



WESTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY
Focused Evaluation Report, August 24, 2025

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COVER PAGE

Institution: Western Connecticut State University
Location: Danbury, CT
Date: August 24, 2025
Subject: Focused Evaluation Report in Response to NECHE Letter of Concern

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report responds to the March 2024 Notice of Concern issued by NECHE and addresses seven areas of focus:

1. Strengthening shared governance
2. Ensuring leadership stability
3. Advancing a multi-year financial plan and risk management
4. Achieving enrollment and retention goals
5. Ensuring sufficient staffing
6. Systematic assessment of student learning and institutional effectiveness
7. Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion

Each section documents WCSU's progress to date, identifies challenges that remain, and outlines specific plans, timelines, and accountability measures to ensure sustained compliance with NECHE standards.

Meaningful advances have been made, but significant work remains. The University must continue to stabilize long-term finances amid enrollment volatility, even as FY25 closed with a \$4.5M surplus and \$11.9M in reserves, aided by \$24.2M in one-time funds and mitigation strategies. In addition, the administration must continue to rebuild trust and engagement in governance, restore staffing in critical student support and facilities functions, embed systematic assessments across all programs, and translate DEI commitments into measurable improvements in campus climate.

WCSU is committed to sustaining momentum and rigorously monitoring outcomes so that planned actions yield the intended results. This report provides NECHE reviewers, system partners, and the campus community with a candid account of both progress achieved and ongoing efforts still required.

Note: Microsoft Co-Pilot was used to support copy editing, formatting, and the production of selected graphics in this report.

INTRODUCTION

While acknowledging areas of institutional strength, the Commission’s Letter of Concern dated March 15, 2024, identified significant challenges across governance, financial stability, leadership continuity, assessment systems, and institutional capacity. This report outlines WCSU’s progress in each of the seven areas of emphasis defined by the Commission and has since accelerated progress through focused leadership, cross-functional engagement, and sustained planning. This report outlines progress to date, highlights areas still under development, and details ongoing work.

The report was coordinated by the Provost, with support from the Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness and Planning. In Summer 2024, cross-functional NECHE Working Groups—comprising faculty, staff, administrators, and union representatives—were formed to address each of the seven areas of emphasis identified by the Commission. Their analyses and recommendations were synthesized into this institutional response (see *Appendix 0-1: NECHE 2025 Working Groups*). Financial and enrollment analyses were developed by the Office of Finance and Administration and the Enrollment Management team, with support from the CSCU System Office (see *Appendix 0-2: NECHE Finance and Enrollment Spreadsheets*). Together, these efforts ensured broad engagement, accountability, and transparent, data-informed planning.

The drafting process included extensive consultation with faculty leaders (e.g., AAUP representatives, Senate President, General Education co-chairs), staff leaders (e.g., SUOAF union leadership), and senior administrators (e.g., Deans, Vice Presidents, Directors). The draft was vetted by Interim President Manohar Singh, incoming President Jesse M. Bernal, the Senior Leadership Team, and the broader campus community. Regular updates were also provided at University Senate meetings and to the CSCU Board of Regents’ (BOR) Academic and Student Affairs Committee. In July 2025, the final draft was reviewed by the Interim Chancellor, system office staff, and senior members of the BOR.

Since receiving the Commission’s Notice of Concern, WCSU has also undergone several significant developments: the successful presidential search and appointment of Dr. Bernal in July 2025; expansion of planning infrastructure; strengthening of shared governance bodies; adoption of Gray Decision Intelligence to enhance data-informed decision-making; and implementation of a restructured budget process integrating financial modeling and risk management. These changes reflect a deliberate institutional shift toward systematic, collaborative, and evidence-based improvement.

The sections that follow present WCSU’s response to each of the seven areas of focus, with evidence of progress, candid discussion of ongoing challenges, and clear plans to ensure full compliance with NECHE Standards:

1. **Effective system of shared governance**
 - a. Clear and consistent policies and processes
 - b. Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) Board of Regent’s (BOR) role
 - c. Consideration of relevant perspectives
 - d. Regular and systematic review
2. **Stability of senior leadership**
 - a. BOR hire and review
 - b. Role of president
 - c. Consultation with faculty, students, staff

3. **Multi-year financial plan**
 - a. President's authority and autonomy
 - b. Preserves and enhances available financial resources
 - c. Financial stability
 - d. BOR review of financial plans
 - e. Financial management organization, planning, and processes
 - f. Written financial management policies and practices
4. **Enrollment and retention**
 - a. Goals for retention and graduation
 - b. Financial planning linked to realistic enrollment projections
5. **Sufficient levels of staffing**
 - a. Sufficient and qualified personnel
6. **Systematic assessment**
 - a. Regular and systematic assessment
 - b. Effectiveness of assessment
 - c. Using results from assessment
 - d. Integration with broader strategic and financial plans
 - e. Clear and public expectations of students
 - f. Clear learning outcomes
 - g. Assessment methodology
 - h. Assessment results improve curriculum and learning
7. **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI)**
 - a. Meeting own goals for DEI
 - b. Fosters inclusive atmosphere

This response is grounded in alignment with the NECHE Standards for Accreditation. Each area of focus addresses specific elements of the standards. The University's responses reflect our commitment to transparency, self-assessment, and continuous improvement.

INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

Founded over 120 years ago, Western Connecticut State University (WCSU) is a regional public institution committed to preparing compassionate and career-ready graduates. With a mission rooted in inclusive excellence and community engagement, WCSU continues to adapt to the evolving educational, economic, and demographic landscape of Connecticut and beyond. This reflects the intellectual leadership of its faculty, dedication of its staff, and inquisitiveness of its students in advancing shared goals for the betterment of humankind. As a newly designated Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) in 2024, WCSU is expanding culturally responsive support services and pursuing federal and philanthropic opportunities to better serve its growing Latino student population. WCSU's 2024–2030 strategic plan, *Western Rising*, is a roadmap for transforming the institution into a nimble, innovative university.

Priorities include resource realignment, program optimization, and the development of new cutting-edge, interdisciplinary, and workforce-aligned offerings that meet the needs of a diverse and evolving student body. Following a period of interim appointments, WCSU has secured stability at the highest levels with the appointment of a permanent President in July 2025 and a permanent Provost shortly thereafter. This leadership continuity addresses a key NECHE concern and provides a strong foundation for advancing institutional priorities.

Located on two campuses about an hour north of New York City WCSU is situated in one of Connecticut's most diverse and economically dynamic regions, making it uniquely positioned to serve as a bridge between local industry, workforce needs, and higher education. Between 2010 and 2020, Danbury saw a 7% population increase, placing it in the top tier of growing towns in Connecticut for that period. Growth has since leveled off, with an annual increase of approximately 0.15% in recent years. With high-tech facilities and a diverse student body of over 3,100 undergraduate and 600 graduate students, WCSU provides students with a practical, career-focused education grounded in the liberal arts and sciences. Operating across two campuses approximately 2 miles apart requires intentional coordination in areas such as public safety, facilities management, and student services. This structure adds complexity to operations and influences staffing models, budget planning, and service delivery, and necessitates continual evaluation of staffing and resource allocation models to ensure student services and facilities are adequately supported across both locations. Recent financial planning explicitly accounts for this dual-campus structure. Updated five-year forecasts show modest surpluses in FY26-27 but recurring structural deficits thereafter unless new revenues and efficiencies are achieved.

Approximately 400 faculty members support bachelor's and master's programs across five schools:

- Ansell School of Business
- Macricostas School of Arts and Sciences
- School of Professional Studies
- School of Visual, Performing, and Communication Arts
- School of Graduate, International, and Career Studies

Notably, WCSU welcomed its largest freshman class since 2018 in Fall 2024. More information about the University can be found at www.wcsu.edu.

As mentioned, since the submission of the previous report in 2023, WCSU has undergone several significant senior leadership transitions, including:

- Appointment of a permanent President

- Appointment of a permanent Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Hiring of a new Interim Chief Financial Officer
- Hiring of a new Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer
- Hiring of a new Chief Information Officer

The President of WCSU reports to the Chancellor of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) and serves on the system cabinet alongside the presidents of the other Connecticut State Universities (CSU), Connecticut State Community College (CT State), and Charter Oak State College, which collectively provide affordable, innovative, and rigorous programs for students to achieve their personal and career goals as well as contribute to the economic growth of Connecticut.

CSCU campuses play critical roles in the communities they serve. WCSU is a valued member of the western Connecticut region as a key employer, a social and cultural hub, and a resource to the business community. Business, education, government, and civic leaders sought a president for WCSU who will be actively engaged and visible in the community and who seeks out mutually beneficial partnerships and strategic relationships that will advance the University, the CSCU system, and the region's economic, social, and cultural well-being. Through its membership in the CSCU system, WCSU has benefited from a range of collaborative initiatives, including shared governance and finance policy development, centralized reporting infrastructure, joint planning committees, and opportunities to consult with peer institutions on strategic and academic planning efforts. The system facilitates knowledge-sharing and coordinated policy implementation across campuses, supporting innovation, accountability, and mission alignment.

Board of Regents

WCSU is part of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) system, governed by a 23-member Board of Regents responsible for academic, financial, and leadership oversight across the four regional public 4-year institutions, the state's public online college, and 12 community colleges (see <https://www.ct.edu/regents>). Among many responsibilities, the board adopts an operating budget for the CSCU system; sets statewide tuition and student fee policies; establishes financial aid policies; reviews, licenses, and accredits academic programs; adopts policies addressing human resources operations; and, in collaboration with institutional constituents, conducts searches for and selects senior leaders. In addition to governance responsibilities, the board also holds broad responsibilities for the collaborative development and coordination of statewide higher education policy.

AREA OF FOCUS #1

Developing an Effective System of Shared Governance That Supports Communication, Transparency, and Accountability at All Levels

WCSU has prioritized rebuilding trust, transparency, and decision-making clarity across all levels of governance. These efforts have involved both structural reforms and a cultural shift toward inclusive leadership and shared accountability. The initiatives below reflect deliberate progress in alignment with NECHE Standard 3.

NECHE specifically outlined a need for WCSU to provide evidence of success in developing an effective system of shared governance that supports communication, transparency, and accountability at all levels.

WCSU has made substantive progress in strengthening shared governance structures and cultivating a more inclusive, transparent, and consultative institutional culture. These efforts are grounded in structural reforms (e.g., Senate committee consolidation, expanded President's Council, standing advisory bodies), revised processes (e.g., budget deliberations through the University Policy and Budget Committee, policy feedback loops), and cultural practices (e.g., monthly Provost-Senate briefings, participatory planning). Recent progress in shared governance has been reinforced by the stability of WCSU's senior leadership team, particularly the permanent appointments of the President and Provost. This stability has strengthened collaboration, communication, and trust across governance bodies.

Shared Governance

To assess the current state of shared governance, post the NECHE visit, two campus-wide governance perception surveys conducted by the AAUP and SUOAF indicate moderate to significant improvement in transparency and communication. The surveys focused on assessment of shared governance and transparency post the NECHE visit. A detailed summary of survey results is included in Appendix 1-1 (*AAUP Survey*) with selected key findings referenced below from the report submitted by the two groups.

The faculty representative (AAUP) body's survey noted a significant change in the shared governance environment. As many as 61% of respondents answered "Yes" when asked whether shared governance has improved since the NECHE visit. Examples of improvement cited by respondents included greater appreciation of shared governance by university administration, willingness to incorporate input into decision making, and president's visits to departmental meetings.

The staff representative (SUOAF) body's survey noted only modest improvement in the rating of shared governance and decision making from poor (pre-NECHE visit) to fair (post-NECHE visit). The survey notes some improvements in communication and transparency but notes also that there are still challenges to be addressed. The reports, while recognizing the improvement made since the NECHE visit, also noted a few areas for further improvement including university wide communication with faculty, staff, and students.

Highlights of the findings include:

- **Employment Duration and Involvement:** The majority of respondents have been employed at WCSU for more than 10 years; a substantial number reported having little to no prior involvement in University governance before the last NECHE visit.
- **Shared Governance and Decision-Making:** Pre-visit, shared governance was generally rated as poor, with minimal staff involvement in key decisions; post-visit, there was slight improvement to *fair*, with some increased participation and influence in decision-making.
- **Transparency and Communication:** Pre-visit, decision-making processes were widely seen as opaque, with ineffective communication from leadership; post-visit, there was noticeable improvement in transparency and communication, though opinions remain mixed.

Both representative groups acknowledge that further progress is needed to strengthen shared governance—particularly in communication, anonymous feedback, and inclusion of non-academic voices.

These findings will serve as a baseline for continued improvement – the University intends to repeat climate surveys or other feedback mechanisms annually to gauge progress and identify any persistent weak points in shared governance.

At WCSU, shared governance is essential to institutional integrity, transparency, and effectiveness. While recent survey results—especially among faculty—demonstrate promising gains, the University recognizes the need to ensure all constituencies experience a consistent culture of collaboration, trust, and accountability. The administration is fully committed to this ongoing work. WCSU has continued to prioritize a more inclusive, transparent, and responsive governance system that reflects shared values and aligns with NECHE Standard 3.17, ensuring the thoughtful inclusion of diverse perspectives, clear decision-making, and timely action. Strengthening shared governance is not only a compliance priority—it is central to the University’s broader renewal and long-term resilience.

President’s Council

This past academic year the interim President reinitiated the President’s Council – an extended body of the senior leadership team – including administrative and shared governance leaders from across campus to enhance communication campuswide and provide a forum to discuss future planning and seek input/feedback. The group met twice in the Spring 2025 semester and was well received. To strengthen transparency and institutional alignment, incoming President Bernal has shared plans to expand both the membership and scope of the council next academic year. In its new formation, the Council will be the University’s primary forum for inclusive planning and resource discussion. Meeting at least every other month, this body includes representatives from across divisions and will advise on strategic priorities, budget development, and institutional policy. The Council is now charged with fostering clarity and shared ownership in key university decisions, advancing a culture of deliberation and accountability and its impact will be reviewed periodically to ensure it meets its inclusivity and transparency goals (see *Appendix I-2*). It also provides a space to surface cross-functional insights, especially during times of change.

Goals:

- Serve as the principal cross-divisional body for inclusive input on university-wide planning, budgeting, and resource allocation.
- Strengthen alignment of institutional decisions with mission and strategic priorities.
- Elevate transparency in communication and rationale for major decisions.

Planned Outcomes:

- Increased community trust through visible deliberation and consensus building.
- Documented advisory input integrated into budget submissions and planning reports.
- Standing agenda items tied to strategic plan KPIs and financial sustainability metrics.

In addition, President Bernal has launched several initiatives to strengthen shared governance, transparency, and cross-functional alignment—each aligned with key NECHE Standards:

- Regular convening of faculty, staff, student, and administrative leaders (including representatives from AAUP, SUOAF, SGA, and the Senate) for timely consultation on operations and policy
- Expanded senior leadership engagement to ensure academic deans are integrated into institutional planning, budgeting, and enrollment strategy discussions
- A Presidential Communications Strategy launched in July to provide regular updates, centralized access to governance decisions, and feedback mechanisms

Together, these initiatives demonstrate a proactive commitment to shared leadership, mission-aligned decision-making, and institutional integrity.

