses' technological learning environments. Information Technology & Innovation has recently set a goal of a four-year refresh cycle for computers (25% per year).

Media Services has been adequately funded and remains current with state-of-the-art equipment for departmental and university-community use. Nevertheless, the fact that budget levels are likely to remain the same or even decrease presents a challenge to Media Services to keep pace with growing demand for its materials and facilities.

Staffing issues, in particular, remain a significant challenge. The BOR has placed a freeze on filling vacant positions. As a result, Media Services and Information Technology & Innovation have unmet staffing needs which directly affect ability to support the university mission. Media Services is down one administrative position that may not be filled in the near future. As a result a reduction in services began in January 2013. Media Services now closes at 5 pm instead of 9 pm and is no longer available to all evening classes. This cutback has a significant adverse effect on students in the Media Production program who take classes in the evening and who need access to equipment in the evening. Services for weekend events are also limited to high profile events.

IT has its own staffing issues. The IT Help Desk and User Services staff receive and respond to a large number of support calls—an average of 877 per month for 2012 – and close to an average of 860 calls per month (a 98% closure rate). Due to current understaffing and significant spikes in calls at the beginning of the semester, average response time has lengthened.

Projection

At the Haas Library, the library faculty recently convened an ad hoc committee to comprehensively address library space, collections and services. One currently planned change

to increase student awareness of available library services will be the moving of the reference desk to a more prominent position near the entrance of the building so it will be in the sightline of students entering the formal library space, Fall 2013.

Opening of CELT in Haas Library in Spring 2014.

Opening of Learning Commons in Young Library in Summer 2013; in Haas in Spring 2014.

In an effort to ensure broad awareness of library services to all departments and faculty, the M&LSPCV recommends – and will work with library staff to develop – a more active relationship with representatives of individual departments, beginning in Fall 2013.

Institutional Effectiveness

Library, Media Services and Information Technology & Innovation are poised to respond to the information and technical needs of the university; however, their ability to respond is at least to some degree dependent on state budgets and effective leadership to plan and implement positive innovations in order to remain relevant to the changing academic and technological environments.

In the spirit of combining forces, the Chief Information Officer seeks regular feedback from the Senate Information Technology Committee, the Senate Distance Education Committee, Student Government and the various collaborative units within the university such as library, schools, departments and various university administrative units.

The Media & Library Services Policy Committee, a standing University Senate committee, is a valuable resource and serves a unique function in its ability to bridge across the Library, Information Technology & Innovation and Media Services.

Standard VIII: Physical and Technological Resources

Description: Physical Resources

Western Connecticut State University has a split campus comprising nearly 400 acres and 30 buildings with 1.9 million square feet of assignable space. Classrooms, offices, residence halls, student centers, and other facilities are located on both the original Midtown campus and the newer Westside campus. While the campuses are approximately four miles apart, they are made accessible to students via a bus shuttle service which runs throughout the academic year.

The 34-acre Midtown campus has five classroom buildings; a Student Center; three residence halls; the Ruth A. Haas Library; two administrative buildings; Alumni Hall, which houses a child care center; two parking garages and several parking lots.

The 364-acre Westside campus houses a large multi-department classroom building, three residence halls; the William A. O'Neill Athletic and Convocation Center; an observatory; a new Campus Center; tennis courts; athletic fields; the 33-acre Westside Nature Preserve and the Charles Ives Center for the Performing Arts, a 40-acre outdoor amphitheater for university shows and other regional events. A 137,000 square-foot Visual and Performing Arts Center (VPAC) is under construction and scheduled to open in May 2014.

Together, the Midtown and Westside campuses offer 1,891,124 square feet of usable academic, administrative, residential, and support-service space.

Additionally, WCSU offers nursing and management programs in Waterbury, Connecticut on the campus of Naugatuck Valley Community College (NVCC). Western at Waterbury also offers General Education and elective classes as needed.

Major new buildings completed in the last 10 years added 263,000 square feet of assignable space at a cost of \$74.2 million (as shown in Data First Form, Standard VIII, Physical and Technological Resources). WCSU also constructed two large parking garages (one on each campus) during this period, at a cost of \$18.8 million.

Total expenditures for technology (operating and capital funds) for fiscal year (FY) 2010 through FY 2012 remained relatively constant, at approximately \$5.8 million annually. Funding for other capital projects, however, varied significantly, ranging from \$4.5 million in FY 2010 to \$32.1 million in FY 2012. Expenditures for FY 2013 will be substantially greater. The increased expenditures were driven primarily by costs associated with the design and construction of the Visual and Performing Arts Center.

Physical resources have changed considerably over the past 10 years. Some of the upgrades focused on improving living conditions for students who live on campus. The Centennial Residence Hall was completed in 2004. Fairfield Hall underwent a one million-dollar renovation. Pinney Hall was also refurbished.

The most significant physical transformations of the last decade have taken place on the Westside campus. A new Athletic Stadium opened in 2004, as did Centennial Residence Hall

and an attached parking garage. In 2008, the Westside Campus Center opened and brought student dining services there. Construction on the Visual and Performing Arts Center began in 2011.

The Midtown campus has also benefited from significant new construction. A 582-car student parking garage opened in 2007 and a 65,000 square foot Science Building opened in 2005.

Major renovations in the last decade covered 207,004 assignable square feet at a cost of \$22.4 million. These include the Westside Observatory (2004); Warner Hall (2005); Old Main Administration Building (2005); Fairfield Residence Hall (2008); Pinney Residence Hall (2010); and Grasso Residence Hall (2011-2012). Higgins Hall underwent extensive exterior masonry and roof repair in 2010 and Higgins Annex space was reconfigured for classrooms and faculty offices in 2011. In Fall 2012, WCSU replaced two fifty-year old boilers in the Midtown campus boiler house and updated Midtown's hot water production system. The installation of a fuel cell in 2013 will reap significant energy cost savings and enhanced electricity and heating efficiencies for the Science Building on the Midtown campus. It also provides learning opportunities for students on the science and technology of fuel cell power generation as well as the environmental impact of integrating clean-energy resources in the power grid. Planned renovations for the next five years will cover 202,189 square feet at a projected cost of \$56.2 million.

Western's space usage is guided by a participatory and open master planning process mandated by the Board of Regents. Planning is conducted and updated regularly. The 2007 update was developed by Symmes Maini & McKee Associates and reflects many hours of investigation, meetings, and community feedback from faculty, staff, and students.

The vast majority of WCSU's classrooms and other teaching facilities accommodate 40 students or less. Smaller class sizes allow for greater individual attention devoted to each student. In budget crises, as we have weathered several times since the last review, these smaller facilities have prevented us from raising enrollment caps to respond to financial challenges.

WCSU funds capital projects from four primary sources: participation in the system-wide CSUS 2020 bond program, which allocates \$1 billion to WCSU and its sister Connecticut comprehensive universities over a ten-year period; participation in the Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities Authority (CHEFA) bonding program; use of reserve funds; and use of current-year operating funds. WCSU does not issue any bonds on its own authority.

As a state institution, WCSU follows all the rigorous design, permitting, and inspection requirements determined by state law. All new construction on campus is designed and built to meet the criteria for LEEDS certification. Whenever possible, the Department of Environmental and Facilities Services uses sustainable products, including cleaning products.

The university has adopted and adheres to the facilities guidelines and operational standards set forth by the Association of Physical Plant Administrators in terms of cleaning and custodial standards. Additionally, the university has increased efficiency by investing in upgraded and

expanded building automation, which allow for remote monitoring of HVAC and other environmental conditions of facilities.

Appraisal: Physical Resources

Completion of the Science Building in 2005 brought significant improvement to the university. Various departments benefited from new classrooms, laboratories, equipment, and faculty offices. Planning for the building and equipment also served as an occasion for faculty to develop a new vision for the sciences at Western, including working with Danbury area schools on an annual Summer STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) Experience and for [Bridges programs](#) like the Junior Meteorology Program.

Since the 2007 Symmes Maini & McKee Associates update, conditions have changed in ways not anticipated in the Master Plan. For instance, since enrollment growth has slowed, we have not been filling our residence halls to capacity. To prepare revision of the 2007 Master Plan which includes three new residence halls, the CFO in FY 2013 chaired a task force that began assessing Midtown campus needs and how they might best be met once the School of Visual and Performing Arts moves to the Westside campus in Summer 2014. The task force's data and recommendations will be shared with a professional campus master planner, hired through the Regents' Office, who will create a revised plan for WCSU.

Student retention is a high priority for Western, and physical and technological resources play a part in student success and satisfaction. To that end, two facilities designed to improve learning, advising, and retention are scheduled to open in Fall 2013: a Math Emporium in Higgins Annex (an 88-seat facility to provide self-paced tutorial assistance for math courses) and a Learning Commons on the Westside campus (a tutorial and advising center for Ancell students). Three WCSU buildings will require attention in the years immediately ahead: Berkshire Hall and White Hall on the Midtown campus and the Westside Classroom Building. While Berkshire Hall and White Hall are structurally sound, they are dated and need extensive interior renovation. The Westside Classroom Building is also structurally sound, but poorly designed.

The 2020 bonding program does not identify funds for major work in either White Hall or the Westside Classroom Building. The program does, however, provide funds to design a full renovation of Berkshire Hall in FY 2017.

In spite of the need to update some buildings, students and faculty are satisfied with the classrooms and facilities of new buildings and older buildings that have undergone major renovations.

A Fall 2012 Sightlines LLC evaluation provided the university with additional insight into its facilities and maintenance processes when compared to peer institutions. Their [report](#) noted that WCSU achieved custodial and maintenance results that were as good as or better than peer institutions, and notably, achieved these at lower costs. A strong service process, a capable staff and solid work culture, informed by collective bargaining rules and practices, have allowed Western's facilities team to do more with less.

Sightlines also observed that, while WCSU has younger and more technically complex facilities than its overall peer averages, it is underspending on renewal and adaptation of existing buildings. This tendency to underspend on existing infrastructure was observed in many universities. Overall, the positives in the report outweighed the negative, and it was especially encouraging to learn that our institution provides service at levels equal to or greater than our peer institutions, and at much lower cost.

Projection: Physical Resources

Although Connecticut is currently experiencing financial stress, the state seems committed to both the CSUS 2020 and the CHEFA bonding programs. These will support the following enhancements:

- Equip and furnish the Visual and Performing Arts Building, FY14
- Construct a new police station on the Midtown campus, FY16
- Renovate Higgins Hall classrooms, FY17
- Renovate Founders Hall, which WCSU uses at Naugatuck Valley Community College, FY16
- Complete design work for the renovation of Berkshire Hall, FY19
- Full renovation of Litchfield and Newbury Residence Halls, FY16; FY18
- Construction of a 500-car student parking garage on the Westside campus, FY16

Creation of a new Master Plan is scheduled to begin in early 2014. Unlike the previous Master Plan, which emphasized the creation of additional space, the focus will be on significant renovations of current space and, in some cases, replacement of buildings. It will also include a feasibility study to replace the problematic Westside Classroom Building with a more functional home for the Ansell School of Business and address the World Languages lab shortage and the Communication Department's facilities.

Description: Technological Resources

WCSU maintains a strong network and technology infrastructure that insures fulfillment of the educational and administrative mandates of the university. Our information and technology offerings have been substantially revised in the past few years. University Computing adopted the new name of Information Technology & Innovation (IT&I) in February 2013. This new name is not simply cosmetic: it more accurately captures the department's tasks and goals and better aligns it with the university's mission and vision.

The 2008-2012 Information Technology Strategic Plan has resulted in many accomplishments over the past several years with the use of technology to support the university's Strategic Plan.

Students saw the addition of a second computer center at Westside; new HD video editing and MIS security labs; web-based voting for SGA elections; and web-based email and collaboration tools through Microsoft's Live@Edu product (now Office 365). Faculty saw the creation of an Instructional Technology Center; installation of SmartBoards in classrooms; workshops and one-on-one support for Blackboard Vista/Learn; a web-based curriculum development workflow; and web-based voting for University Senate elections. The entire university benefited from a new WestConduit web site with easier access to important announcements, news and social media; a mobile web site and smartphone app for important university information and services; regular

upgrades of desktop hardware and software; and significant enhancements to the server and network infrastructure.

Additionally, many other projects brought the university into new areas of technology: working with the Communication Department and Charter Communications to support live student-produced election coverage broadcasts; implementing HD video conferencing for the Nursing Ed.D. program; and deploying Android tablets to students in the Ed.D. program for Instructional Leadership.

Western's server and storage environment has improved dramatically in the past 10 years. Significant investment in time, money, and staff has yielded a robust virtualized environment. Servers and storage can be provided easily without additional physical hardware.

In Fall 2012, the university detected a significant security vulnerability in one of its technology systems and corrected the problem. Although no evidence of inappropriate records accessing was detected, the institution offered two years of ID theft protection to everyone whose data may have been compromised. This remedial process was implemented with dispatch and transparency, which minimized reputational and financial risk.

University data and systems are backed up regularly. The encrypted tapes are stored in a secure location off-site and are readily available if needed.

Western uses the Banner College Enterprise Resource Planning system to manage core services for the university. These include student services (registration, advising, transcripts, grading), financial services (payments, financial aid), alumni relations, institutional research, and institutional advancement.

The university also uses the Blackboard Vista and Learn learning management systems. Blackboard Vista will be completely replaced by Learn in Fall 2013.

Information Technology & Innovation and Media Services have endeavored to fully equip classrooms and lecture halls with state of the art technology. All classrooms on both campuses are equipped with instructor station computers, projectors (older projectors are being replaced with high-definition models) and Internet access.

Over [two dozen classrooms](#) are also equipped with student computer stations, including discipline-specific computer labs which support programs in Art, Music, Theatre, Journalism, Writing, Communication, Mathematics, Biology, Education, MIS, and Nursing. Classroom technology is upgraded on a rotational basis as established by the university's [Information Technology Committee](#) (ITC).

The university provides state of the art hardware and software in faculty offices. Programs and procedures allow for regular upgrade and replacement of computing equipment.

Students bring their own computers to campus or have access to technology in one of five staffed computer labs. Three unstaffed 24-hour labs are also available to students.

Internet connections are available throughout both campuses and are provided in the residence halls for students with their own computers. The university is 100% wireless-enabled.

The IT&I staff is responsible for upkeep of the network and all computers in classrooms, labs, and faculty and staff offices.

SmartBoards have been installed in 22 locations across both campuses, mainly in support of the teacher education program. In Fall 2011, Pharos, a print management system, was installed. Enhanced technology is also being used in Institutional Advancement. In Fall 2013 Raiser's Edge will be installed. This software will help the Foundation better manage fundraising, monitor income and expenses, and generate reports. It will be integrated with the department's bookkeeping program, Financial Edge.