University Senate

Through our continued commitment to shared governance, much work has been completed by the University Senate since the last NECHE site visit and more efficiencies in terms of the Senate subcommittee structure and effective use of several of the committees to address the specific concerns (e.g., UPBC for financial planning and the Assessment committee).

Examples of Senate Actions:**Fall 2023**

- Approved recommendations related to revisiting the General Education Curriculum.
- Recommended adoption of a new Graduate Course Repeat Policy.
- Held a special session to expedite approval of a new *Master of Science in Artificial Intelligence*.

Spring 2024

- Revised, eliminated, or combined 13 separate Senate Committees to reduce membership demands and improve efficiency. Several committees identified as inefficient or inactive were restructured into more strategically critical bodies (e.g., financial planning, assessment, general education, online programming).
- Consulted with administration on a new Bookstore vendor hire.
- Considered a Senate-led motion to recommend hiring new Marketing staff.
- Approved a new Academic Probation and Suspension Policy.

Fall 2024

- Revised UPBC bylaws to focus the mission on financial collaboration with administration.
- Revised Faculty-Developed Study proposal processes in conjunction with the Provost.
- Recommended changes to course scheduling to create a common hour, proposed by an AAUP faculty member, the SGA president, and a School Dean.
- Recommended changes to the Course Drop Period policy in collaboration with School Deans.

Spring 2025

- Reviewed WCSU's contributions to the CSCU Access, Completion, Talent (ACT)–KPI Action Plan brought to Senate by the Provost's office.
- Recruited faculty members to serve as voting members on RFP Review Committees (Bookstore and Food Service RFPs).
- Requested a 5-Year Budget Plan Town Hall, subsequently convened by the CFO.
- Provided input toward the Dual/Concurrent Enrollment Policy Draft requested by the Provost.

- Discussed changing curriculum approval processes to streamline approvals.

2024–25 Senate Resolutions

- **SR-24_25-01:** Change default course scheduling to broaden class availability across the week and create a Common Hour. Enabled by the adoption of the CourseLeaf scheduling system to optimize based on student needs.
- **SR-24_25-02:** Extend the University Add/Drop Period from 1 to 2 weeks.
- **SR-24_25-03:** Support for students, faculty, and staff amid federal policy changes affecting visa status; encourages flexible accommodations and continued advocacy at the state and federal level.

In addition to the UPBC refocusing its by-laws and focus on financial planning and transparency, the Assessment subcommittee has also been engaged in reviewing KPIs, established and requested by the system office, for use in institutional effectiveness and reviewing assessments routines for measuring learning outcomes (see additional details later in the report on *Area of Focus #6*).

Two committees were reformed into advisory boards to the Provost: (1) *Educational Achievement and Access Bridge Program (EA2P) Advisory Board* and (2) *Advising & Registration Advisory Board*. These boards met regularly in AY 2024–25. Committee representation and charges are included in *Appendix 1-3*.

Discussions between SUOAF and AAUP leadership are ongoing regarding increased representation for SUOAF staff members within the University Senate. A constitutional review was supported at the May 2025 meeting, with a proposed amendment on the agenda under discussion for September 2025.

Financial Transparency

WCSU has centralized and aligned its financial processes through the formation of new governance structures and routine collaboration among academic affairs, student affairs, and finance.

In addition, progress has been made in enhancing communication of the budget planning process and financial reporting with key constituent groups. The University actively seeks feedback both formally and informally through campus forums, committee presentations, and discussion sessions. This engagement is particularly evident in the identification of priorities for funding and throughout the budget development process. To further transparency, information and recorded sessions related to budget planning are posted on the [Division of Finance and Administration website](#).

The University Planning and Budget Committee (UPBC)—a subcommittee of the University Senate—plays a key consultative role in this effort. The UPBC recently revised its bylaws ([link](#)) to focus its mission on collaborative financial planning with administration and on monitoring the progress of the strategic plan. The Provost and Chief Financial Officer serve as ex-officio members.

The UPBC’s primary responsibilities include:

- A. Evaluating, monitoring, and reporting on the Institutional Strategic Plan in accordance with the institutional planning model accepted by the University Senate, with an annual agenda that includes regular review of goals and objectives with responsible departments.
- B. Reviewing and commenting on or endorsing the recommended spending plan for the

- University (prepared by Fiscal Affairs) prior to submission to the Board of Regents.
- C. Receiving and reviewing academic and non-academic program proposals that require significant budgetary commitment, and analyzing them with respect to the strategic plan, resource availability, and implementation timelines.
 - D. Preparing responses on program discontinuance for appropriate committees.
 - E. Establishing ad hoc or standing subcommittees as needed.

Through the UPBC, the Provost and CFO are committed to a more deliberative process that analyzes academic programming, faculty/staff capacity, enrollment, trends, projections, and other relevant data. Data is posted on the Institutional Research and Assessment website (<https://www.wcsu.edu/ira/>) and made available to deans and university committees as needed.

To expand transparency and access, the University has invested in a program evaluation and planning software (Gray DI) that is available to faculty and administrative leaders, including department chairs. See the *Academic Program Development & Delivery* section for how the Gray DI platform informs data-driven program planning and resource allocation. The CFO regularly attends and addresses the University senate at its monthly meetings on the budget planning process. Work will continue to enhance such communication to offer regular financial updates at Senate and through scheduled town halls throughout the year as well as operationalize the role of the UPBC to review financial reports and plans in a timely manner and make recommendations to the President. The most recent Town Hall on Finances was held in April 2025 led by the CFO with support from various members of the cabinet. This was very well attended by members of the WCSU community. It is noted that given the need to ensure financial stability and sustainability over the next 5 years, and the varying degrees of support, including one-time funding, that the State and BOR offer, this process has been fluid and subject to change, and so additional ad hoc meetings might also need to occur in the future to avoid confusion and lack of transparency. WCSU will continue to adapt its financial communication schedule (including additional forums as needed) so that stakeholders are kept informed even as circumstances change.

Following a recent change in BOR policy (more details in *Area of Focus #3* of the report) related to reserves with enhanced transparency on which funds are restricted and unrestricted for WCSU, system office reserves and levels set for minimum amount of reserves (30 days) and clear communication regarding budget reports and spending plans will be important. This will be discussed at the President's Council in the future and communicated through various constituent groups highlighted above.

Enrollment Management

In Spring 2025, WCSU convened a Strategic Enrollment Planning Group to improve communication on enrollment priorities and ensure transparency in planning. This group met regularly to review institutional research data, identify growth opportunities, and align strategies for recruitment and retention. In Summer 2025, the President, Enrollment Team, and senior leadership finalized the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan (SEMP), integrating these priorities into a clear framework for action. For strategies and implementation details, see *Area of Focus #4*.

DEI Governance

WCSU's diversity, equity, and inclusion work is guided by the Office of Diversity and Equity, Diversity Council, Racial Justice Coalition, and Pride Center, each including faculty, staff, and student representation. Under renewed leadership, the Diversity Council resumed monthly meetings,

strengthened communication on policy changes, programming, and community priorities, and made bylaws and mission statements publicly available ([Diversity Council page](#)). In addition, the WCSU–AAUP Minority Recruitment and Retention Committee remains engaged in faculty development and collaborates with the Office of Diversity and Equity to refine outreach and recruitment efforts aligned with institutional goals. Additional information on DEI structure, initiatives, and program outcomes is detailed in *Area of Focus #7*.

Conclusion

WCSU has made meaningful strides toward building an effective and inclusive system of shared governance. Broad-based representation is now embedded across key institutional initiatives, particularly in the strategic planning process and the implementation of its goals. Faculty, staff, students, and administrative leaders are increasingly engaged in collaborative decision-making that aligns with institutional priorities. These governance enhancements are reinforced by the leadership stability outlined in *Area of Focus #2*, ensuring that decision-making processes are anchored in consistent executive direction.

The University has improved communication and transparency between the administration and the University Senate, as well as with the broader campus community. These enhancements can be understood across two dimensions:

Structural Changes

The streamlining of University Senate committees, revitalization of the President’s Council as a consultative body, implementation of a more inclusive budgeting process, biweekly meetings of the Provost’s Council (for Deans), and monthly meetings with all Provost direct reports as well as the Dean of Student Affairs, have helped institutionalize cross-divisional input and alignment.

Improved Practices

There has been a notable increase in the number of Senate resolutions submitted to the President, more frequent and substantive participation of senior leadership in Senate meetings, improved post-NECHE communication practices, and timelier, coordinated interactions between WCSU and the CSCU System Office. Such improvements include more regular and strategic communications with the system CFO and staff as well as the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs in offering timely feedback on new programming and system wide grant funded initiatives (e.g., Design Accelerator for transfer students, *Let’s Get Ready* near peer mentoring program).

Through its evolving system of board BOR and internal shared governance review mechanisms, WCSU is strengthening its ability to ensure timely, data-informed decisions that reflect relevant perspectives, align with expertise, and support mission-driven action on institutional plans, policies, and academic programs—demonstrating growing alignment with NECHE Standards.

Looking ahead, WCSU will sustain these initiatives and remain attentive to feedback – ensuring that communication channels remain open, governance bodies remain truly representative, and any resurgence of distrust is proactively addressed.

AREA OF FOCUS #2

Ensuring the Stability of Senior Leadership, Including the Hiring of and Transition to a Permanent President

WCSU has made substantial progress in stabilizing its senior leadership team, culminating in the successful appointment and onboarding of a permanent president. Following several years marked by interim appointments across key administrative roles—including the President, Provost, and multiple Vice Presidencies—WCSU and the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) System partnered to strengthen leadership continuity and decision-making capacity.

Foremost among these changes are the appointment of a permanent President and a permanent Provost, providing visible assurance that WCSU's executive leadership is in place, aligned, and committed to the institution's long-term success. The Provost serves as the institution's designated second-in-command, formally and culturally recognized as the President's partner in leading the University and authorized to act on behalf of the President in their absence.

The CSCU Board of Regents (BOR) conducted a national presidential search that resulted in the appointment of Dr. Jesse M. Bernal, Ph.D., who assumed office in July 2025. Dr. Bernal brings nearly two decades of higher education leadership experience spanning state systems, private institutions, and public regional universities. He previously held senior leadership positions at Grand Valley State University in Michigan, where he supported the institution's turnaround amid steep demographic declines and limited state funding—challenges comparable to those now faced in Connecticut. While in Michigan, he led strategic planning, expansion of alternative revenue strategies, development of an online and low-residency platform, and oversight of the state's largest public charter school system. In addition, he has held executive roles in the University of California system, with portfolios focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion; system-wide strategic planning; and external relations. His career demonstrates a consistent commitment to inclusive excellence, strategic planning, and shared governance, and his experience in steering a regional comprehensive university through enrollment volatility is especially relevant to WCSU's context.

The presidential transition was structured to ensure continuity and alignment across university priorities:

- Overlapping meetings between the outgoing interim President, senior staff, governance leaders, and system partners allowed for the smooth handoff of strategic initiatives and key communications.
- During the transition period, Dr. Bernal engaged extensively with internal and external constituents, including students, faculty, staff, alumni, and system leadership.

In parallel with the presidential appointment, WCSU has filled or stabilized several other senior roles. The permanent appointment of the Provost, Dr. Stephen Hegedus, Ph.D., took effect August 1, 2025. Dr. Hegedus joined WCSU from Southern Connecticut State University, where he served as Dean of the College of Education since 2014. In that role, he oversaw accreditation, program innovation, community partnerships, and faculty development, while also serving on key university-wide planning and budget committees. Earlier in his career, he was a professor and department chair at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, where he directed the Kaput Center for Research and Innovation in STEM Education and led multiple NSF- and foundation-funded initiatives focused on mathematics education, technology integration, and teacher preparation. Internationally, he has collaborated with institutions across Europe, South America, and Africa to advance teacher education and cross-border partnerships. The Provost's appointment followed an internal search to fill the interim role and following meaningful

consultation conducted by Dr. Bernal with shared governance and system leaders. This process addressed consultation with faculty, students, and staff in leadership appointments.

These appointments collectively demonstrate WCSU's progress in establishing a stable, experienced, and forward-looking leadership team with the capacity to guide the institution through both immediate challenges and long-term strategic priorities.

Other Senior Leadership Roles

In addition to the president and provost appointments, WCSU has taken deliberate steps to strengthen and stabilize its senior leadership team. These actions ensure continuity, maintain momentum during a period of transition, and position the university to advance its strategic priorities with experienced, committed leaders in key roles.

- Permanent Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer appointed in Fall 2024. See more details in *Area of Focus #7*.
- Interim Vice President for Institutional Advancement and Interim Vice President for Finance & Administration agreed to extended appointments, up to December 2026, to provide stability during the presidential transition. Formal searches for these vice president positions are planned for 2026. While these key administrative posts remain under interim leadership, the extended appointments through 2026 provide continuity until permanent hires are made. The University will stagger these searches to ensure a thoughtful selection process that does not disrupt ongoing initiatives.

Among these interim leaders, Ronald C. Thomas serves as Interim Vice President for Finance and Administration (CFO). Mr. Thomas brings more than three decades of senior leadership experience in higher education, including service as Vice President of Administration and Finance/COO at York College (CUNY), where he oversaw budgeting, facilities, enrollment management, human resources, public safety, and capital planning. Earlier roles at York included Dean for Administrative Affairs and leadership positions in institutional advancement, adult and continuing education, and community partnerships. He has also directed workforce and economic development initiatives, managed multimillion-dollar budgets, and led efforts to generate new revenue streams to support institutional priorities. His background in fiscal management, facilities planning, and organizational development provides WCSU with seasoned leadership in a critical functional area during a time of transition.

WCSU has also clarified the roles and responsibilities of its executive leadership team, ensuring improved coordination across academic, student, financial, and operational units. The Senior Leadership Team has been oriented to recognize the provost's role as the primary deputy to the President, ensuring clear decision-making authority and consistent academic and administrative alignment. The President and Provost jointly model a shared leadership approach, presenting a united front on strategic decisions and fostering a culture of collaboration across academic and administrative domains. A revitalized President's Council, inclusive of faculty, staff, and student representatives, meets regularly with the President to provide input on strategic priorities, resource allocation, and policy decisions.

Looking ahead, the President is developing a process to regularly assess senior leadership effectiveness through institutional planning mechanisms and annual reporting, including the use of benchmarks and KPIs. Beginning in 2025-2026, the President will institute annual performance reviews for the executive team, tied to institutional planning benchmarks and 360-degree feedback, to ensure leadership effectiveness is continually assessed and strengthened. The CSCU

interim Chancellor is advancing a similar effort to assess the system presidents. We also note that the BOR (via the interim CSCU Chancellor) is engaged in assessing and supporting the new President’s performance, adding another layer of stability and oversight. This commitment to stability, evaluation, and transparency ensures WCSU is positioned to lead with integrity and coherence in support of its mission and in alignment with NECHE standards.

WCSU is confident that the current leadership team provides a strong foundation after a period of transition. However, we recognize that effective leadership is an ongoing commitment; thus, we will monitor leadership performance and continuity, ensuring that any future transitions (e.g., upcoming VP searches) are carefully managed with ample consultation and overlap to maintain momentum.

Strategy Alignment

Over the summer (2025), WCSU leadership undertook the work of aligning and consolidating multiple ongoing planning efforts and recommendations into a single, draft strategic direction. This process integrated NECHE’s Notice of Concern areas, the CSCU System’s strategy development and KPI-setting (A.C.T. framework), the University Senate’s approval of WCSU KPIs in 2024-2025, *Western Rising 2025–2030*, divisional and college-level plans (Academic Affairs, Enrollment Management, IT, Facilities, HR, and DEI), external review recommendations from the Central Connecticut State team, and the institutional priorities articulated through the presidential search and hiring process for Dr. Bernal. The goal of this integration is to honor and sustain the many efforts already underway, particularly those with broad community and shared governance support, while streamlining and sharpening our focus.

For clarity and ease of alignment with system priorities, WCSU has organized this draft within the CSCU A.C.T. framework—Accessibility, Completion, and Talent. This model emphasizes opening pathways to higher education, ensuring students persist to completion, and preparing graduates with the skills and opportunities to thrive. It resonates strongly with *Western Rising’s* focus on *student success, inclusive community culture, and financial sustainability*. It also connects with our emerging academic vision, which imagines WCSU as a catalyst for talent, equity, and innovation through flexible pathways, experiential learning, interdisciplinary “Impact Hubs,” and a deep commitment to our Hispanic-Serving Institution identity.

As this remains a draft, WCSU will continue to engage the campus community in Fall 2025 to refine benchmarks and finalize goals. Under new leadership, the University’s collective efforts are being channeled into three defining priorities: becoming “distinctly WestConn”, strengthening our foundations, and reclaiming our role as a regional anchor and hub for innovation. In this way, the University is both staying true to its shared governance roots and sharpening its future focus—purposeful, public, and transformative.

The strategy alignment process was directly informed by the FY26-FY30 financial plan, including scenario-based enrollment projections and reliance on short-term system support. This alignment ensures that institutional KPIs are grounded in the financial and enrollment assumptions now adopted in *Area of Focus #3*.

See *Appendix 2-1* for draft Strategic Alignment Proposal.

AREA OF FOCUS #3

Developing a Multi-Year Financial Plan to Achieve Financial Stability and Ensure Sufficient Resources to Carry Out the Mission

In direct response to NECHE’s request that WCSU demonstrate progress toward achieving financial stability through a multi-year financial plan the University has developed and begun implementing a five-year financial planning framework (see Table 1 below). This plan reflects the University’s commitment to data-informed decision-making, realistic forecasting, and transparent stewardship of institutional resources. The framework aligns projected expenditures and revenue trends with institutional goals, including enrollment, staffing, and academic priorities. It also incorporates contingency modeling and risk mitigation measures designed to address external volatility, such as uncertain state appropriations, fringe benefit cost fluctuations, and the unresolved implications of federal legislation (e.g., OBBA).

FY25 closed with a \$4.5M surplus and \$11.9M in reserves—results made possible through \$24.2M in one-time system support and targeted cost-containment strategies. The updated FY26–FY30 framework (as of August 19, 2025) projects a break-even balance in FY26 (+\$0.4M) and a narrow surplus in FY27 (+\$0.9M after mitigation), before recurring structural deficits of approximately \$10.5M annually in FY28–FY30 absent continued system support and new revenues. The plan was developed in collaboration with the CSCU System Office and is updated regularly to reflect changing financial conditions and strategic priorities. While long-term forecasting remains inherently complex, WCSU has made demonstrable progress in stabilizing operations, improving enrollment pipelines, and strengthening financial oversight—key elements of the University’s strategy to ensure sufficient resources to fulfill its mission sustainably.

As WCSU works to stabilize its financial position and respond to the concerns outlined in the Commission’s report, it is important to acknowledge the broader context that complicates long-term forecasting. Multiple factors remain beyond institutional control, including the absence of a state funding formula, unpredictable year-to-year appropriations, fluctuating fringe benefit costs, and the unresolved implications of the recently passed federal OBBA legislation. These conditions introduce volatility that requires contingency models and a flexible, adaptive approach. In addition, WCSU—like many public universities nationwide—faces structural challenges following the expiration of pandemic-era relief funds, rising personnel costs, and growing demand for student services.

Despite these external constraints, the University remains firmly committed to meeting NECHE Standards through transparent, data-informed budget practices aligned with sustainability goals. WCSU respectfully encourages the Commission to consider this dynamic and evolving financial landscape when reviewing institutional progress.

Multi-Year Financial Framework

The WCSU financial planning framework is grounded in four principles: transparency, alignment with enrollment goals, sustainable resource allocation, and realistic forecasting in partnership with the CSCU System Office. It emphasizes prioritizing and reallocating resources for strategic investments. See **Table 1** (below) for the University’s internally developed budget projections, which anticipate both investments and efficiencies, and *Appendix 3-1* for the BOR-approved five-year plan (Summer 2025), which will be revised regularly.

Opportunities

With strategic support from the CSCU System and new internal leadership initiatives, WCSU has begun

implementing reforms that align with NECHE Standards on planning, governance, resources, and effectiveness. Measurable progress has been made in expanding geographic recruitment pipelines, increasing online and hybrid offerings, and improving operational efficiency. These steps reflect a broader institutional commitment to linking enrollment growth with financial sustainability and align with both strategic planning and resource stewardship.

Early indicators—such as the uptick in first-year enrollment and improvements in marketing and retention practices—demonstrate positive momentum. These gains reflect institutional agility as well as alignment with CSCU’s ACT framework, which emphasizes access, completion, and talent development. WCSU’s ability to adapt is a strength, and its renewed commitment to transparency, evidence-based decision-making, and mission alignment provides a strong foundation for rebuilding trust and sustainability.

Challenges

Despite these gains, WCSU continues to face significant challenges noted in the Commission’s Notice of Concern. Externally, the University must navigate demographic decline in the region, policy uncertainty, and lingering impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Internally, it has had to address the legacy of overly optimistic enrollment projections, which contributed to budget imbalances and diminished confidence. These projections have been corrected using evidence-based modeling. For additional detail, see the *Strategic Enrollment Management & Institutional Planning Framework (2025–2030)*.

In response, WCSU has strengthened mechanisms for fiscal oversight and resource allocation, including the establishment of a Position Review Committee (PRC) that evaluates all hiring proposals based on return-on-investment and alignment with strategic priorities. This ensures a more disciplined and transparent approach to staffing and budget decisions.

Nevertheless, concerns remain regarding sufficiency of staffing in critical student-facing and facilities roles and the need for deeper integration of assessment practices to improve educational effectiveness. Continued monitoring and evaluation will be essential to ensure that progress is sustained and scaled appropriately. These issues are addressed further in *Area of Focus #5* and *Area of Focus #6*.

Realistic Enrollment Projections

A key enhancement to the University’s planning is the adoption of multiple enrollment scenarios. This report shares details on a budget-aligned scenario and identifies strategies in a conservative scenario. Past reliance on optimistic projections contributed to structural imbalance and diminished confidence. The conservative scenario anchors financial assumptions to flat or modestly declining enrollment, ensuring sustainability even under these conditions. Scenario-based modeling demonstrates that WCSU can maintain operations and meet accreditation standards even if enrollment remains stable or declines slightly, while upside scenarios from new programs, partnerships, and targeted recruitment represent additional opportunities rather than baseline expectations.

Current Fiscal Picture

For several years, WCSU has had financial challenges balancing its budget largely due to falling enrollments and rising expenses. Historically, WCSU drew down its reserves from \$24 million to near-zero to cover annual shortfalls. A budget mitigation plan was developed and approved by the BOR for FY24 and FY25, which focused on mitigating costs, freezing some hiring decisions, and CSCU System Office support.

WCSU ended FY25 with a surplus of \$4.5M and \$11.9M in reserves. These results were made possible through \$24.2M in one-time system support (including ARPA funds, Reserve for Salary Adjustments, and CSCU Office appropriations) and targeted mitigation strategies. Without these supports, WCSU would have experienced a \$23M deficit.

The updated FY26-FY30 framework projects a modest surplus in FY26-27 but renewed structural deficits of \$10.5M annually by FY28-30 absent continued support and new recurring revenues. To address this, WCSU is implementing efficiencies that focus on non-personnel operating costs (e.g., vendor renegotiations, shared services, and administrative reorganization) and pursuing one-time offsets such as grants, philanthropy, and sponsorships. These short-term or multi-year external funds are being used to offset operational and personnel costs while reserves are maintained as a cushion of last resort.

Finalizing the Multi-Year Financial Plan

WCSU is continuing to refine its comprehensive multi-year financial plan that demonstrates a clear path toward sustainability. This plan builds upon FY24-25 mitigation measures and incorporates updated FY26-30 budget assumptions to present a realistic roadmap. It distinguishes between recurring strategies (expanded housing and dining, efficiencies, program enhancements), one-time offsets (grants, philanthropy, sponsorships, and enterprise agreements), and prudent reserve use.

The plan will be continually tested against actual conditions, with adjustments made annually. If assumptions fail to hold, additional measures—such as deeper expense cuts, enhanced efficiencies, or advocating for increased state support—will be necessary. Closing the full \$10.5M structural deficit through recurring means alone would require flattening the growth of personnel expenses, expanding efficiencies to at least \$7–10M annually, and tightly containing operating costs. More drastic moves, such as reducing enrollment or the physical footprint, are recognized as last-resort options. See *Appendix 3-2* for risk management and mitigation details.

Table 1. Five-Year Sustainability Plan: Impact of Strategic Mitigation Measures FY25-FY30

[FY25 is actual; proceeding years are projections]

in Millions

Category	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30
Core Revenues						
Tuition	56.6	60.4	62.7	65.7	68.8	72.2
State Appropriation	32.4	33.2	33.5	34.5	35.5	36.5
Housing & Dining	15.5	17.2	20.2	21.0	21.8	22.7
Other	2.6	3.3	3.4	3.6	3.9	4.1
One-Time System Support	24.2	11.9*	---	---	---	---
Total Revenues	131.3	126.0	119.8	124.8	130.0	135.5
Expenses						
Personnel	64.7	64.4	67.0	69.9	73.0	76.2
Fringe	15.5	15.5	16.3	17.1	18.0	18.8
Operating	39.4	38.4	39.3	40.5	41.7	43.0
Total Expenses	119.6	118.3	122.6	127.5	132.7	138.0
Balance Before Transfers	+11.7	+7.7	-2.8	-2.7	-2.7	-2.7
Debt Service (Expense)	-7.3	-7.3	-7.6	-7.8	-7.9	-8.0
Final Balance After Transfers	+4.5	+0.4	-10.4	-10.5	-10.6	-10.5

*Approved by BOR

Mitigation Measures (Aspirational, Not Yet Approved)

Other Revenues (Aggregated Annually)						
Ad'l Housing & Dining Increases						
<i>Annual Increases</i>		0.0	+0.5	+0.5	+0.5	0.0
<i>Aggregate Recurring</i>	--	0.0	0.5	1.0	1.5	1.5
Revenue Enhancement Initiatives						
<i>Annual Increases</i>		+0.5	+0.5	+0.5	+1.0	+1.0
<i>Aggregate Recurring</i>	--	0.5	1.0	1.5	2.5	3.5
Efficiencies (Savings)						
<i>Annual Savings</i>		0.0	+0.3	+0.5	+0.5	+0.7
<i>Aggregate Recurring</i>	--	0.0	0.3	0.8	1.3	2.0
Recurring New Revenues						
<i>Annual</i>		+0.5	+1.3	+1.5	+2.0	+1.7
<i>Aggregate Recurring</i>	--	0.5	1.8	3.3	5.3	7.0
Temporary Offsets						
One-Time System Support**	--	Above	3.0	2.0	2.0	1.0
Grants/Philanthropy/Sponsorships	--	1.0	4.0	6.0	7.0	9.0
WCSU Reserves (Revenue)	--	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Temporary New Revenues	--	1.0	9.0	8.0	9.0	10.0
Total Aspirational Revenues	--	+1.5	+11.3	+11.3	+14.3	+17.0

**Could include delayed debt service or debt service relief.

Balances

	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30
Balance before Mitigation	+4.5	+0.4	-10.4	-10.5	-10.6	-10.5
Balance after Mitigation (blue)	+4.5	+1.9	+0.9	+0.8	+3.7	+6.5

FY27-30 surplus/break-even requires continuation of system support (not yet Board-approved) plus new revenue initiatives, efficiencies and reserves (blue cells above).

Reserve Balance

<i>Anticipating Mitigation Measures</i>	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31
<i>Opening Balance</i>	11.9	16.4	18.3	17.2	18.0	21.7	28.2
<i>Use of Reserves</i>	0.0	0.0	-2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Closing Balance	11.9	16.4	16.3	17.2	18.0	21.7	

A detailed 5-year budget and risk management plan can be found in *Appendix 3-1* and *Appendix 3-2*.

FY26–FY27 (Biennium Budget)

WCSU enters FY26 with a \$19.8M structural deficit carried forward from FY25. With support from the CSCU System Office's Use of Reserves Policy approved by the BOR (\$11.9M) and other mitigation measures, the University projects a modest surplus of \$400K. Assumptions include a 6.5% enrollment increase in Fall 2025, a 4.5% salary increase, and a 2.75% rise in state aid. Housing demand is expected to grow by 11%, with ancillary services adding \$1.4M in revenue as a residence hall returns to service.

Recurring mitigation measures begin in FY26, including housing and dining rate adjustments (\$500K annualized by FY27), early revenue initiatives (\$500K), and operational efficiencies. Efficiencies will target non-student service expenses through reorganization, vendor renegotiations, and potential

mergers. One-time offsets of \$1.0M are anticipated from grants, philanthropy, and sponsorships, providing short-term relief while preserving reserves.

In FY27, WCSU projects a surplus of \$0.9M, supported by \$2.5M in recurring new revenues and \$8.5M in temporary offsets. Recurring measures expand through growth in housing/dining, operational savings, and program enhancements. One-time offsets are projected at \$4.0M (grants, philanthropy, sponsorships) plus \$2.0M in reserves. While essential, reliance on non-recurring funds underscores ongoing fiscal fragility.