Appraisal: Technological Resources

Western installs and supports a high level of technology in its classrooms and laboratories. In spite of limited staff and an ever-growing system-wide project list, systems run at an uptime of better than 99%.

In light of current budget concerns and the longer lifespan of modern hardware, IT&I has recently set a new goal of a three-year (33%/year) refresh cycle for computers. Still, some outstanding needs have grown increasingly pressing. For instance, the Department of World Languages and Literature needs a language resource center (a discipline-specific computer lab), and the Communication Department needs better facilities. Moreover, there is an emerging need to provide services for students on their mobile devices.

Data and information security is a high priority of WCSU, the ConnSCU System, and the State. The university's response to the Fall 2012 security vulnerability was swift and transparent and the incident produced fortification of our information security. Since discovery of the vulnerability, the university has increased its information protection capacity. We will continue to improve in this area.

While there is room to grow, WCSU continues to improve its resources, thereby saving students, faculty, and staff time and resources. For instance: the Fall 2012 installation of the Pharos print management system reduced university-wide printing 19.5% (amounting to a cost savings of 20.2%).

Projection: Technological Resources

In order to improve service to students through technology, in Summer 2013 the IT&I staff will expand the live chat feature currently available on the university's web site to mobile devices.

In Spring 2014, IT&I will develop student, faculty, and staff satisfaction surveys to pinpoint areas that need improvement. This will be the first step in developing a new Information Technology Strategic Plan.

Three IT&I projects reflect the university's dedication to security and technology innovation:

- Data recovery plan, completion in Fall 2013

- Implementation of new security policies and standards, completion in 2014
- Long-term network re-architecture and equipment upgrade, completion in 2015

Institutional Effectiveness

Recent outside assessment confirms that our infrastructure and maintenance programs are strong and competitive with our peer institutions. The university's alignment of strategic goals with facility and technology priorities will guide its response to issues concerning its physical and technological resources.

Standard IX: Financial Resources

Description

Despite recent financial challenges, Western Connecticut State University remains financially stable and has proven to be both nimble and prudent in responding to fluctuating economic factors, while staying true to the goals and values of its Strategic Plan that guides spending decisions.

WCSU has a fulltime Vice President for Finance and Administration who oversees all aspects of the institution's financial status and is supported by a staff of six budget and finance professionals. WCSU protects the integrity of its finances through appropriate division of duties in the origination, authorization, and payment of financial commitments and adherence to well-developed fiscal policies. All university employees are bound by the [ethics policies](#) of the Connecticut Board of Regents for Higher Education (ConnSCU) and the State of Connecticut.

The university budgets and expends funds subject to the statutes, regulations, policies and oversight of the State and ConnSCU. Within this framework, senior administration and the University Planning and Budget Committee (UPBC) use the Strategic Plan to guide resource allocation. For example, the goals of supporting a range of high quality academic programs and seeking program accreditation was supported by increasing the number of fulltime teaching faculty from 197 to 228 between FY06 and FY13, a 15.7% increase.

The Board of Regents generally initiates the annual budget process in February. WCSU develops its budget in light of multiple discussions and contacts with relevant stakeholders. The Vice President for Finance and Administration (VPFA) generates at least one, and in many cases several, scenarios projecting various levels of total resources and costs of operations. Budget and finances are regular topics at the President's senior-leadership cabinet meetings, where needs and initiatives are discussed throughout the year. Based on these discussions, budget scenarios are formulated and shared with UPBC for review and comment. This information is also shared with the University Senate and in open forums to which the general university community is invited.

In April the budget is submitted to the Board of Regents for review. The budget is approved in June, shortly before the start of the fiscal year. The governing board requests a mid-year review in February and a revised forecast for the current year is submitted in April.

PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PWC) audits the university annually. PWC's senior partner in charge meets with WCSU's President, VPFA, and Controller at the end of each engagement to review the management letter and the audit. For FY11 and FY12, PWC reported that WCSU had a "clean audit." No new management comments were identified and the agency noted that a comment made in the FY10 audit had been addressed and closed.

WCSU develops current and multi-year financial planning in consultation with Admissions. Admissions and Finance officers are cognizant of economic conditions, demographic trends, institutional programming, and marketing initiatives. Working with ConnSCU, WCSU estimates likely levels and trends for state support. In addition, the Budget Office and VPFA make a regular practice of developing multiple scenarios in addressing new budgets and possible fund reductions. At the President's request, WCSU reviewed key elements of its Strategic Plan during

FY12, including its underpinning financial assumptions. The VPFA chaired a group that developed a five-year financial model as part of this review process. The model facilitates the creation of multiple scenarios that show the impact of changes in key variables such as state support, tuition and fee rates, enrollment, and retention.

WCSU's FY04, FY08 and FY12 financial records demonstrate its use of financial resources to support academic purposes, programs and students.

Expenditures	FY12	FY08	FY04
Instructional	\$46,035,507	\$37,747,397	\$30,497,594
Research	\$370,616	\$621,663	\$417,676
Public Service	\$483,647	\$454,017	\$433,513
Academic Support	\$8,340,300	\$8,472,490	\$7,496,610
Student Services	\$12,210,023	\$12,210,627	\$8,959,722
Institutional Support	\$28,989,087	\$21,622,141	\$17,877,806
Scholarships & Fellowships	\$9,226,795	\$5,952,916	\$5,280,798
<u>Auxiliary Enterprises</u>	<u>\$10,681,718</u>	<u>\$8,450,945</u>	<u>\$5,868,611</u>
Total	\$116,337,693	\$95,532,196	\$76,832,330

The governing board requires that at least 15% of tuition revenues be set aside to fund aid for students, with the bulk of these monies to be used for need-based aid. The Board has authorized two merit-based financial aid programs, the Presidential and the Trustee scholarship programs. The Board periodically reviews and amends these programs. WCSU Student Financial Services, Admissions, and Fiscal Affairs regularly discuss scholarship and recruiting needs. Based on these discussions, WCSU has chosen to set aside more than the Board-required 15% of tuition for several years. Admissions and some of the Deans report difficulties in attracting the best students due to limited merit-based aid. In response, WCSU funded the Trustee Scholarship program for the first time in FY13, at a policy-specified maximum level of \$114,000. The university will fund the program again in FY14.

WCSU's independent Foundation is able to supplement the institution's financial aid resources, consistent with donor restrictions. This makes additional money available for need-based and merit-based scholarships. In FY12, the Foundation provided \$213,000 in scholarship assistance. Even with this help, WCSU needs to identify more resources in the coming years for both need-based and merit-based help.

WCSU is financially stable, generating surpluses consistently, as measured by the ConnSCU spending plan format, and net assets have risen steadily, reaching a value of \$211.8 million as of June 30, 2012. However, declining state funding and declining enrollment have had a significant impact on recent budgets and will continue to challenge the university going forward.

Like any public institution, WCSU's finances suffer when State finances suffer. State support to WCSU was relatively stable between 2007 and 2011, and then dropped dramatically for 2012, as Connecticut experienced financial difficulties. State support for FY14 is lower than it was in FY11.

State funding*

FY11	FY12	+-%	FY13	+-%	FY14 projected	+-%
45.8	38.9	-15.2%	38.6	-7%	40.8	+5.6%

*in millions

Total operating expenses were \$116.3 million in FY12, an increase of 1.03%, and state appropriations were \$38.9 million, a decrease of 15.2% over the prior year. Therefore, state appropriations covered only 33.4% of total operating expenses in FY12, compared to 39% in FY11.

Hence, over the past ten years enrollment-related revenue (tuition, fees, housing and food) has provided the larger share of financial support, increasing to 64% of budgeted FY13 revenue.

After rising steadily from 2005 to 2009, enrollment has softened. Finances in FY12 were challenged when total enrollment fell short of budget by approximately 3% and challenged again in FY13 when total FTE enrollment fell short by 4.1%, retreating to roughly the same level as it was in FY08. WCSU absorbed these cuts while maintaining faculty lines by reducing the number of funded fulltime positions in other areas (by more than 24 positions), holding some funded positions vacant, identifying operating efficiencies, and holding the line on operating expenses. The university has maintained essential services at acceptable levels even with these cuts, but there have been service impacts felt by students, faculty, and staff. These impacts include lack of adequate clerical coverage in some offices, sporadic lapses in daily cleaning of some areas, and deferral of new initiatives in some program areas, such as study abroad.

Vacancy savings were key to absorbing enrollment shortfalls in FY12 and FY13. However, the unexpected scope of the enrollment decline in Fall 2012 (-4.1%) in conjunction with a 5% rescission of state support and a sharp increase in retirement-plan related fringe benefits costs fully exhausted any contingencies for FY13. Despite these strains, WCSU forecasts a better than break-even position in April 2013 for FY13.

Financial pressures will intensify in FY14. Although the state budget has not been finalized, it is clear that the level of state support will effectively decline. WCSU, like all state entities in Connecticut, is a party to a labor concession agreement reached in late Fall 2011. Under the agreement, wages were frozen for FY12 and FY13 in return for a commitment to provide raises in FY14 – FY16 and protect the job security of most fulltime incumbents. The raises will range from about 3% to 5% annually, depending on specific union affiliation and current pay level.

As enrollment is not expected to grow substantially, WCSU will leave a number of faculty positions filled by limited term "special appointments" open in FY14, and will remove funding from a smaller number of non-faculty positions to bring the total number of fulltime positions in better alignment with current enrollment levels.

In April 2013, WCSU submitted a break-even spending plan for FY 2014 to the Regents for review and approval. The plan assumes \$40.8 million in state support. The plan assumes flat enrollment for the coming year. Senior administration believes that WCSU can increase its retention rates and improve its recruitment efforts to meet this enrollment level. In order to achieve balance, WCSU reduced total baseline fulltime positions by 20 from FY13, with most of the reductions achieved by attrition and reduction in one-year special appointment faculty members. New faculty hiring is being focused on programs for which WCSU already has a strong reputation (Music Education and Nursing, for example) or for which it has previously committed itself to making enhancements (Business, for example, which was accepted for AACSB accreditation candidacy this year).

Declining State demographics will continue to cloud future budgets. WCSU draws nearly all of its students from Connecticut. Unfortunately, 2012 Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) data forecast a 10.8% decline in graduating Connecticut high-school seniors between 2012 and 2022. WCSU leadership is actively developing and implementing program and marketing initiatives that will make WCSU more attractive to out-of-state students and non-traditional students.

New and additional revenue sources are critical to the future financial well-being of the university. To that end, WCSU has increased the professionalism of its Institutional Advancement Office and independent Foundation during the past several years, hiring a permanent Director of Development and an Assistant Director of Annual Giving, a new position. Although additional staff and more work are needed, the office has made good progress. During the past two years, gift processing policies have become more donor-centric and procedures more responsive and integrity-driven. For example, the annual fund campaign is now branded as the Fund for Western to reinforce the message that donations directly benefit the university and its students. In addition, an ambitious timeline was established requiring receipts to be mailed within 48 hours of gift acceptance. In the past two years donations have increased by 39%.

In addition, the Foundation initiated a comprehensive campaign in 2012—the first in ten years. The campaign has a multi-year goal of raising at least \$12.5 million. The campaign will add significantly to the Foundation's endowment assets, valued at about \$11 million as of December 31, 2012. The campaign will use the excitement associated with the opening of the new 134,000 square-foot Visual and Performing Arts Building in May 2014 as one of its major draws. The campaign will raise money for three major areas: student support, innovation and research involving faculty and students, and partnerships with the community.

The staff is committed to following best practices, abiding by the Association of Fundraising Professionals' *Donor Bill of Rights*, a copy of which is made readily available to all donors in print and on the website.

Grants are another revenue source. In July 2012, the university hired a fulltime Director of Sponsored Research and Administrative Services. The new staff person assists faculty and others in the community in developing grant proposals.

New sources of revenue related to auxiliaries and other operations are reviewed by the relevant Vice President and the VPFA.

WCSU maintains documented policies on internal networked computer files and, in many cases, on departmental websites and shared mainframe drives where they are readily available to members of the university community. Comprehensive fiscal policies, for example, are maintained on Fiscal Affairs' shared computer drive, while travel, purchasing and hiring policies are available on departmental web pages.

Appraisal

WCSU's practice of prudent financial management is evident in its ability to have generated operating surpluses while increasing faculty lines and obtaining additional program accreditations through FY13. In FY14, the university continues to demonstrate prudence by ensuring that the number of fulltime positions is more consistent with recent enrollment levels.

WCSU has done a respectable job of managing its available resources. It takes advantage of attrition to re-evaluate positions and, if needed, reallocate funding. It looks for improvements in processes, procurement and technology to reduce OE expense and free up dollars for use in other areas.

The university has generated operating surpluses from FY05 through FY12 and entered FY13 with a balanced plan. Additionally, the university held \$33.4 million in reserve as of June 30, 2012, including a ConnSCU required unrestricted fund balance equal to 7% of the current year's operating budget. This balance provides an ongoing cushion against severe adverse economic events.

Whatever policy and operation changes WCSU makes, these decisions are reached through a transparent and inclusive process. Senior administration works closely with UPBC on major financial issues and communicates regularly with the university Senate on finances.

It is clear that the university needs to grow its resource base in order to fulfill its strategic priorities. Fostering this growth will be challenging since recent trends point to reduced state support and decreasing numbers of in-state high school graduates over the next 10 years. In addition, the institution's ability to rapidly assess certain operations and reorganize or redeploy existing resources is hindered by a combination of collective bargaining agreements and various state regulations. Despite these constraints, the university is addressing those factors under its control.

In light of recent enrollment shortfalls, the university is reviewing and revising enrollment operations. A new Director for Admissions, who has extensive experience in tuition-dependent private institutions, joined Western in March 2013. That same month a process re-engineering assessment focusing on streamlining the recruitment-admission-financial aid-registration-billing process was begun to improve services to students. Recommendations for improvements will be reported in August 2013.

Two additional reports are due in June 2013 on how to increase retention and enrollment: one to increase the first- to second-year retention rate by 3% points in FY14 and 3% points in FY15, another to increase entering student enrollment by 4% in FY14 and 4% in FY15 and increase out-of-state enrollment by 5% in FY14 and 10% in FY15.

In a time of limited resources, Western needs to prioritize its academic programs. To foster excellence and control expense, Western must be more selective in identifying the academic programs in which to invest. It must promote these programs in order to attract a larger share of in-state students and more out-of-state students. In 2013 four signature programs were identified to invest in and promote for FY14 and 15. A report on how to elevate marketplace attractiveness and public visibility of these programs is due in Summer 2013.

Fundraising has become increasingly important as state funding for higher education declines. The university addressed this problem with the recent increased staffing of the Institutional Advancement office. This has already resulted in an increase in annual giving and the initiation of a comprehensive campaign. The Campaign will be in the “quiet phase” until two thirds of the funds are raised. During this time the Campaign will be looking for participation from the campus community and opportunities to connect with faculty, staff and students.