Looking ahead, the June 30, 2027 expiration of the State of Connecticut's Healthcare and Pension agreement with the State Employees Bargaining Agent Coalition (SEBAC) presents both challenges and opportunities. Many employees may retire before the deadline to preserve benefits, potentially reducing institutional knowledge and stability. At the same time, this transition offers a chance to realign staffing with strategic priorities—enhancing diversity in hiring, strengthening student services, and increasing administrative flexibility. By planning proactively, WCSU can turn this workforce shift into an opportunity to modernize operations and better align resources with the University's mission.

FY28–FY30 (Longer-Range Forecast)

Without mitigation, WCSU would face recurring structural deficits of \$10.5M annually by FY28–FY30, a reduction of \$9.4M from FY25. Projections assume 2% annual enrollment growth, 3% housing growth, and 3% tuition increases (pending BOR approval). Personnel costs are expected to rise 4.5% annually, driving most of the expense growth.

Mitigation measures are expected to scale gradually. By FY30, recurring new revenues are projected at \$7.0M annually, supported by expanded housing/dining, efficiencies, and program enhancements. Efficiencies will need to grow well beyond the \$2M currently modeled, potentially to \$7-10M annually, requiring significant culture change and structural adjustments that cannot be precisely timed as new leadership onboard. One-time offsets of \$10.0M are projected from grants, philanthropy, and sponsorships, along with system support if available.

WCSU continues to build reserves as a last resort, providing a cushion if aspirational mitigation measures scale more slowly or if additional system support is needed to buy time. Reserves will only be deployed strategically to protect continuity of operations and student success.

Ongoing Structural Deficit post-FY30

By FY30, WCSU faces a projected structural deficit of \$10.5M before mitigation, driven primarily by rising personnel, fringe, and operating costs that together are expected to reach \$138M. To eliminate this gap through recurring adjustments, the University would need to significantly flatten the growth of personnel expenses, which are currently projected to increase by \$11.5M from FY25 to FY30. Slowing this trajectory from 4.5% annual growth to closer to 2% could save \$5-7M. Efficiencies would also need to expand well beyond the \$3M currently planned, reaching \$7-10M annually by FY30 through shared services, vendor renegotiations, and space utilization strategies, including reconsideration of the two-campus infrastructure. In addition, tighter controls on operating expenses could yield another \$2-3M in recurring savings.

Taken together, these measures—roughly \$10-12M in ongoing cost containment—would be required to structurally close the deficit without reliance on temporary offsets or system support.

WCSU is pursuing a balanced pathway of recurring revenues, efficiencies, and temporary offsets.

However, leadership acknowledges that fully eliminating the gap without such offsets may ultimately

require more drastic actions, such as limiting enrollment or reducing the physical footprint—decisions that would fundamentally reshape the University and should be considered only as a last resort. In the interim, WCSU will continue to refine budgets through the representative President’s Council and ensure campus-wide transparency through regular email updates and open forums, while pursuing every feasible mitigation strategy to protect the student experience.

Investments: Human Resources, Facilities IT

Natural attrition over the past five years has helped stabilize the budget, allowing targeted reinvestment in priority areas. To ensure resources are allocated strategically, the Position Review Committee (see *Area of Focus #5*) has been reorganized with a transparent process that links hiring to institutional priorities.

In Summer 2025, the Provost and President convened a representative work team—including senior leadership, deans, AAUP, SUOAF, the University Senate, and the Student Government Association—to draft three-year facilities and IT infrastructure plans. These plans align capital and operating investments with WCSU’s academic vision, positioning the University to advocate effectively for state support and ensuring that facilities and IT upgrades directly enhance academic quality, student experience, and long-term sustainability. The plans propose \$83.7 million in strategic priorities: \$20.7 million annually for facilities infrastructure, \$4.2 million for IT infrastructure, and \$3.0 million for personnel. A full draft of this plan, incorporating feedback from key stakeholders, will be available for NECHE review in early Fall 2025.

At the system level, collaboration is underway among the Board of Regents (led by Chair Marty Guay), CSCU leadership, and institutional representatives to shape a comprehensive investment plan for WCSU. During Spring 2025, leaders from the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) toured campus facilities, recommending that WCSU prepare a multi-year capital plan tied to institutional strategy and existing bond authorizations. Any additional non-auxiliary capital or operating requests will proceed through OPM and legislative approval processes.

Two Campus Viability

Based on feedback from the 2024 NECHE visit, the University is actively discussing the long-term viability of maintaining two campuses 2 miles apart, particularly in light of current enrollment levels and projected demographic shifts. WCSU has integrated this issue into the Master Planning process, led by the Associate Vice President for Facilities and the Chief Financial Officer, in coordination with colleagues from the CSCU System Office. The President and Provost are also involved in the group.

The Master Planning process is examining a range of options to reduce costs, improve efficiency, and enhance institutional identity. Early indicators show that consolidating all operations to the Midtown campus is not financially feasible on its own, underscoring the importance of identifying opportunities that make campus use more cost-effective, mission-aligned, and beneficial for students. Current lines of exploration include:

- **EdAdvance Partnership:** A Facilities Use Agreement with EdAdvance is being finalized for office space in University Hall through June 2026. The arrangement may transition into a longer-term licensing agreement if partnership activities demonstrate added value for WCSU students.
- **CT State Community College (Danbury):** Co-location with CT State Danbury remains under consideration as part of broader enrollment and facilities strategies.
- **Revenue-Generating Westside Facilities:** The Westside campus offers unique opportunities to leverage high-quality facilities for external use. The state-of-the-art Visual & Performing Arts Center and the Ives Concert Park are positioned as cultural hubs for concerts, conferences, and

community events. Additionally, WCSU is exploring how the Westside Observatory can be incorporated into public programming, STEM partnerships, and regional outreach to strengthen identity and generate new revenue.

- **Summer Rental Program:** WCSU is evaluating opportunities to generate revenue during lower-use periods through rentals to corporate internship programs, professional cohorts, and external vendors who would operate camps or retreats.
- **Workforce Partnerships:** Preliminary discussions are underway with the Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board (WIB) about a potential facilities rental arrangement that would align workforce development with student opportunity.
- **Campus Identity and Branding:** The planning team is also exploring ways to differentiate and strengthen the identities of each campus. The Westside campus could be further developed as a nature-rich, sports-centered, self-contained experience, while the Midtown campus would emphasize its downtown, city-facing identity.
- **Leadership Visibility:** To reinforce the role of both campuses, senior leadership has increased its activities on the Westside, including holding senior team meetings there, ensuring balanced engagement across both locations.

Through these efforts, WCSU is pursuing a balanced approach: one that addresses financial sustainability while leveraging each campus's unique strengths, expanding partnerships, and enhancing student and community value. The University will continue to monitor viability as enrollment progresses.

Financial Resources and System Support

WCSU's financial sustainability is strengthened by both institutional actions and the ongoing support of the CSCU System. In 2025, the BOR adopted a Fund Balance Policy and Debt Relief Policy that provide critical short-term stability for all system institutions. Under the Fund Balance Policy, WCSU will receive \$11.9M in FY26 and \$7.0M in FY27 in system-directed reserves, as well as \$7.0M in additional FY26 funding ([Attn. Meeting Packet; Resolution pg.512](#)). The Debt Relief Policy provides \$4.9M in system-supported debt relief in FY26. These funds will be used to support strategic investments, reduce debt obligations, and rebuild reserves ([Attn. Meeting Packet; Resolutions pg.120-121](#)). Beyond financial transfers, CSCU contributes strategic guidance, scenario modeling expertise, and joint state advocacy. This system-level engagement adds significant credibility to WCSU's multi-year financial plan and reflects the shared responsibility for ensuring institutional viability within the CSCU system.

Enrollment Trajectory

WCSU has embraced a strategic, data-driven approach to enrollment planning. Over the past 18 months, the Office of Academic Affairs has conducted a comprehensive, program-level analysis across all academic schools. This internal review, complemented by a parallel external analysis conducted by Central State, identified actionable opportunities to enhance academic quality, cost-effectiveness, and student demand alignment.

Findings from both studies directly informed key decisions, including the reconfiguration and consolidation of select programs, the expansion of high-demand offerings, and the creation of new academic pathways. Low-enrollment/low-completer programs (e.g., Nutrition Studies, Meteorological Studies) were discontinued, and programs have been reconfigured to provide more relevant courses of study designed to enhance enrollment and completion rates (e.g., BS in Atmospheric and Climate Sciences). This work also laid the foundation for launching the new School of Graduate, International, and Career Studies, alongside a refreshed institutional branding and

promotional campaign. In addition, efforts have focused on establishing new accelerated (4+1) programs in key areas to retain undergraduate students into graduate programs in cost-effective ways.

To support this cultural shift toward evidence-informed decision making, WCSU partnered with Gray Decision Intelligence (Gray DI), a national firm specializing in academic program analytics. The Gray DI platform will inform curriculum development, scheduling, and resource optimization as part of a larger effort to integrate data into strategic planning.

Conservative/Baseline Enrollment Scenario Planning

In addition to the budget-aligned growth model, WCSU leadership has prepared a conservative enrollment projection scenario to ensure fiscal responsibility under less favorable demographic and market conditions. This scenario assumes enrollment remains flat or experiences modest declines over the next five years, reflecting regional demographic trends and heightened competition in the higher education sector.

Under this conservative assumption, the University projects greater pressure on tuition revenue, housing occupancy, and auxiliary income. Without corresponding adjustments, these dynamics would widen structural deficits and erode reserves by FY28-30. Recognizing this risk, WCSU has identified a set of proactive measures to sustain operations even under flat or declining enrollment conditions:

- **Alternative Revenue Generation:** Expansion of workforce education, micro-credentials, and certificate programs through the WELL (Workforce Education and Lifelong Learning) platform; increased utilization of the Visual and Performing Arts Center, Ives Concert Park, and the Observatory as rental and cultural assets; and targeted summer rental agreements with corporate internship programs and external organizations.
- **Space Optimization and Two-Campus Viability:** Ongoing review of the dual-campus model remains central to cost-containment efforts. Master Planning discussions include co-location partnerships (e.g., EdAdvance, CT State Community College) and selective space reduction or repurposing to reduce fixed costs and optimize utilization.
- **Additional System Support:** WCSU will continue to work closely with the CSCU System Office and BOR to secure financial and strategic support, including reserve allocations, debt relief, and system-wide efficiencies that reinforce institutional viability.
- **Cost Containment and Resource Reallocation:** Hiring controls and the PRC will maintain discipline in staffing decisions, ensuring that positions are added only where there is clear evidence of return on investment. Operating budgets will be reviewed annually for additional cost-saving opportunities.
- **Ongoing Program and Staff Review:** Academic and administrative programs will continue to be regularly assessed using evidence-based tools (e.g., Gray DI) to identify underperforming areas for redesign, consolidation, or discontinuation, while reinvesting in high-demand, mission-aligned programs.

This conservative scenario underscores WCSU's commitment to realism and accountability in its financial planning. While the University is cautiously optimistic about achieving enrollment growth, the ability to sustain operations under flat or declining conditions demonstrates resilience and prudent stewardship of resources.

Strategic Initiatives in Progress or Under Discussion

The following initiatives—many now in active implementation—form the backbone of WCSU's strategic enrollment and financial sustainability plan. Many have been developed and led by faculty and staff, will require shared leadership across divisions for successful execution, and will engage shared

governance and union leadership in ongoing consultation, in keeping with NECHE's emphasis on broad-based participation and communication.

Academic Program Development & Delivery

Theme: Academic innovation aligned with workforce needs and student interests.

Key Initiatives (In Progress):

- Launch non-credit micro-credentials aligned with regional workforce needs (e.g., healthcare, education, advanced manufacturing)
- Expand applied learning and internship opportunities across undergraduate majors
- Expand First Year Experience (FYE) offerings and embed high-impact practices into gateway courses

Decision-Making & Progress Tracking:

- The Academic Affairs leadership team will prioritize programs using enrollment trends, workforce data, and feedback from constituents
- Track program launches and completions via the Registrar's Office and annual reports from Deans and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness

Recruitment & Enrollment Strategies

Theme: Strengthening recruitment pipelines with targeted strategies.

Key Initiatives:

- Grow concurrent and dual enrollment partnerships and develop new career-aligned K–12 pathways with key districts
- Increase graduate enrollment through targeted digital marketing and flexible delivery
- Implement a predictive student recruitment platform to improve conversion and yield

Decision-Making & Progress Tracking:

- The Enrollment Management team will review ROI metrics quarterly to decide which pipelines and platforms to expand or adjust
- Track lead generation, application-to-enrollment conversion, and new enrollment trends by segment

Student Retention & Success

Theme: Promoting student belonging and academic persistence.

Key Initiatives:

- Launch a campus-wide well-being and belonging initiative centered on equity and inclusion
- Leverage HSI designation to pursue federal grants aimed at Latino/a student success and retention; will be limited in the short-term due to federal changes
- Improve academic advising and early alert through integrated technology and training

Decision-Making & Progress Tracking:

- A cross-divisional team will prioritize scalable initiatives and align grant-funded activities with institutional goals
- Monitor year-over-year retention by population group and student satisfaction through surveys (e.g., NSSE)

Infrastructure & Institutional Capacity

Theme: Aligning operations and investments with long-term sustainability.

Key Initiatives:

- Improve course optimization (size, timing, modality) using CourseLeaf and integrated planning tools
- Strengthen grant acquisition through new development software and targeted faculty workshops

- Build administrative efficiencies and succession plans to ensure continuity in key roles

Decision-Making & Progress Tracking:

- President’s Council review of process improvements and staffing strategies will occur each semester with HR and Finance co-leading
- Progress tracked through internal KPIs and benchmarking grant submission volume and course fill rates

Philanthropy & Resource Development

Theme: Expanding resources for student success and institutional growth.

Key Initiatives:

- Collaborate with the WCSU Foundation to increase annual fundraising for student scholarships by at least 1.5x (benchmark: \$1.54M average over previous 5 years)
- Pilot auxiliary ventures (e.g., summer housing, rental space) to generate \$500K annually
- Develop a culture of evidence by aligning strategic plan goals with institutional effectiveness measures and dashboards

Decision-Making & Progress Tracking:

- Foundation Board and Institutional Advancement will determine campaign priorities annually, in consultation with the president and in alignment with an established MOU
- Use Advancement CRM (Blackbaud) and Institutional Effectiveness dashboards (to be developed) to track progress against revenue and scholarship distribution goals
- Senior team members and academic deans will develop annual engagement goals that will be reviewed and tracked by the president

Additional Revenue Streams: Total Funds, New Markets, and Expanded Partnerships

As part of a new total funds strategy, WCSU is expanding and diversifying its revenue portfolio beyond tuition and state appropriations. This includes intentional growth in non-credit education, public-private partnerships, sponsored training, and philanthropy—each designed to create durable revenue streams while deepening the University’s mission-driven impact.