The 2012 hiring of a fulltime Director of Sponsored Research is expected to result in additional funding for the university.

In spite of the fiscal challenges it faces, there are numerous positive aspects of WCSU financial management. Perhaps most significantly, the university consistently generates surpluses and continues to benefit from the state’s general obligation funding of major capital projects that serve academic and administrative purposes. The Visual and Performing Arts Center is the most prominent and recent example of such funding. Budgeting and financial transparency have increased steadily during the past five years, and the university continues to receive “clean audits.”

Projection

- Implement the recommendations of the re-engineering assessment, FY14
- Implement the recommendations of the retention report, FY14
- Implement the recommendations of the enrollment report, FY14
- Implement the recommendations of the signature programs report, FY14-FY15
- Develop a plan to meet a comprehensive campaign goal of \$12.5 million over 5 years, FY14-FY16. The Board of Directors of the WCSU Foundation is responsible for monitoring progress of the campaign, with the assistance of a consultant who is working with Institutional Advancement, the president, and the board throughout the campaign.
- Increase the number of grants awarded by 15% over the next three years, FY14-FY17

Institutional Effectiveness

Appropriate and effective internal checks and balances are in place to insure the fiscal sustainability and integrity of the university. In addition, the university adheres to state laws and regulations and is annually audited by both the state and an outside agency.

Standard X: Public Disclosure

Description

Western Connecticut State University is committed to transparency and full disclosure to its students, faculty, and staff, as well as the general public. Printed and virtual documents provide extensive information about the university's Vision, Mission, Strategic Plan and all processes surrounding governance and operation.

The website is comprehensive and fully functional. Current and prospective students have access to up-to-date information regarding programs, courses, registration deadlines and procedures, and costs. Requirements, procedures and policies regarding [admissions](#) and transfer credit are online, as are student fees, charges, and refund policies. [The Registrar's page](#) outlines degree requirements and other forms of academic recognition. To facilitate inquiries, the website provides links and telephone numbers for all departments and services.

Major campus publications such as the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs are available in print and online and pertinent information such as national program accreditation and audited financial statements are available online.

Academic programs and corresponding [undergraduate](#) and [graduate](#) program sheets are showcased online, as is the Student Handbook. The Handbook informs students of their obligations and responsibilities, and of the university's obligations and responsibilities to its attendees.

Other pertinent information located online includes instructions for [enrolling in and withdrawing](#) from the university; [lists of offered courses](#); academic [policies](#), procedures, and other educational opportunities; and lists of current faculty by department and program affiliation. Many academic and administrative departments have their own webpages.

WCSU conforms to all applicable federal and state laws, protecting the privacy of individuals, while also fully disclosing information that the public and appropriate university officials have a right to know. WCSU complies with the 1974 federal Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Student directory information is published. With regard to student records, only appropriate faculty and staff are given access to this information and it is not disclosed to a third party unless the student authorizes disclosure. The university responds promptly to information requests. All non-exempt data are subject to disclosure to the general public and the news media under the provisions of Connecticut's Freedom of Information Act. The information shared with and presented to the public is obtained from offices responsible for the collection, analysis, and maintenance of data that directly impacts students and the public. The university ensures that the information it provides is truthful and accurate.

Our website archives minutes of various committee meetings such as the University Senate, the Information Technology Committee, and the Committee on General Education.

[The President's Annual Report](#) has been produced solely online since 2008. In it, the President shares highlights of the previous year. The latest report, for instance, showcases the 2012 visit of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Banned Books Week, interviews with Fulbright scholars, and

excerpts from guest lecturers. Faculty achievements as well as contributions by staff and students are also featured.

Other key publications include: the Student Handbook; the Faculty Handbook; various collective bargaining agreements; the Policies and Program Manual, the Admissions Office Viewbook, the Western Report, and Institutional Advancement's publications, *Momentum* distributed to donors and *The Cupola* with broad distribution.

In compliance with the Clery Act, the Police Department annually publishes a public safety report, providing information on campus crime statistics and the Police Department's efforts to create a safer environment. Safety programs and services available to the campus community are also listed. Since 2006, the Police Department communicates with the university community using an Emergency Notification System (ENS) which sends texts, emails, and robo-calls in the event of emergency situations such as inclement weather, disaster preparation, or health and safety issues. Additionally, this system makes it possible to post emergency information directly to the university website.

Information on all undergraduate and graduate programs is provided in the Undergraduate Catalog and the Graduate Catalog, respectively. The catalogs include comprehensive descriptions of the university's Mission, Principles, and Values, expected educational outcomes, admissions policies, and procedures, financial aid information, degree requirements, faculty and course offerings, as well as a listing of the obligations and responsibilities of both the institution and its students.

WCSU's Waterbury site is located on the grounds of Naugatuck Valley Community College, approximately 25 miles from WCSU's Danbury campus. Courses leading to a Bachelor in Business Administration (BBA) or a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) are offered at the [Waterbury site](#).

The Office of Academic Affairs supervises the revision of the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs to ensure accuracy and completeness and that courses listed are in fact offered. A schedule of classes is published three times a year (in Fall, Spring, and Summer) listing all courses offered during the current and upcoming semester or session.

The size, composition, description of the campus setting and other relevant characteristics of the student body are found on the [Consumer Information webpage](#). There students may also review the total cost of education (via net price calculator) and average debt incurred by graduates. The university's Registration and Cashiers pages clearly explain and identify all [student fees](#), ancillary charges and [refund policies](#).

Information on academic services, such as Academic Advising, and co-curricular and non-academic programs, such as AccessAbility Services, is provided in published brochures, the website, and catalogs.

[Institutional learning and physical resources](#) from which students can be expected to benefit are posted online, as are the university's goals for students' education. Retention, graduation rates, and post-graduation study are also [published online](#).

Information about program excellence and learning outcomes for programs with external accreditation are found in accreditation reports in the Office of Academic Affairs. The university's statement on [regional and program accreditation](#) is featured on its Admissions web page, including the university's current accreditation status through NEASC and other accrediting bodies.

Appraisal

WCSU makes a concerted effort to meet NEASC standards for Public Disclosure. The university strives for consistency, clarity, and accuracy when publishing print and online information. The same holds true for information that is mailed or distributed to students, faculty, staff, and the public. 87.5% of faculty and staff [surveyed in 2012](#) stated that the university's educational policies and procedures are clearly stated in publications, including the website.

Rich in content, the website and publications present a vibrant and thorough picture of our university and illustrate its strengths from a multiplicity of perspectives. In addition to facts, figures, mission, and policies, they showcase the university's events and achievements as well as civic and community endeavors. They portray a dynamic institution that provides myriad learning opportunities.

Given the number of publications generated by the university it is important that they, and the website, project a consistent image and message to students and the public. With this in mind, a review of the university's various communication vehicles would be beneficial.

Aggressive efforts are made to update the website and keep its information fresh. As projected in the Fifth Year Report, a major website redesign was completed in 2007. The site is more student-centered and now incorporates measures of student success in achieving institutional goals including rates of retention and graduation and the expected amount of student debt upon graduation. 83% of faculty and staff [surveyed in 2012](#) agreed that the website contains accurate and current information. Focusing attention on webpage updates will increase this percentage. Generally, web pages do not indicate when last updated. In addition, a web policy, including editorial and content responsibilities and updating procedures and responsibilities, needs to be adopted and distributed to the campus community. This will clarify how web pages are managed and who is responsible for their updating.

The website stays relevant by embracing new and popular communication technologies. These include increasing use of social media, a Facebook page, a Twitter feed and online chat sessions for prospective and new students.

The website supports the university's goal to provide as much information as possible to help students navigate smoothly through every step of the college experience, including contacting their professors. A recent web enhancement does just that. The Dean of Arts & Sciences in Spring 2013 insured online posting of all faculty contact information and office hours. This information needs to be posted for all fulltime and adjunct faculty, including earned degrees and the institutions granting them.

Appropriately, the Emergency Notification System (ENS) is used only during emergencies. As of 2011, incoming freshmen are automatically enrolled in the system using their university issued email address. Other members of the university community are not required to sign up for

this system. Consequently, not all university personnel receive emergency notifications. Moreover, there is no automated process in place to remove students, faculty or staff from the ENS system once they leave the university, which results in unwanted notifications. Additionally, if the university electronic communication servers fail, there is no mechanism in place to provide emergency information. Currently the ENS system does not provide coverage to campus visitors.

Overall, WCSU presents an accurate portrait of itself in the information it makes available. Transparency is a valued part of the campus culture and dialogue and this contributes to the university's positive image.

Projection

The university's website is the primary source for current and accurate information about WCSU. The university's Communications Team is comprised of eight members from various departments including Information Technology and Innovation, Admissions, Institutional Advancement, University Relations, Publications & Design, and the Library. This team will continue to meet weekly in order to ensure that the website maintains high standards of integrity, public disclosure, reliability, timeliness, and accessibility.

In Fall 2013 the Dean's Council will develop a plan to have current full and part-time faculty listed on the website indicating departmental or program affiliation, degrees held and the institutions granting them. The list will be online by January 2014.

A Comprehensive Communications Plan Team was formed in Spring 2013 to audit and assess the effectiveness of all university communication and develop consistent messaging on all platforms by Fall 2013.

In Spring 2014 Information Technology and Innovation will convene a committee to review an existing, but never finalized, web policy. This policy will be adopted and disseminated to the university community in Fall 2014. Training workshops for faculty and staff to assist with learning various web responsibilities will be held each semester.

The university's Police Department is working to improve its ENS system and extend coverage to campus visitors. Improvements will be implemented over the next 24 months.

Institutional Effectiveness

Transparency, accuracy, inclusion, and engagement are highly valued at WCSU. So is increased accessibility to information and resources. To this end, Human Resources and University Publications regularly engage in review and evaluation of university documents and information materials. The university is aware of the benefits of having an excellent story to tell and uses a multiplicity of formats and technologies to reach prospective students and the campus community. There is campus-wide awareness that it is important to keep current and embrace new communication technologies adopted by our constituents. Emerging electronic technologies will continue to play a part in our information distribution both in and out of the classroom.

Standard XI: Integrity

Description

Western Connecticut State University is committed to adhering to the highest ethical standards in the conduct of its affairs. Among the documents establishing those standards are the statutes governing public higher education in the State of Connecticut (see Tables and Endnotes: Standard XI: 1) and the principles and values that support our mission. These include:

- Empowering students to attain the highest standards of academic achievement, public and professional services, personal development, and ethical conduct
- Promoting a rich and diverse cultural environment that allows freedom of expression within a spirit of civility and mutual respect
- Integrity in the process of teaching and learning

The mission, principles, and values are published in a number of publications, including the catalogs and the Faculty Handbook, both in print and online.

As the Data First table shows, policies are in place to address academic honesty, academic freedom, intellectual property rights, privacy rights, and principles of fairness for students, faculty and staff. The university publicizes non-discrimination policies in the areas of admissions, employment, faculty and staff recruitment and evaluation, disciplinary action, and advancement.

WCSU is part of the [Connecticut State Colleges and Universities System](#) which is governed by the Board of Regents for Higher Education. The BOR grants authority to WCSU to conduct educational activities including the granting of degrees. WCSU adheres to conflict of interest rules authorized by the State of Connecticut.

University policies are distributed to employees at the time of hire. The Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) between the Board of Regents for the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities System (ConnSCU) and the American Association of University Professors sets forth a series of principles of academic freedom and procedures for filing and deliberating about complaints. Academic freedom issues are also addressed in the Faculty Handbook. The CBAs for faculty, administrative personnel, and support staffs include standards of conduct as well as procedures to address alleged violations. All [CBAs](#) pertaining to WCSU are available online.

Academic integrity guidelines along with plagiarism and cheating definitions may be found in the Undergraduate Catalog and the Student Handbook.

The Student Handbook contains university policies and regulations on alcoholic beverages, the grade appeal process, parental notification (drug and alcohol violations), public forums, demonstrations, marches, and protests, and student confidentiality, as well as nondiscrimination, affirmative action, multiculturalism, and sexual harassment. Policies and regulations are described in the [Student Handbook](#).

The university's grievance policy and complaint procedures are made available to students, faculty, and staff via the appropriate Handbooks (Student and Faculty), the Undergraduate Catalog, new employee orientation and is emailed to the campus community annually.

The Office of University Relations is responsible for responding to media inquiries. This process ensures not only timely responses but accurate dissemination of information to internal and external constituencies.

WCSU is an affirmative action/equal opportunity educator and employer. A statement of the university's affirmative action policy appears on all position announcements. It is disseminated to the university community annually and is available online. The Chief Diversity Officer is involved in all searches for faculty, administrative, and support staff positions. This process is clearly described in the President's Affirmative Action Policy Statement. An Affirmative Action Plan directed toward developing and maintaining a diversified workforce is submitted annually to the Connecticut Human Rights Office (CHRO). Funds to support the recruitment and retention of protected groups are set aside under faculty and administrative staff collective bargaining agreements. In keeping with efforts to establish an environment in which the dignity and worth of all members of the institutional community are respected, all university staff have participated in training on sexual harassment and diversity issues.

In 2009, WCSU established the Veterans' Support Center dedicated to helping student veterans achieve academic and personal success. A dedicated hotline and mailbox have been established to respond to veterans' questions about financial aid, admissions, etc. and a webpage devoted to veterans' affairs was launched.

WCSU strives to maintain transparency in its interactions with faculty, staff, students, and prospective students. This was evident in the Strategic Planning process begun in 2005. Numerous opportunities were provided for individuals and groups to contribute to the document. A draft was made available on the university's website, with a feedback button; open forums were held on campus and meetings convened with external stakeholders to receive feedback and comments.

A more recent example occurred in September, 2012 when a [vulnerability](#) was discovered in WCSU's computer systems. While it is believed that no confidential data was accessed, WCSU disclosed this information through the national media and informed nearly 250,000 individuals whose personal data may have been compromised. In addition to fixing the problem, WCSU is offering two years of identity theft protection as a precaution to those who were potentially impacted. The website also carried the information about the incident in English, Spanish, and Portuguese out of respect for the populations that the university community serves.

WCSU believes that conferences and workshops enhance education, professional development, and the learning environment. To that end, recent conferences at the university have included a Creativity and Compassion Conference in conjunction with a 2012 visit from His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama and a panel discussion on race in America following the arrest of Dr. Henry Louis Gates in 2009. To celebrate the 20th anniversary of the launch of the Hubble Space Telescope, which was built in Danbury, the university hosted a multi-event symposium in 2010.

Astronaut Story Musgrave, who flew on the first mission to repair the Hubble Space Telescope delivered the President's Lecture.

WCSU has been accredited by NEASC since 1954. In addition, the university is accredited by the Connecticut Board of Governors for Higher Education, the Connecticut State Department of Education and six specialized accrediting agencies.