WELL: A Scalable Workforce and Lifelong Learning Platform

The Workforce Education and Lifelong Learning (WELL) initiative, housed within the new School of Graduate, International, and Career Studies, is central to WCSU’s strategy to reach new markets and generate alternative revenue. WELL leverages WCSU’s academic expertise and regional relationships to offer stackable, industry-aligned credentials for:

- Working professionals
- Adult learners
- Employer-sponsored trainees
- Career changers

Key features of the WELL model include:

- Non-credit micro-credentials and customized corporate training aligned with regional workforce needs
- Stackable certificates that ladder into degree programs, fueling long-term enrollment growth
- Revenue-sharing structure that incentivizes internal and external trainers while maintaining lean operations
- Automated systems for registration, pricing, and payment to support scalability and ensure operational efficiency

WELL is positioned as both a revenue engine and a community impact hub—meeting employers’ needs while positioning WCSU as a key regional partner in upskilling, career advancement, and economic mobility.

Building the Enrollment Pipeline: Public-Private and K–12 Partnerships

Danbury Public Schools (DPS)

In collaboration with the superintendent and DPS guidance counselors, WCSU has established a shared strategy to increase postsecondary access for local students. This includes early awareness programs, mentoring, and expanded dual-enrollment offerings (*see Appendix 3-3 for further details*).

Benefits to both organizations include:

- DPS students gain access to early college experiences and clearer postsecondary pathways
- WCSU strengthens its local enrollment base and builds trust with regional families and educators

Healthcare Pipeline Development: Nuvance Health

WCSU is in active partnership development with Nuvance Health, the region’s largest healthcare provider. This collaboration will include:

- Guaranteed clinical placements for nursing and allied health students
- Interdisciplinary internships across majors, including business, IT, and communication
- Joint marketing and awareness campaigns (e.g., “Attend WCSU. Work at Nuvance.”)

Benefits to both organizations include:

- Students receive structured, career-connected experiential learning
- Nuvance strengthens its talent pipeline while increasing visibility as a regional employer of choice

Industry-Driven Innovation: Boehringer Ingelheim

WCSU is formalizing an academic partnership with Boehringer Ingelheim, a global pharmaceutical firm headquartered in Danbury. This evolving relationship builds upon years of informal collaboration and is now expanding over the next three years into:

- Sponsored research opportunities and faculty-student innovation labs
- Internship and career pipelines in the pharmaceutical and life sciences sectors
- Philanthropic engagement and naming opportunities tied to workforce innovation

Benefits to both organizations include:

- Students gain structured access to high-skill, high-wage fields
- Boehringer deepens its investment in regional education and benefits from a strong talent pipeline

Institutional Readiness and Fiscal Integrity

In summary, WCSU has made important strides in stabilizing operations and planning for the future, but financial sustainability will require ongoing discipline, adaptability, and shared commitment. While small surpluses are projected in FY26 (+\$0.4M) and FY27 (+\$0.9M after mitigation), these results are possible only with system support, temporary one-time offsets, and early efficiencies. Without such support, the University would face recurring structural shortfalls of approximately \$10.5M annually by FY28–FY30. Absent state and system partnership, WCSU would need to pursue much deeper cost containment and reductions than currently planned.

At the same time, the University must accelerate recurring revenue initiatives and innovations, including expanded housing and dining, auxiliary ventures, and program enhancements, while also leveraging short-term opportunities in philanthropy, grants, sponsorships, and regional partnerships. These efforts will require cultural change and the collective commitment of all stakeholders. Success in this

transformation will reduce reliance on external and temporary support and enable WCSU to strengthen its long-term financial position.

The University leadership and BOR remain committed to vigilant oversight of this multi-year plan. We will report regularly on progress and shortfalls, take corrective action as needed, and remain transparent with the campus through email updates and open forums. Only through this continuous attention—combined with innovation, efficiencies, and system partnership—will WCSU fully address the Commission’s concerns and ensure sufficient resources to carry out its mission.

Conclusion

WCSU’s financial sustainability strategy balances near-term stabilization with long-term transformation.

- **Recurring Measures (Priority):** Expansion of housing and dining, auxiliary ventures, and program enhancements, paired with efficiencies focused on non-personnel costs and administrative overhead. These strategies are expected to generate approximately \$7.0M annually by FY30, with potential to grow further.
- **One-Time or Short-Term Offsets (Bridge Support):** Philanthropy, grants, sponsorships, and designated enterprise agreements are projected to provide \$1-10M annually in temporary relief. While these funds are essential to stabilize operations, they are not a substitute for structural balance.
- **Reserves (Last Resort):** WCSU continues to build reserves to provide a cushion if mitigation measures scale more slowly or if system support declines. Reserves will be deployed strategically and only to protect continuity of operations and student success.
- **System Partnership (Critical in the Near Term):** Continued system-level support—through measures such as debt relief, appropriations adjustments, or delayed debt service—remains vital to sustain operations until recurring strategies reach scale.

Leadership acknowledges that eliminating the structural deficit solely through recurring adjustments may ultimately require difficult actions, such as reducing enrollment or the physical footprint. These would fundamentally reshape the institution and are recognized only as last-resort options.

The University will continue to monitor conditions, refine budgets through the President’s Council, and report progress and shortfalls transparently via campus emails and open forums. Through disciplined oversight, cultural change, and system partnership, WCSU is committed to addressing the Commission’s concerns and ensuring sufficient resources to carry out its mission.

AREA OF FOCUS #4

Achieving Enrollment and Retention Goals

WCSU has made measurable progress toward reversing recent enrollment declines and improving student retention through a comprehensive, data-informed, multi-year strategy. Undergraduate enrollment has stabilized and, in targeted programs, increased over the past year. This growth was driven by intentional changes in recruitment strategies, improved admissions yield, and stronger engagement with student success data (see *Strategic Enrollment Management Plan* in *Area of Focus #3*). This work is closely aligned with the University's *Strategic Enrollment Plan* and *Five-Year Financial Sustainability Framework*, which project modest surpluses in FY26-27 but continuing reliance on reserves and \$7M annual system support to remain balanced through FY30.

The priorities addressed in this area also reflect those identified in the 2023 Self-Study, including responding to regional demographic shifts, improving admissions yield rates, strengthening retention performance through expanded use of student success data, aligning academic programs with market demand, developing targeted strategies for online and adult learners, and refining financial aid packaging and outreach strategies. WCSU faces a projected decline in Connecticut high school graduates over the coming years, meaning that recruitment strategies must increasingly target new markets and niches to achieve growth.

During the past year, WCSU implemented a new advisement model in which professional advisors provide wrap-around services to all first-year students. The first-year seminar (UNI 101) was revised to ensure consistent delivery and measurable learning outcomes across all majors. In addition, the Academic Probation and Suspension Policy was updated to provide students with more time and coordinated support to return to good academic standing. These policy and practice changes are designed to foster a more supportive first-year experience and improve persistence rates. As a result of these efforts, first-year retention from Fall 2024 to Spring 2025 reached 89%, and the Fall 2024 to Fall 2025 first-year retention rate increased to 76%, up from 73% the prior year. While encouraging, this rate remains below peer averages and the University's ultimate goal (see *Retention Plan* below). Sustained efforts are needed to move retention closer to ~80% over the next five years, which would significantly bolster enrollment stability.

Undergraduate Enrollment Trends

Undergraduate enrollment in Fall 2024 reflected both stability and targeted growth, supported by deliberate recruitment strategies and the use of predictive analytics. Undergraduate headcount increased by 0.7% and undergraduate FTE rose by 4.0% compared to Fall 2023. These totals include approximately 100 Dual/Concurrent Enrollment students, consistent with the prior year. Growth was driven primarily by first-time, first-year matriculated students, with the Fall 2024 first-year class increasing by 21%—the largest since 2018—excluding Dual/Concurrent enrollments. This growth was fueled by enhanced marketing, a more strategic admissions process, and the adoption of the Otho predictive analytics model, which has improved funnel predictability and enabled more effective allocation of institutional aid. As a result, Net Tuition Revenue (NTR) for first-year students increased by \$2 million over Fall 2023. New student enrollment gains contributed to overall full-time enrollment growth of 0.8% in Fall 2024, with a projected 5.6% increase for Fall 2025 (see *Strategic Enrollment Management Plan* in *Area of Focus #3*).

Retention gains accompanied these enrollment increases. First-year retention from Fall 2024 to Spring 2025 reached 89%, reflecting stronger persistence. Spring 2025 enrollment was bolstered by 201

additional full-time undergraduate students—an 11.4% increase in headcount and an 8.6% increase in FTE over Spring 2024. This increase includes 393 part-time Dual/Concurrent Enrollment students, marking significant growth in Early College opportunities. Updates to the Dual/Concurrent Enrollment Memoranda of Understanding with local high schools have strengthened partnerships, made the program more attractive, and expanded access (see also outreach initiatives in *Area of Focus #1*).

Key Enrollment Highlights

- **Fall 2024:**
 - +0.7% undergraduate headcount (includes ~100 Dual/Concurrent Enrollment students; consistent with prior year)
 - +4.0% undergraduate FTE
 - +21% first-time, first-year matriculated students (excludes Dual/Concurrent Enrollment)
 - \$2M increase in Net Tuition Revenue for first-year students over Fall 2023
- **Spring 2025:**
 - +11.4% undergraduate headcount
 - +8.6% undergraduate FTE
 - +201 additional full-time undergraduates
 - 393 part-time Dual/Concurrent Enrollment students (significant growth)

Graduate Enrollment Trends

Graduate enrollment trends also reflect positive momentum. In Spring 2025, graduate headcount reached 564, representing a 2.4% increase from Spring 2024. Early registration data for Fall 2025 (as of June 23, 2025) indicated a projected 6% increase in graduate headcount year-over-year and a 5.3% increase in graduate credit hours. These gains are linked to the expansion of workforce-aligned and applied graduate programs, enhanced recruitment efforts, and greater flexibility in program delivery. The momentum in graduate enrollment is expected to strengthen as new programs, such as those identified in the Program Development section of *Area of Focus #3*, continue to be marketed and launched.

Yield Rate Performance

In Fall 2024, the admissions office achieved a 17% yield rate on admitted students, an improvement over Fall 2023. The combination of increased applications and stronger yield produced a 21% increase in the size of the first-year class—the largest since 2018. Since Fall 2023, WCSU has leveraged Othot’s AI-driven model to guide application, yield, and scholarship strategies, creating greater predictability in the enrollment funnel and enabling more effective optimization of institutional aid. As a result, NTR for first-year students increased by \$2 million compared to Fall 2023. New student enrollment gains also drove overall full-time enrollment growth of 0.08% in Fall 2024, with current projections indicating a 5.6% increase for Fall 2025.

This growth was supported by data-informed recruitment strategies that targeted markets with the greatest potential for enrollment gains, as well as an updated merit award matrix that provided scholarships to more students earlier in the admissions funnel. These efforts expanded WCSU’s local market share and advanced the early success of new out-of-state recruitment pipelines.

Complementary initiatives further supported yield and student success. WCSU updated its Dual/Concurrent Enrollment MOUs to make the program more attractive to local high schools, boosting participation in Spring 2025. A new advisement model, built around professional advisors, was implemented to provide wrap-around services for first-year students. In addition, WCSU revised its first-year seminar (UNI 101) to create a consistent experience across all majors and updated its academic probation/suspension policy to give students more time and support to get back on track.

Collectively, these strategies strengthened recruitment outcomes and positioned students for long-term persistence (see *Recruitment & Enrollment Strategies* in *Area of Focus #3*).

Key Yield, Revenue, & Student Success Highlights

- **Fall 2024:**
 - 17% yield rate (↑ from Fall 2023)
 - +21% first-year class size, largest since 2018
 - \$2M increase in first-year NTR vs. Fall 2023
 - 0.08% overall FT enrollment growth in Fall 2024; +5.6% projected for Fall 2025
 - Othot AI model optimizing application, yield, and aid strategies
- **Student Success & Pipeline Enhancements:**
 - Updated Dual/Concurrent Enrollment MOUs boosted local high school participation (Spring 2025)
 - New professional advisor model providing wrap-around first-year support
 - Revised UNI 101 course for consistency across all majors
 - Updated academic probation/suspension policy allowing more recovery time for students

Program Realignment and Academic Innovation

Informed by both internal analysis and an external program review conducted in partnership with Central State during Spring and Summer 2025, WCSU has reconfigured academic offerings to better align with workforce needs, student demand, and institutional resources. Low-enrolled or low-completer programs have been phased out, while high-demand programs have been expanded or introduced. This process included faculty-led curriculum redesign, incorporation of applied learning components, and the launch of new accelerated (4+1) pathways to retain undergraduates into graduate study. These program adjustments are tied directly to the enrollment and budget modeling discussed in *Area of Focus #3* and are expected to yield stronger enrollment pipelines and higher program completion rates.

Programs Closed or Reconfigured:

- BA in Social Sciences (sunset due to low enrollment)
- Several majors restructured for clarity and relevance

New or Revised Programs Include:

- BS in Atmospheric and Climate Science
- MM in Music Performance
- MS in Artificial Intelligence
- New concentrations in MBA and BBA programs
- Accelerated 4+1 programs, including BBA-MBA pathway
- High-demand additions in Homeland Security, Applied Behavior Analysis, and Doctor of Nursing Practice
- Accelerated Nursing Program
- BFA Art
- BM in Music Performance

Online and Adult Learner Strategy

Recognizing the growing importance of flexibility in program delivery, WCSU has broadened its online and hybrid course offerings to better serve adult learners, working professionals, and students balancing multiple responsibilities. Several graduate programs have adopted fully online formats, and selected undergraduate programs now offer hybrid delivery options to expand access beyond traditional

commuting patterns. The University is also exploring non-credit and certificate-based opportunities through the Workforce Education and Lifelong Learning (WELL) initiative, described in *Area of Focus #3*, as a way to attract new student populations and create on-ramps to degree programs. This multi-pronged approach to serving adult learners supports both enrollment growth and the University's regional workforce development mission.

Non-Credit and Workforce Education Expansion

WCSU launched a new platform, in partnership with Charter Oak State College (CSCU's online institution), in January 2025 to offer career-aligned, non-credit micro-credentials to adult learners, working professionals, and industry partners. This expansion aligns with the institution's strategic plan and its mission to serve the evolving educational needs of the region.

As indicated in *Focus Area #3*, to guide this work, WCSU developed the Workforce Education and Lifelong Learning (WELL) Framework, a comprehensive blueprint that:

- Establishes program design standards and quality benchmarks
- Emphasizes adaptability to support expanded opportunities and access
- Aligns offerings with labor market intelligence and regional economic priorities
- Outlines institutional partnership models and internal coordination pathways

The WELL Framework marks a major milestone for WCSU and provides a sustainable foundation for non-credit programming that complements credit-bearing academic degrees.

To lead this initiative, the School of Graduate, International, and Career Studies (SGICS) appointed an Associate Director of Workforce Development and Applied Learning. This leadership role is responsible for:

- Overseeing non-credit program development
- Cultivating partnerships with regional employers
- Ensuring non-credit offerings reflect industry needs and align with the WELL Framework

Recent Program Launches

- Foundations of Cybersecurity Certificate (2025) – successfully launched with strong participation and positive feedback
- Medical Interpretation Certificate – scheduled for launch in August 2025, expanding offerings in high-demand, bilingual workforce sectors

These early efforts have positioned WCSU as a regional leader in upskilling, reskilling, and lifelong learning. Additional non-credit offerings are in development.