Appraisal

While no single entity is charged with evaluating the effectiveness of the university's policies and procedures, the University Senate reviews academic policies and various committees, offices, and organizations review areas that relate directly to them. The Board of Regents ultimately holds the president accountable for implementation of policies in an annual evaluation of his performance. University policies and procedures are consistent with NEASC standards and appear to be working effectively at every level. 87.6% of the respondents to the [2012 Faculty/Staff survey](#) believe that the university demonstrates integrity in the management of its affairs.

WCSU's annual Affirmative Action Plan serves as a vehicle to assess the effectiveness of the university's non-discrimination and equal opportunity principles. The university is making consistent and significant progress in systematically addressing issues in diversity. This progress includes campus-wide workshops, speakers, and training sessions. The university is able to retain minority faculty and improve female and minority representation at the management and administrative level. In 1998, minority representation at the management and administrative level was 13%. As of Spring 2012, there has been an increase in female and minority representation to 21%. However, despite this increase, our faculty and administrators do not fully reflect our student population. This is particularly reflected by the lack of faculty for whom English is a second language. The greater Danbury area has a significant Spanish speaking and Brazilian population, but there are few teaching faculty fluent in Spanish or of Brazilian descent on campus.

Several complaints have been filed with the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO) and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) since 2003. Most cases have been dismissed, but four cases remain pending. Despite the occurrence of two incidents involving homophobic behavior in 2010 and 2012, students describe the university environment as "very accepting." The aforementioned incidents prompted immediate action by the President's Office. In addition to the University Police Department's investigations of these incidents for potential criminal prosecution, emails clearly stating the university's "zero tolerance" for harassment or bullying activities were sent to the campus community. In 2012, the Gay Straight Alliance (now called "Queers and Allies") was voted "Best Student Organization" by the WCSU Student Government Association and its officers have been recognized student leaders.

The processes in place for resolving grievances are working effectively. Since 2003, twelve grievances have been filed by AAUP faculty. As of Fall 2012, there is only one grievance filed by a fulltime faculty member that is still pending. Of the grievances filed by members of other

bargaining units during this period, all have been resolved. 82.2% of respondents to the 2012 [Faculty/Staff Survey](#) believe that the faculty and staff evaluation process is uniform.

WCSU is aware of changing student demographics and has responded with appropriate services. Student Veterans are a rapidly growing campus constituency. In addition to providing an Office of Veterans' Affairs within Student Financial Services, the university's website has dedicated pages that provide veterans with WCSU information and a link to federal VA benefit information. In 2010, a Veterans' Lounge was opened in the Midtown Student Center.

With widespread use of the Internet for research, opportunities for plagiarism have increased. As a result, the number of complaints filed by faculty to the Student Judicial Committee has increased. The creation of the university Judicial Board in 2007 provides students accused of violating the Student Code of Conduct, the opportunity to be heard by a board consisting of faculty, staff, and students instead of a single hearing officer. While the inclusion of diverse perspectives may occasionally create unforeseen challenges, more often than not it provides the opportunity for more equitable measures. Of the respondents to the 2012 [Faculty/Staff Survey](#), 84.5% believe that WCSU's educational policies and procedures are equitably applied to all students.

Privacy and security issues represent an ongoing concern. Despite the difficulty of keeping up with rapidly changing technology, WCSU has been diligent about protecting these rights while respecting the openness that must characterize a university environment. For instance, the computer vulnerability discovered in September 2012 was openly discussed on campus in meetings and in written communication and with the media.

Since the arrival of the current president in 2004, WCSU has made concerted efforts to be inclusive and to communicate in a transparent manner. Development of the university's Strategic Plan is a fine example of the university's methodology. The Plan was developed with the input of a variety of constituencies and after several "town hall" style meetings were held. Similar meetings have been employed along with written communication about the impact of state budget reductions on Western since 2009. This transparency has helped maintain morale and control rumors during stressful times.

The president conducts Opening Semester meetings for faculty and staff during which he gives a "state of the university" address. He and his Cabinet welcome questions and comments from the audience. He and the university's leadership also convene regular meetings each semester with academic department chairs to discuss priorities and issues. For students, the president conducts "Pizza with the President" forums twice each semester. These are opportunities for the president to hear and respond to student concerns. These sessions are felt to be worthwhile by both the students and the president as evidenced by student attendance and enthusiasm. Notes are taken during these forums and are distributed to those who can best respond to, or follow-up on, specific issues.

Projection

The vulnerability of WCSU's computer networks has resulted in reorganization of the department once known as "University Computing." In addition to the hiring of new staff, the

department has been renamed Information Technology & Innovation. Within 18-24 months, the architecture of the network will have been redesigned. This redesign will provide greater information security and a disaster recovery program.

Our Office of Multicultural Affairs will continue to promote diversity and multiculturalism across campus. Faculty recruitment efforts will include outreach to non-traditional, higher education resources that target under-represented populations. The Director of Multicultural Affairs will rejoin in 2013 the New York Southern Connecticut Higher Education Recruiting Consortium, an organization whose mission is to assist higher education institutions with recruiting a talented and diverse workforce, particularly among dual-career couples.

As issues arise, the Office of the President, as well as the Division of Finance & Administration, will continue to hold regular town hall forums to keep the university informed about recent challenges, answer questions, listen to concerns, and accept advice from the WCSU community. Recent examples of this were a community discussion in 2012 about the installation of a fuel cell to power our Science Building and the Open Forum held in April 2013 to discuss the university's budget for FY14 and FY15.

Institutional Effectiveness

The ongoing effort for institutional integrity is supported by the Board of Regents as well as WCSU's policies, procedures, handbooks, and continuous education and training. We value collaboration and shared governance. This is demonstrated through transparent communications with students, faculty, staff, and the external community. This open communication supports a framework of academic freedom, high ethical standards, and commitment to integrity.

Tables and Endnotes

Standard I: Mission and Purposes: No tables or endnotes

Standard II: Planning and Evaluation

1. Strategic Plan history: www.wcsu.edu/strategicplan/history.asp and www.wcsu.edu/senate/pdf/senate%20minutes%200307.pdf
2. Attract and retain outstanding faculty: <http://www.wcsu.edu/strategicplan/attracting-retaining.asp>

Standard III: Organization and Governance

1. Board of Regents established: Connecticut General Statutes 10a-1a: http://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_185.htm#sec_10a-1a
2. BOR adopted by-laws: Board of Regents minutes, Dec. 20, 2011. (http://www.ct.edu/images/uploads/BOR_Minutes_122011_w_Attch_A.pdf#page=4)
3. Additional Board of Regents governance information: http://www.wcsu.edu/neasc/pdf/CT%20BOR%20Governance%20Language%20for%20NEASC%202013_07_24.pdf
4. Further information about the Senate, including its bylaws and Senate Committee bylaws, can be found on its website (<http://www.wcsu.edu/senate/>) and/or in the Faculty Handbook (<http://www.wcsu.edu/facultystaff/handbook/>).

Standard IV: The Academic Program

Table 1: First-Year Student Perspectives vs. Senior Perspectives

	First-Year Student Perspectives			Senior Perspectives		
	WCSU	CSUS	Carnegie Class	WCSU	CSUS	Carnegie Class
Ability to speak clearly and effectively	61%	66%	70%	74%	74%	75%
Ability to write clearly and effectively	72%	76%	75%	77%	79%	80%
Ability to think critically and analytically	76%	83%	83%	89%	85%	88%
Ability for analyzing quantitative problems	66%	70%	71%	79%	75%	77%
Acquiring a broad general education	77%	81%	81%	81%	80%	84%
Ability to learn effectively on their own	67%	71%	71%	75%	73%	77%

Percentages of students who felt that their university has contributed "quite a bit" or "very much" to their abilities.

Table 2. Changes in Enrollment by Program

Program	Absolute Change	Percent Change
BBA Marketing	-59	-27.96%
BBA Finance	-34	-21.52%
BS Secondary Ed & History	-20	-21.98%
BS Elementary Ed & Psychology	-19	-21.59%
BS Medical Technology	-17	-53.13%
BS Elementary Ed & English Writing	-15	-57.69%
BS Elementary Ed & History	-14	-35.9%
BS Elementary Ed & English	-12	-20.34%
BS Secondary Ed & English Writing	-11	-68.75%
BA Pre-Law	11	220%
BA Pre-Medical/Pre-Dental	12	52.17%
BA Social Sciences	13	44.83%
BA Computer Science	15	24.19%
BA Anthropology/Sociology	19	50%
AS Liberal Arts	29	85.29%
BA Professional Writing	29	23.58%
BA Media Arts	35	72.92%
BS Health Promotion Studies	38	32.76%
BS Pre-Nursing	41	39.42%
BS Registered Nursing	42	66.67%

Table 3. Low Enrollment Programs

Program	FY 2012 Enrollment
BA in Earth and Planetary Sciences	10
BA in Spanish	8
BS Elementary Ed & Anthropology/Sociology	4
BS Elementary Ed & Biology	4
BS Elementary Ed & Political Science	1
BS Elementary Ed & Spanish	9
BS Elementary Ed & English Writing	11
BS Secondary Ed & Chemistry	2

1. Program sheets: <http://www.wcsu.edu/academics/programsheets/>
2. Graduate Council: <http://www.wcsu.edu/facultystaff/handbook/pages/grad-BL.asp>. As more graduate programs have been added, WCSU has made every effort to ensure that faculty members possess the credentials and current competence in their fields to teach graduate courses and meet the increased standards of quality required for graduate courses, through hiring, annual review, and the promotion and tenure process. The professional graduate programs have recruited and promoted faculty who have applied experience and are active in the academic development of their field.
3. Undergraduate student expectations are broadly described at <http://www.wcsu.edu/catalogs/undergraduate/degrees.asp>, and graduate degree expectations are described at <http://www.wcsu.edu/graduate/>. Fresh Start Policy: <http://www.wcsu.edu/admissions/freshstart.asp>; an applicant who was a previously

enrolled, matriculated student with a cumulative grade point average of less than 2.0 is eligible for readmission under certain conditions. The period of withdrawal or suspension and readmission must include at least one year in which no college courses were taken at WCSU. Remedial non-credit college courses in English and mathematics are accepted. Students applying for readmission can have no more than 60 credits at WCSU with a "C-" or higher average. Requirements for graduation, continuation in, termination from, or readmission to WCSU academic programs are published in the online electronic Academic Services and Procedures.

4. Memorandum from ConnSCU counsel about anti-plagiarism software:
<http://www.wcsu.edu/neasc/pdf/Anti-Plagiarism%20Software%20memo.pdf>

Standard V: Faculty

1. Faculty evaluation criteria: <http://www.wcsu.edu/facultystaff/handbook/WCSU%20-%20Faculty%20Handbook.pdf> (see especially, pp. 239-256)
2. Faculty Handbook and Collective Bargaining Agreement: faculty responsibilities, recruitment, appointment, evaluation, promotion, and tenure:
 - Department Chairs, Teaching Assignments, Advising:
<http://www.wcsu.edu/facultystaff/handbook/pages/id-bylaws.asp>
 - Governance: <http://www.wcsu.edu/facultystaff/handbook/pages/univ-gov.asp>
 - Grievance (Article 15): <http://wcsuaaup.org/AAUP2007-2011Contract.pdf>
 - Evaluation: <http://wcsu.edu/facultystaff/handbook/pages/DEC-eval.asp>.

3. Source: March-April 2012 issues of *Academe*, “The Annual Report on the Economic Status of the Professions.”

Ordered by Full Professor					Ordered by Assistant Professor				
	Prof	Assoc	Asst	Instr		Prof	Assoc	Asst	Instr
Wesleyan	129.2	86.2	72.4	--	Quinnipiac	125.9	96	76.4	54.5
Quinnipiac	125.9	96	76.4	54.5	Fairfield	116.5	88.0	74.3	--
Fairfield	116.5	88.0	74.3	--	Wesleyan	129.2	86.2	72.4	--
New Haven	110.8	87.2	68.3	56.3	New Haven	110.8	87.2	68.3	56.3
WCSU	99.1	79.2	63.8	53.2	WCSU	99.1	79.2	63.8	53.2
SUNY New Paltz	97.3	75.4	57.5	56.8	St. Joseph	88.7	72.6	62.9	45.2
CCSU	96.6	77.5	62.3	56.1	CCSU	96.6	77.5	62.3	56.1
ECSU	94.6	73.1	60	49.6	SCSU	93.8	77.1	61.2	51.5
SCSU	93.8	77.1	61.2	51.5	ECSU	94.6	73.1	60	49.6
Hartford	90.0	71.5	54.6	50.4	Bridgeport	86.9	76.8	60	--
St. Joseph	88.7	72.6	62.9	45.2	SUNY New Paltz	97.3	75.4	57.5	56.8
Bridgeport	86.9	76.8	60	--	Hartford	90.0	71.5	54.6	50.4

4. WCSU departmental distribution of courses: The example below showcases Psychology, as representative of a large department with over 300 majors and many classes taken by non-majors as General Education courses in the Social Sciences. This information was taken from the Fall, 2012 semester schedule, which listed 12 fulltime and 22 part-time faculty teaching a total of 70 classes (as of June, 2012; the schedule may have changed slightly later):

	Course	Number of Sections	Number of Different Faculty
	PSY 100 Introduction to Psychology	20	14
	PSY 201 Principles of Research in Psy	3	3
	PSY 202 Abnormal Psychology	3	2
	PSY 203 Clinical Psychology	2	2
	PSY 204 Psychological Statistics	3	2
	PSY 205 Social Psychology	3	3
	PSY 210 Child Psychology	3	3
	PSY 211 Adolescent Psychology	3	2
	PSY 215 Psychology of Personality	3	3
	PSY 222 The Adult Years	2	2
*	PSY 230 Intro to Brain and Behavior	2	1
*	PSY 251 Psychology of Cognition	2	1
*	PSY 260 Health Psychology	2	1
	PSY 324 Experimental Psychology	3	2
	PSY 349 Psychology of Perception	2	2
	PSY 450 Research Seminar	2	2
*	PSY 475 Honors Guided Reading	2	1

*Four classes are multiple sections taught by one faculty member.

Single sections of courses are omitted.

5. Faculty development funds for activities to enhance the ability to be a productive and innovative professional in the capacity of classroom teacher:
<http://www.wcsu.edu/facultystaff/handbook/pages/fac-fund.asp>.

Standard VI: Students: No tables or endnotes

Standard VII: Library and Other Information Resources: No tables or endnotes

Standard VIII: Physical and Technological Resources: No tables or endnotes

Standard IX: Financial Resources: No tables or endnotes

Standard X: Public Disclosure: No tables or endnotes

Chapter XI: Integrity

1. These standards include: Connecticut General Statutes 10a-1 and 10a-87; 1-83 (the Ethics Statutes), 10a-6 (the Freedom of Information Act), and the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), which protects students' privacy.