Undergraduate Recruitment

WCSU employs a comprehensive, data-informed undergraduate recruitment strategy that integrates targeted outreach, regional partnerships, and predictive analytics.

- **Pipeline Engagement:** Annual outreach to more than 500 high schools across Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey, with over 700 combined visits, panels, and events. These efforts have supported consistent 7–8% annual growth in the fall application pool.
- **Predictive Modeling:** Adoption of Othot's AI-driven model in Fall 2023 to guide application, yield, and scholarship strategies. The model has increased predictability in the enrollment funnel and optimized the allocation of institutional aid. In Fall 2024, Net Tuition Revenue (NTR) for first-year students rose by \$2 million compared to Fall 2023. New student enrollment gains

contributed to full-time enrollment growth of 0.8% in Fall 2024, with a projected 5.6% increase for Fall 2025.

- **Local Market Saturation:** Intensive engagement with eight local high schools through on-site decision days, FAFSA workshops, and college readiness programming.
- **Events and Campus Visits:** Daily campus tours, monthly preview days, open houses, and targeted counselor receptions designed to convert prospective students into enrollees.
- **Marketing and Outreach:** Geo-targeted digital campaigns and out-of-home advertising to build brand awareness and drive prospective student inquiries.

Transfer Recruitment

Transfer students remain a significant opportunity for growth. WCSU is prioritizing this segment through strengthened articulation agreements, streamlined credit evaluation, and enhanced outreach to “some college, no degree” adults in the region. WCSU continues to strengthen its transfer strategy by removing barriers, building faculty-to-faculty relationships, and participating in statewide initiatives:

- **Community College Partnerships:** High-touch engagement with CT State campuses (e.g., NVCC, NCC, NWCC) through advising visits, faculty presentations, and guaranteed admission pathways.
- **Systemwide Alignment:** Active participation in NASH, STEP, and Universal Transfer Explorer to simplify credit evaluation and engage early-intent students.
- **Predictive Modeling Expansion:** In 2025, WCSU will implement a new transfer-specific Othot model to guide scholarship, outreach, and yield strategies.

Graduate and International Enrollment

Through the newly configured the SGICS, WCSU is pursuing sustainable growth and global competitiveness by aligning graduate education with workforce demands and international market opportunities. Key strategies include:

- **Targeted Pathways:** Fast-Track Admissions, 4+1 programs, flexible formats for working adults and veterans, and employer partnerships.
- **International Recruitment:** Dedicated staff, visa support, expanded STEM programs, and global partnership development.
- **Technology-Driven Outreach:** AI-powered digital campaigns, virtual office hours, alumni testimonials, and SEO optimization to boost reach and engagement.
- **Career Integration:** Employer-sponsored admissions, tuition reimbursement programs, and co-op tracks linked to graduate programs.

Enrollment Process Optimization and Impact Monitoring

- **CRM and Application Funnel Management:** WCSU uses TargetX as the system of record for the Office of Admissions, tracking student interactions, campus visits, and conversion rates. Implemented in Fall 2013, TargetX captures all admission inquiries and applications, with a bidirectional, real-time data integration to the University’s Student Information System (Banner). Prior to implementation, the admissions office lacked an inquiry management system and a systematic communication plan for prospective students.
- **Automated Outreach:** TargetX enables automated application tracking and personalized follow-up communications to increase conversion from inquiry to enrollment.
- **KPIs and Dashboards:** Centralized key performance indicators and dashboards monitor enrollment growth, retention, and career outcomes, with annual reporting used to guide continuous improvement efforts.

Financial Aid Optimization

WCSU has made targeted improvements to its financial aid strategy, focusing on equity, efficiency, and student success. The following seven initiatives support recruitment, retention, and financial literacy:

Aid Packaging Automation

Through partnerships with Othot and Ellucian, WCSU implemented algorithm-based financial aid packaging that prioritizes Pell-eligible, on-campus students. This system ensures full tuition and fee coverage for qualifying students and accelerates award delivery, improving both equity and operational efficiency.

- **Impact:** Increased accuracy and predictability in aid packaging to support yield and retention; as of July 31, 2025, packages issued rose 18.98% for freshmen, 19.14% for transfers, and 18.07% for continuing students compared to the same date in 2024. The total number of packages has already exceeded the entire 2024–2025 academic year by 4.33%.
- **Next:** Continue refining packaging algorithms and monitor results to ensure equity, consistency, and positive enrollment outcomes.

FAFSA Completion Campaign

In response to federal delays in the 2024–2025 FAFSA cycle, WCSU hosted over 30 bilingual workshops, assisting approximately 500 families in completing applications. This coordinated outreach aimed to mitigate the impact of national disruptions and maintain financial aid accessibility for incoming and continuing students.

- **Impact:** FAFSA completion rates reached 17.8% above the national average and 11.3% above the state average; more than 1,000 additional students were packaged compared to the prior year. As of July 31, 2025, completion rates for new and unduplicated FAFSAs increased 41.5% over 2024–2025 and 15% over 2023–2024.
- **Next:** Finalize a comprehensive annual outreach plan, coordinate efforts across recruitment units, and prepare for the 2026–2027 cycle with August beta testing and an October launch.

Community-Based Partnerships

WCSU expanded engagement with local and regional access programs, including Waterbury Promise and Higher Heights Youth Empowerment, to strengthen pipelines for underrepresented students.

- **Impact:** Enrollment of Waterbury Promise students increased by 50%, strengthening the connection between community partnerships and access goals.
- **Next:** Explore last-dollar match scholarships and expand partnerships to include Hartford Promise and New Haven Promise initiatives.

Danbury Promise Development

In 2024, WCSU initiated discussions with city officials and business leaders to develop a Danbury Promise initiative, aimed at providing targeted financial and mentoring support for local students.

- **Impact:** Initial momentum was delayed due to leadership transitions, pausing active development.
- **Next:** Re-engage city, business, and philanthropic stakeholders in Fall 2025 to assess feasibility, gauge community and foundation interest, and determine the commitment required to advance a local Promise program focused on FAFSA completion, mentorship, and last-dollar awards.

Tuition-Free/Last-Dollar Feasibility

Exploring institutional scholarship options to remain competitive with regional public institutions.

- **Next:** Launch a feasibility study to assess cost, impact, and ROI.

SAP (Satisfactory Academic Progress) Monitoring

Enhanced early alert and appeal processes have been implemented for students falling below SAP standards. Students placed on Academic Plans for Success receive wraparound academic support to improve outcomes.

- **Impact:**
 - Expanded use of Highland OnBase technology has streamlined the appeal process, making submissions more accessible and efficient.
 - A larger University Appeals Committee—with representation from academics, financial aid, housing, the registrar’s office, and advisement—ensures a holistic review process that recognizes academic challenges may stem from broader personal or institutional barriers.
 - This inclusive, student-centered approach has contributed to significant improvements in compliance:
 - 12% decline in SAP non-compliance from Spring to Fall 2025
 - 69% reduction in SAP warnings in the same period
- **Next:** Finalize new SAP policy for 2025–26, increasing the GPA requirement to 2.0; Launch a campus-wide communication campaign to ensure awareness and understanding of updated standards

Student Loan Repayment & Default Management

In partnership with Education Credit Management Corporation (ECMC), WCSU expanded borrower outreach as federal loan repayments resumed in 2025. More than 12,000 personalized communications were sent to delinquent borrowers and those at risk of delinquency, providing information on repayment options, financial resources, and direct connections to ECMC for individualized assistance.

- **Impact:** Conducted over 12,000 targeted borrower communications, improving financial literacy, reducing default risk, and strengthening Cohort Default Rate management; delinquency rates for 31+ day late payments declined from 18.12% in May 2025 to 15.18% in June and 13.63% in July, significantly outperforming peer institutions in the region.
- **Next:** Host webinars on repayment strategies, integrate repayment counseling into academic advising, and assess staffing needs in the Office of Financial Aid to maintain proactive borrower support.

Strategic Enrollment Management Plan (2025–2030) (Draft)

Over the course of Summer 2025, WCSU’s Enrollment Team, in partnership with the Senior Leadership Team, conducted a focused review of institutional enrollment trends, market conditions, and fiscal projections to identify a sustainable path forward for student growth. Just as the multi-year financial plan in *Area of Focus #3* establishes a disciplined framework for aligning resources with WCSU’s priorities, its success ultimately depends on our ability to generate stable, sustainable enrollment growth. Financial stability and enrollment health are not parallel tracks—they are interdependent commitments that must be advanced in unison. The *Strategic Enrollment Management Plan (2025–2030)(Draft)* (see *Appendix 4-1*) is therefore designed as the operational counterpart to the financial plan, translating budget assumptions into tangible recruitment, retention, and program strategies. By directly linking enrollment targets to resource allocation, program investment, and market opportunities, this framework ensures that every fiscal decision is informed

by realistic enrollment trajectories, and every enrollment initiative is grounded in the financial realities and opportunities outlined in our five-year plan. Together, they form a single roadmap for WCSU's recovery, resilience, and long-term renewal.

The Summer 2025 review encompassed academic, student support, financial, and enrollment operations to assess future enrollment trajectories. This work has included:

- A review of demographic and market trends in Connecticut and the broader tri-state region, including high school graduate trends.
- Evaluation of historical enrollment, retention, and graduation data.
- An analysis of early indicators from current enrollment cycles, including promising increases in registered credit hours, housing demand, and first-year applications.

These insights informed a set of scenario-based projections designed to help WCSU plan intentionally and adaptively. Three draft scenarios were developed:

1. A **Baseline/Conservative (No Change or Modest Decline)** scenario projecting continued decline.
2. A **Moderate Adjustment** scenario based on current strategic efforts.
3. A **Bold Transformation** scenario requiring significant investment and cultural shifts.

Through ongoing discussion and financial modeling, a fourth scenario emerged—Budget-Aligned Growth—as the most viable path for achieving enrollment stability and progress without overextending institutional capacity. This scenario assumes 4% enrollment growth in Fall 2025 and Fall 2026, followed by 2% growth annually through 2029. It balances ambition with feasibility, and supports the University's financial recovery goals, including the elimination of reserve use by FY27 and rebuilding reserves in the years following. This new scenario reflects not only the fiscal expectations embedded in the FY26-FY30 biennium planning process, but also the real-time adjustments already underway to stabilize undergraduate pipelines, reengage adult learners, and invest in retention.

Importantly, the Budget-Aligned Growth Scenario maintains flexibility. It does not preclude movement toward the Moderate Adjustment Scenario if strategic investments, resource prioritization, and market conditions allow—but it sets a practical foundation that builds confidence, restores institutional health, and repositions WCSU for long-term success.

The scenarios and projections are part of a living planning document. Final enrollment goals for the FY26–FY30 period and accompanying rationale will be finalized in consultation with the campus community following feedback during Fall 2025 and reviewed annually.

These enrollment projections and strategies demonstrate WCSU's capacity for sustainable planning, financial responsibility, and support for mission-aligned student enrollment and retention.

Budget-Aligned Growth Scenario (Aligned to FY26–FY30 Biennium Planning)

This scenario reflects the enrollment trajectory required to align with WCSU's five-year budget planning assumptions: a 4% year-over-year increase in enrollment for Fall 2025 and Fall 2026, followed by 2% annual growth through Fall 2029. It represents a pragmatic, financially responsible path that builds stability without requiring the full investments assumed in more aggressive scenarios (Moderate and Bold Transformation scenarios).

This budget-aligned path builds incremental growth and revenue predictability through measured

gains in undergraduate and graduate enrollment. It enables elimination of reserve use by FY27 and supports rebuilding reserves while avoiding overextension of staff, systems, or space. While it lacks the dramatic upside of the Bold Transformation scenario, it maintains WCSU’s viability and resilience. The following points highlight why this approach is the most practical and financially sustainable path for WCSU over the FY2–FY30 period:

- Aligns directly with the biennial budget forecast and FY26–FY30 financial modeling presented to the CSCU BOR in June 2025.
- Achieves sustainable enrollment growth without requiring unrealistic gains in first-year or graduate populations.
- Allows the University to phase in new programs and partnerships while continuing to strengthen retention.
- Supports long-term stabilization of housing, tuition, and auxiliary revenue, which are projected to grow in parallel.

Table 2: Total Headcount by Year (Budget-Aligned Projections)

Year	Total Headcount	YoY Change	% YoY	Change from 2024
2024	4,169	—	—	—
2025	4,336	+167	+4.0%	+167
2026	4,509	+173	+4.0%	+340
2027	4,599	+90	+2.0%	+430
2028	4,691	+92	+2.0%	+522
2029	4,784	+93	+2.0%	+615
Total Change			+14.8%	+615

Table 3: Segment-Level Breakout (First-Year UG, Transfer UG, Graduate)

Year	Total Headcount	First-Year UG	Transfer UG	Graduate
2024	4,169	850	325	602
2025	4,336	860 (+1.2%)	340 (+4.6%)	650 (+8.0%)
2026	4,509	875 (+1.7%)	350 (+2.9%)	700 (+7.7%)
2027	4,599	890 (+1.7%)	355 (+1.4%)	715 (+2.1%)
2028	4,691	900 (+1.1%)	360 (+1.4%)	730 (+2.1%)
2029	4,784	910 (+1.1%)	365 (+1.4%)	740 (+1.4%)
Total Growth	+615 (+14.8%)	+60 (+7.1%)	+40 (+12.3%)	+138 (+22.9%)

Assumptions

- **First-Year Undergraduate:** Small, steady gains driven by better yield strategies, early FAFSA restoration, and focused out-of-region pipelines (e.g., NY, NJ, MA). Growth is capped due to limits in market share without major investment.
- **Transfer Students:** Recovery is slower but benefits from articulation improvements and outreach to adult learners and “some-college-no-degree” (SCND) populations. It is estimated that nearly 40,000 adults fall into this category in Western Connecticut. Growth ranges between 2.9% and 1.4% annually.
- **Graduate Students:** Strongest proportional growth, with momentum from new or online programs and workforce-aligned offerings. Growth is frontloaded in FY25–FY26 and stabilizes in outer years.

Strategies Enabling this Projection

- Continued execution of existing *Western Rising* strategies, especially in yield improvement and reengagement of transfer and adult students.
- Modest but targeted growth in graduate enrollment via online expansion and workforce-aligned credentials.
- Retention improvements driven by early academic alerts, integrated advising, and new momentum-based scholarship incentives.
- Gradual expansion of out-of-region pipelines (NY/NJ/MA) and Spanish-language outreach in local high schools.
- Reinvestment of modest surpluses into marketing, CRM infrastructure, and housing conversion.

While the Budget-Aligned Growth Scenario provides a responsible baseline, WCSU remains positioned to pursue more aspirational growth as outlined in the Moderate Adjustment Scenario, should conditions and investments allow.

Moderate Adjustment Scenario as Aspirational Option

While the Budget-Aligned Growth Scenario sets a responsible baseline, WCSU recognizes the potential for more ambitious growth should resources, partnerships, and retention strategies scale effectively. If current momentum can be accelerated—particularly in housing demand, articulation agreements, and brand positioning—WCSU may still reach or exceed the Moderate Adjustment Scenario. This would mean surpassing 5,000 headcount by Fall 2029. However, first-year undergraduate student growth cannot be assumed from in-state demand alone. Consider partnerships (e.g., NY, NJ, MA) and adult learner pipelines. Retention will be a critical variable. Increased registered credits suggest an opportunity for progressive gains.

Table 4: Headcount by Year (Moderate Scenario Projections)

Year	Total Headcount	First-Year UG	Transfer UG	Graduate
2024	4,169	850	325	602
2025	4,430	850 (+0.0%)	360 (+10.8%)	600 (−0.3%)
2026	4,600	875 (+2.9%)	375 (+4.2%)	650 (+8.3%)
2027	4,750	900 (+2.9%)	390 (+4.0%)	700 (+7.7%)
2028	4,900	925 (+2.8%)	400 (+2.6%)	750 (+7.1%)
2029	5,050	940 (+1.6%)	410 (+2.5%)	750 (+0.0%)
Total Growth	+881 (+21.1%)	+90 (+10.6%)	+85 (+26.2%)	+148 (+24.6%)

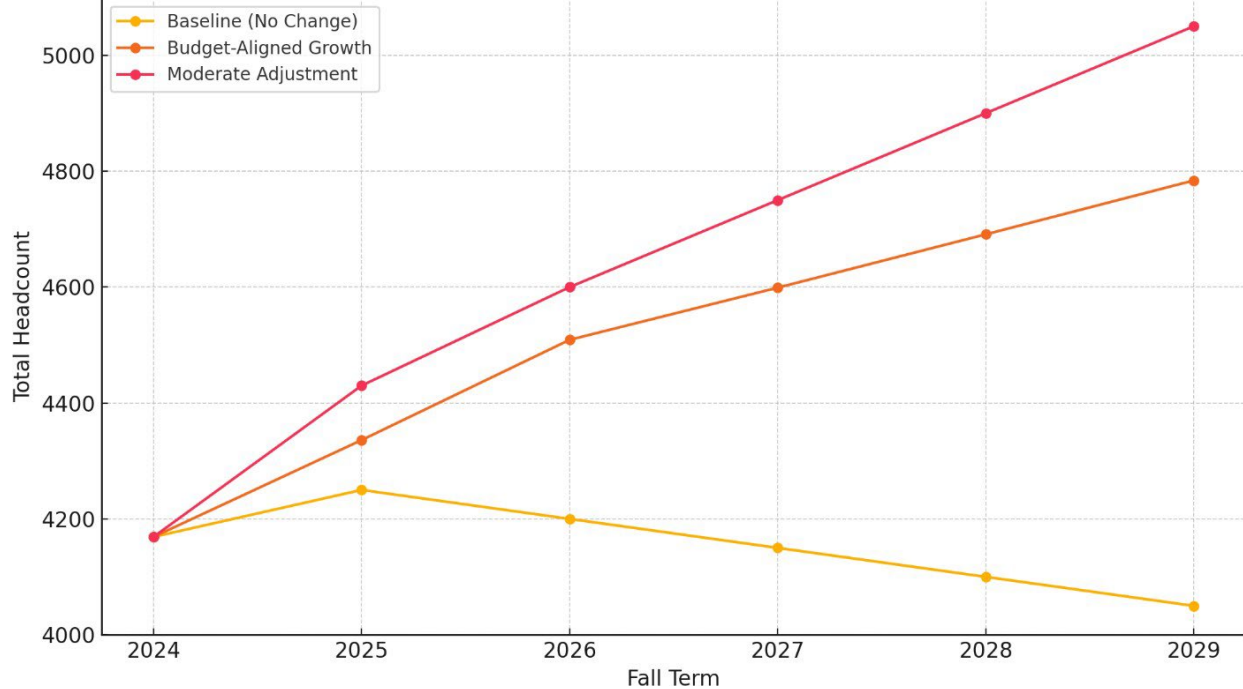
Assumptions

- First-year undergraduate students grow only with investment in out-of-region or new pipelines.
- Transfer student strategy includes improved articulation and adult re-engagement.
- Graduate student growth is contingent on program development, market alignment, potential online expansion, and strategic partnerships.

Strategies Enabling this Projection

- Strategic investments in marketing to adult learners and degree completers.
- Additional transfer pipelines from CT State and NY community colleges.
- Development of new low-cost graduate programs with online delivery.
- Housing partnerships to improve conversion and capacity.
- Boosted HSI identity and outreach through culturally responsive campaigns and events.

Figure 1. Projected Enrollment Trajectories by Scenario (Fall 2024–2029)



These projections, especially the aspirational Moderate Adjustment scenario, are contingent on successful implementation of new initiatives and favorable market conditions. WCSU is prepared to adjust targets if assumptions (e.g., out-of-state yield increases or retention improvements) do not materialize as expected.

Presidential Vision: A Framework for Enrollment and Institutional Renewal

WCSU’s enrollment plan is more than a numbers exercise—it reflects our larger commitment to becoming a distinctly student-ready, regionally responsive, and future-focused public university. Under the leadership of President Bernal, our institutional strategy is rooted in three guiding commitments: to welcome all learners and foster belonging, to weave academic and student supports for seamless completion, and to widen pathways to opportunity through innovative and industry-aligned programming. These principles will shape every aspect of our enrollment vision—from serving adult learners and transfer students, to building out bilingual support systems, micro-credentials, and applied learning in every major. With a focus on shared leadership, equity, and bold investment, WCSU is not just stabilizing—we are building the conditions for transformative growth, sustainability, and impact in service to Connecticut.

Baseline/Conservative Scenario

While WCSU has adopted the Budget-Aligned Growth Scenario for its multi-year enrollment plan, the University has also prepared a conservative scenario assuming flat enrollment or modest declines over the next five years (see *Area of Focus #3*). This conservative projection is built to ensure that institutional sustainability is not dependent on optimistic enrollment assumptions. Under this model, the University would respond to constrained revenue by expanding alternative revenue-generating initiatives, optimizing space and facilities (including continued review of two-campus viability), seeking additional system support, and continuing to implement targeted cost-containment and staffing strategies. The inclusion of this conservative scenario underscores WCSU’s commitment to responsible planning and transparent risk management in both financial and enrollment projections.

Future Actions

WCUS's enrollment and retention work is not finished. The enrollment modeling presented in this update establishes a grounded, forward-looking foundation for WCSU's long-term growth and financial sustainability. Building from this work, several key areas of focus will shape the next phase of strategic enrollment management:

Segment-Level Opportunity Mapping

WCSU will enhance enrollment planning by disaggregating data across key student groups—including adult learners, Latino and Hispanic students, student-athletes, Pell-eligible students, and first-generation learners. These insights will guide targeted outreach, programming, and support services to improve yield, persistence, and student achievement in alignment with NECHE Standard 8.

College- and Program-Level Analysis

Through the use of Gray Decision Intelligence (Gray DI), WCSU is implementing real-time dashboards for program performance, labor market alignment, and student demand. This supports:

- College-specific enrollment targets
- Program portfolio optimization
- Evidence-based decisions about investments, redesigns, or phase-outs
- Cross-functional planning involving academic affairs, finance, and enrollment

This ensures sustainable academic growth.

Alternative Academic Delivery Models

To better serve transfer, adult, and returning students, WCSU is exploring:

- Cohort-based models in high-demand fields
- Stackable credentials and non-credit to credit pathways
- Hybrid and accelerated course formats
- Redesigned summer and intersession offerings

These approaches increase flexibility, equity, and student agency.

Strategic Integration and Budget Alignment

Enrollment planning is fully embedded in WCSU's broader institutional strategy. This includes:

- Alignment with the Western Rising framework
- Facilities and IT modernization
- Academic program repositioning
- New budgeting processes guided by Gray DI and multi-year, all-funds planning
- System-level coordination with CSCU initiatives

This integrated approach ensures long-term sustainability.

Campus Engagement and Implementation (Fall 2025-Spring 2026)

To ensure shared ownership and successful execution:

- Draft enrollment projections and strategies will be presented to departments and governance bodies in Fall 2025
- Community feedback will be gathered through forums and work sessions
- A finalized FY26–FY30 Enrollment Plan will be published by Spring 2026 with clear annual targets by segment and college

This transparent planning process reflects NECHE expectations for inclusive governance, assessment, and planning.

Annual reviews of enrollment performance, market trends, and program viability will allow WCSU to remain adaptive and forward-thinking in a changing higher education environment.

Data-Driven Retention Efforts

Retention strategies at WCSU have shifted toward a more proactive, data-driven model that integrates academic, co-curricular, and student support functions. The University has expanded its use of institutional research and predictive analytics to identify at-risk students earlier in the semester and connect them with timely interventions. This includes coordinated outreach by professional advisors, faculty, and Student Affairs staff, as well as increased use of early alert and academic progress reporting systems. The Retention Committee, co-chaired by Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, continues to monitor persistence trends by population group and to recommend targeted support initiatives. These actions have contributed to the recent gains in first-year retention and will remain a central focus as the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan is fully implemented (see *Area of Focus #3*).

Retention Plan 2025-2030 (In Progress)

The WCSU Comprehensive Retention Plan is a collaborative effort between the Division of Academic Affairs and the Division of Enrollment Management & Student Affairs. This partnership strategically identifies the key factors—both within and outside the classroom—that influence student retention and success. The plan emphasizes alignment with NECHE Standards and addresses institutional concerns cited in the Commission’s March 2024 Notice of Concern.

A working draft of the plan includes 44 strategies/actions organized into three major focus areas:

Focus Area	Number of Strategies/Actions
Academic Programming & Institutional Effectiveness	15
Wrap-around Support Services	23
Financial Support	6

Each strategy is embedded within a data-informed decision-making framework supported by the Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness. This office will track outcomes over time, assess program impact, and drive resource reallocation as needed. The focus on measurable impact ensures that interventions are not only implemented but also evaluated and improved over time to ensure evidence-based institutional improvement.

Retention Targets and Context

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the national average retention rate for public four-year institutions similar to WCSU is 78.7%, with the Connecticut state average at 80%. WCSU’s five-year average is approximately 73%. The University has established a realistic goal of reaching the national average within five years, with an incremental 1% increase in retention annually. Achieving this target would result in the retention of approximately 215 additional students over five years, with significant academic, financial, and community benefits. To advance toward this goal, WCSU is prioritizing evidence-based drivers of student persistence, including: (1) the Senate-approved extension of the academic probation period paired with coordinated wraparound academic support, which has already reduced academic suspensions by over 75% in one year; (2) the institutionalization of UNI 101 as a required First Year Experience course, following a pilot that

achieved an 86.1% Fall-to-Spring retention rate; and (3) expanded bilingual peer mentoring and targeted HSI-aligned programming to strengthen belonging and success among Latino/a students. Additional strategies, including those related to financial aid optimization, co-curricular engagement, and emergency aid expansion, are described in the “Representative Strategies” tables and program examples later in this section.

Status and Timeline

The Retention Plan is currently in draft form. Work will continue during the Summer and Fall 2025 terms to:

- Prioritize the proposed strategies
- Finalize specific annual and five-year targets (designated by “◆” in the table below)
- Align institutional resources accordingly

Representative Strategies (Exemplars)

Below are illustrative examples of actions identified under each strategic area.

Strategies, Draft Goals, Timelines, and NECHE Alignment (as of July 2025)

Key:

◆ = Draft target to be finalized in Summer/Fall 2025

Responsible Office = Primary accountable unit for implementation

Timeline = Anticipated launch period or target completion window

Academic Programming & Institutional Effectiveness

Strategy / Action	Goal / Target (Draft)	Timeline	Responsible Office
Academic Probation & Suspension Policy. <i>[Senate passed a resolution in May 2024 to extend probation period up to 3 semesters.]</i>	Using past 3 years data to baseline suspensions. Require advising plans to include wrap-around support. ◆	Fall 2025 launch	Academic Affairs, Advising Center
Create 8 new accelerated 4+1 programs via new Graduate, International, Career Services structure.	Retain UG students into grad programs. Target: 50 new students ◆. Increase graduate enrollment by 8% by Fall 2027.	2025–2027	School of Graduate & Professional Studies
Secure HSI-aligned grants to retain Hispanic students.	\$1M over 2 years to retain +1% of Hispanic students (disaggregated data) annually. ◆	Fall 2025–Fall 2027	Provost’s office, Institutional Advancement, DEI Office
See <i>Area of Focus #6</i> for how assessment of learning outcomes is being used to improve academic programs, which in turn supports retention.			

Wrap-around Support Services

Strategy / Action	Goal / Target (Draft)	Timeline	Responsible Office
Expand Peer-Mentoring (UNI 101) and multilingual mentor capacity.	2x more peer mentors, 4x multilingual mentors. Reach 100% of UNI 101 sections. Workshops each semester. ◆	Spring 2025–Fall 2026	Student Affairs, Academic Affairs
Increase club & sports engagement (MVB, MBB, Martial Arts).	Launch informally in Spring 2025; full implementation Fall 2025. ◆	Spring–Fall 2025	Student Affairs, Athletics
Institutionalize UNI 101 First Year Experience.	Pass UNI 101 through governance in Spring 2025. Required Fall 2025. Piloted with 86.1% F24–S25 retention. ◆	Spring–Fall 2025	Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, University Senate

Financial Support

Strategy / Action	Goal / Target (Draft)	Timeline	Responsible Office
Increase financial aid awareness and FAFSA completion.	Boost FAFSA completion by 5% ◆. 90% of first-year students complete FAFSA ◆.	AY 2025–2026	Financial Aid, Enrollment Management
Grow emergency aid fund; reduce dropouts from financial distress.	Increase scholarship donations by 5% ◆. Build revolving + endowed funds.	AY 2025–2027	Institutional Advancement, Dean of Students, Financial Aid

These enrollment and retention strategies directly support realistic retention goals and the use of outcomes to inform program and service development.

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness will work collaboratively with the identified responsible offices to monitor, track, and evaluate the extent to which the enrollment and retention strategies are yielding in the intended results. As part of the office’s Calendar of Reports (see *Appendix 6-4*) to be rolled out in Fall 2025, two reports will be produced at the end of the Fall and Spring semesters based on the data collected from monitoring and tracking. The Fall report will provide university leadership with a one semester interim progress while the spring report will be an end of year report. The report will highlight areas of progress, challenges, and recommendations for midcourse corrections and improvements.

Enrollment growth and improved retention are not only student success goals but also critical to WCSU’s financial health. The multi-year financial plan (*Area of Focus #3*) relies on these

realistic enrollment projections – hence our focus on ensuring these targets are met through the strategies outlined above. If we fall short, we will revise our financial plans accordingly.

AREA OF FOCUS #5: Ensuring Adequate Staffing in Student Support Services and Facilities

NECHE emphasized that WCSU must “ensure it has sufficient staff to support students and maintain facilities moving forward.”

Adequacy of Staffing Resources

Staffing changes are strategically aligned with institutional priorities, ensuring that reductions and additions directly support areas of highest need. WCSU has taken deliberate steps to stabilize staffing, close long-standing resource gaps, and modernize HR operations. A comprehensive personnel analysis by the Office of Human Resources—detailed in the Strategic Workforce Overview and Peer Comparisons section (See *Staffing Comparison Summary*)—benchmarked WCSU’s staffing ratios against seven peer institutions using Fall 2023 IPEDS data. This review identified both critical needs (e.g., counseling services, academic advising, custodial and facilities operations, public safety, and select instructional areas tied to program growth) and areas where staffing is at or above peer levels. Drawing on these findings, as well as peer benchmarking, campus consultation, and strategic reinvestment, the University has developed a multi-year roadmap to strengthen capacity while preserving student-facing services (as detailed in *Area of Focus #3*, WCSU’s five-year financial plan provides the resource framework that supports this multi-year staffing roadmap). The initiatives outlined below form the foundation for continued progress and sustained compliance with NECHE Standards, aligning staffing with institutional priorities, student needs, and long-term financial sustainability. Key components include:

- Peer institution staffing comparisons
- Financial strategies for targeted staffing investments
- Review and refinement of the Position Review Committee process
- Evaluation of recruitment platforms and software
- Improved recruitment and outreach strategies
- Retention initiatives such as recognition programs and employee engagement
- A communication strategy to enhance campus-wide transparency
- The development of structured mentorship programs

This roadmap was developed by the Chief Human Resources Officer and reviewed with union leadership in March 2025. Following that consultation, the plan was shared with the full campus community via email, along with a survey to solicit input. A campus-wide Town Hall was held in April 2025, with 31 in-person attendees, 20 virtual participants, and 19 additional survey responses. Feedback from these forums has been incorporated into the final version of the HR plan outlined below.

WCSU has experienced notable staffing reductions over the past decade, particularly in facilities, custodial services, and student support areas. In November 2015, the student headcount was 5,818 and the full-time employee headcount was 602; by November 2024, these numbers had declined to 4,137 students and 494 full-time employees. This reflects a significant reduction in staffing that has occurred in parallel with declining enrollment. In response, the University has adopted a data-informed approach to workforce planning, including benchmarking against peer institutions, optimizing staffing through attrition and reassignment, investing in automation, and developing structured retention strategies. The following analysis outlines how WCSU is maintaining operations, addressing staffing needs, and preparing for long-term workforce sustainability. See *Appendix 5-1*. Also see *Area of Focus #7*, for WCSU’s inclusive hiring initiatives – aligning with emphasis on diversity in staffing.

WCSU recognizes that understaffing in areas like counseling and facilities can affect the student experience (e.g., wait times for appointments or maintenance). Addressing these gaps is a top priority, and, in the interim, we are monitoring service metrics to ensure student support and safety remain adequate.

Strategic Workforce Overview and Peer Comparisons

Over the past decade, WCSU has experienced notable staffing reductions, particularly in facilities, custodial services, and student support areas. In response, the University has adopted a data-informed approach to workforce planning that includes benchmarking against peer institutions, optimizing staffing through attrition and reassignment, expanding process automation, and deploying structured retention strategies.

Staffing comparisons were based on data from seven peer institutions identified in a recent CSCU-commissioned report by the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS): Central Connecticut State University (CCSU), Eastern Connecticut State University (ECSU), Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU), Salem State University, SUNY Brockport, SUNY New Paltz, and SUNY Plattsburgh.

Based on Fall 2023 IPEDS data, WCSU’s total student headcount is 4,137. Its most comparable peers by size are ECSU (3,979 students) and SUNY Plattsburgh (4,417 students). Other institutions in the comparison group range in size from SUNY Brockport (6,931) and Salem State (6,239) to SUNY New Paltz (7,420). The largest peers—CCSU (9,712) and SCSU (8,820)—are approximately double the size of WCSU in terms of enrollment. Despite these differences in scale, comparative staffing data from the Fall 2023 IPEDS Human Resources reports provide useful benchmarks. When reviewing the average staffing levels across occupational categories at these institutions, WCSU's ratios demonstrate areas of both alignment and need.

When reviewing the average of the seven peer institutions, below is how WCSU ranks in relation to each Occupational Category with respect to the number of students per staff.

Staffing Comparison Summary (all numbers in headcount)

A comparison of occupational categories shows where WCSU supports more students per staff member than its peers. In some areas, WCSU is relatively aligned; in others, significant gaps exist.

Occupational Category	WCSU	Peer	Difference
All Staff (excludes graduate assistants)	8.31 students per staff	8.26 students per staff	.04 students per staff
Instructional Staff	22.24	22.32	-0.08
Librarians	827.40	678.80	148.60
Library Technicians	689.50	1900.72	-1211.22
Student and Academic Affairs and Other Educational Services	106.08	100.46	5.62
Management	125.36	118.80	6.57
Business and Financial Operations	133.45	102.85	30.60
Computer, Engineering, and Science	137.90	208.41	-70.51
Community, Social Service, Legal Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	153.22	156.83	-3.60

Health Practitioners and Technical	1034.25	389.49	644.76
Service Occupations	66.73	72.33	-5.60
Office and Administrative Support	82.74	81.37	1.37
Natural Resources, Construction, and Maintenance	165.48	206.60	-41.12

WCSU supports more students per staff member than its peers in several key occupational categories, including:

- Librarians (+148.60)
- Student and Academic Affairs and Other Educational Services (+5.62)
- Management (+6.57)
- Business and Financial Operations (+30.60)
- Health Practitioners and Technical (+644.76)
- Office and Administrative Support (+1.37)

While Office and Administrative Support is close to the peer average, the more substantial gaps in student-facing areas (like librarians and health practitioners) suggest a need for targeted reinvestment. Notably, some categories such as Management and Business/Financial Operations—although above peer averages—may not be directly tied to student services and thus may not require immediate staffing adjustments.

WCSU's instructional faculty ratio (-0.08) is essentially aligned with the peer average, indicating stability in this area for now.

These areas were identified as significantly understaffed based on peer benchmarks and are critical to student retention, housing satisfaction, and safety.

The University has identified the following categories for potential staffing investment over the next 3-5 years, subject to meet our financial goals:

- Counseling Services
- Academic Advising
- Custodial Services and 24/7 Facilities Operations
- Health Services
- Public Safety Staffing
- Teaching Faculty in areas of program growth or new offerings

Conversely, WCSU has relatively higher staffing in categories such as:

- Library Technicians (-1211.22)
- Computer, Engineering, and Science (-70.51)

These areas may offer opportunities for role reassignment or consolidation to support priority functions more directly aligned with retention and student support. These areas have been prioritized in WCSU's staffing roadmap; however, the pace of hiring will depend on available funding each year. In the interim, the University is mitigating impacts by cross-training staff, adjusting schedules (as with the facilities third shift example), and leveraging shared services and technology capacity.

Facilities and Public Safety Staffing

Two categories that merit special attention: Service Occupations (-5.60) and Natural Resources,

Construction, and Maintenance (–41.12). These categories primarily encompass Facilities and Public Safety functions—essential to campus operations and student life.

WCSU operates two campuses comprising a total of 408 acres and 32 buildings with over 1.6 million square feet of serviceable space. Despite this scope, Maintenance staffing has dropped from a high of 109 in FY2016 to 66 as of February 2024. Likewise, Connecticut Police & Fire Union positions declined from 22 in FY2014 to 14.

Public safety staff are still expected to provide 24/7/365 coverage, while facilities staff support ongoing residential and academic operations. These realities necessitate new models for maintaining service levels without expanding headcount in the near term. As part of our staffing strategy, all vacated lines are now returned to central administration for evaluation and potential reallocation to areas of greatest institutional need, ensuring resources are deployed in alignment with strategic priorities.

To address immediate needs, WCSU has implemented a creative staffing shift by reallocating an unfilled second-shift position to create a third shift. This change, which results in approximately \$23,000 in savings, enables full campus maintenance coverage—including evenings—particularly in the residence halls. Having staff on hand at night reduces delayed responses, improves the student experience, and may support retention.

Looking forward, WCSU will continue to assess and prioritize facilities and safety roles as financial conditions and enrollment allow.

Union-Level and Departmental Staffing Comparisons

In addition to occupational categories, WCSU compared staffing by union affiliation across sister institutions in the CSCU system. Results from this analysis (see *Appendix 5-1 & 5-2*) show that WCSU staffing is generally in line or stronger in categories such as:

- A&R
- AAUP (Coaches & Trainers)
- AAUP (Instructional Faculty)
- Clerical
- Confidential Unclassified
- Management Unclassified
- SUOAF

However, significant gaps exist in student-facing union categories, most notably:

- AAUP (Counselors)
- Maintenance
- Police

Department/Function	WCSU	CCSU	ECSU	SCSU
Academic Advisement	7	—	12	10
Counseling Services	3	11	6	13
Landscape Technicians	8	Contracted	8	Contracted
Custodians	28	43 + Contracted	56	77
Health Services	3	4	5	6

Communications & Marketing	4	10	7	9
Police	16	23	19	28

According to the International Accreditation of Counseling Services, the recommended staffing level is one full-time equivalent (FTE) counselor per 1,000 to 1,500 students. At WCSU, the reported figure of three full-time staff in the Counseling Department includes both the Administrative Assistant and the Director of Counseling, leaving only one full-time counselor dedicated solely to counseling duties. While the Director also sees students, the Administrative Assistant does not. For Academic Advisement, the National Academic Advising Association does not prescribe a fixed ratio, but benchmark recommendations suggest an ideal of one advisor per 300 students. In Health Services, a benchmark survey by Academic Health Plans indicates that many institutions aim for one health provider per 1,000 to 2,000 students. For campus safety, the Bureau of Justice Statistics reports that public universities average 3.3 full-time campus law enforcement employees per 1,000 students. In facilities, the Association of Physical Plant Administrators in Educational Facilities estimates that to reach the midpoint of staffing standards, WCSU would need to hire approximately 20 additional landscape technicians and 16 additional custodial staff. For Communications and Marketing, no consistent industry standard could be identified.

These data points directly inform how the University will adequately meet staffing requirements and PRC prioritization. They also help identify where strategic reallocation or future investment may be needed to improve the student experience, safety, and institutional effectiveness.

System Value and Collaborative Support

WCSU’s capacity to sustain adequate staffing and operations is significantly strengthened by its membership in the CSCU system. The System Office provides essential shared services and expertise that would otherwise require substantial institutional investment. These supports include:

- **Facilities Planning and Oversight:** Access to system-wide facilities expertise and guidance in capital planning and deferred maintenance.
- **Legal Services:** Centralized legal counsel that assists with contract review, compliance, and risk management.
- **Policy Development:** Coordination of policies across institutions to ensure alignment with state law, system priorities, and best practices.
- **Communications and Public Relations:** Guidance in media relations and system-level messaging, reinforcing WCSU’s external visibility.
- **Collective Bargaining:** Negotiation of union contracts on behalf of the system, relieving campuses of the administrative and financial burden of institution-specific bargaining.
- **Budget and Finance Support:** Technical assistance, financial modeling, and one-time funding allocations that stabilize institutional operations during periods of volatility.

The system also fosters collaborative opportunities with sister institutions, enabling shared services and operational efficiencies. WCSU is exploring the potential to expand these partnerships through shared service agreements and collective buying power. The President is exploring opportunities, in partnership with other state universities, to renegotiate contracts in areas such as bookstore operations and dining services to leverage the size of the system to achieve more favorable terms. An example of this collaborative support occurred in Spring and Summer 2025, when CCSU provided an “external” review team to assist WCSU in IT and facilities planning. CCSU also offered project management support, enhancing WCSU’s capacity to manage complex initiatives without expanding internal staffing.

System-level coordination is further reinforced by regular meetings of the CSCU President’s Council, and similar like-function system groups, which promote cross-institutional alignment and resource-sharing. The Interim Chancellor has engaged deeply with WCSU leadership to support institutional priorities, ensuring that staffing and operational strategies are understood within the broader system context and bolstered by coordinated action.

Together, these system supports enhance WCSU’s ability to deliver high-quality services to students, optimize limited staffing resources, and pursue efficiencies that would not be possible as a stand-alone institution.

Financial Strategy to Meet Staffing Needs

Over the past decade, WCSU has averaged a 10.4% annual turnover rate among full-time employees. With a workforce of approximately 500 full-time positions, this equates to about 50 vacancies each year. As part of its financial sustainability plan, the University aims to reduce the turnover rate to 7.5% over the next 3-5 years while maintaining a stable staffing base of roughly 500 positions.

Reducing turnover while sustaining headcount will enable WCSU to reallocate resources more strategically. Vacancies will be evaluated individually in the context of evolving institutional needs, with opportunities to:

- Shift employees to high-need areas through retraining,
- Share positions across units where feasible, and
- Consolidate or reclassify roles to improve efficiency and create advancement opportunities.

Pending improved finances (as outlined in the Multi-Year Financial Plan), WCSU aims to begin incrementally increasing staffing in the above critical areas. For example, if enrollment targets are met, an additional counselor and several custodial positions will be proposed through the PRC.

Optimizing Faculty and Course Delivery

In Spring 2025, WCSU conducted a comprehensive review of faculty reassigned time, ensuring alignment with the minimum levels outlined in the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Current reassigned time levels are close to these minimums and are being deployed efficiently. Additional analysis of course scheduling and class sizes is ongoing, with optimization planned through predictive analytics and the GrayDI platform for implementation in AY 2026–27, subject to classroom space constraints.

While current instructional faculty levels are comparable to or slightly better than peer institutions, ongoing adjustments will be necessary to align with student demand and institutional priorities. As of the Fall 2024 IPEDS headcount for instructional faculty (excluding coaches, counselors and librarians) WCSU had a student headcount of 4169 and 180 full time Instructional Faculty which is a ratio of 23.16 and Central had a student headcount of 9997 and 411 full-time Instructional Faculty which is a ratio of 24.32 (see *Appendix 5-2*). Through natural attrition, the University will assess whether to refill vacated faculty lines within existing departments or reallocate them to areas of academic growth or new program development, ensuring that instructional capacity is preserved while meeting strategic goals.

Adapting to Changing Conditions

This flexible, data-informed approach positions WCSU to respond effectively to enrollment fluctuations and budgetary conditions. If enrollment declines, the University can implement temporary hiring freezes; if enrollment stabilizes or revenue increases, staffing will be prioritized in high-need areas identified through benchmarking and peer comparisons.

Looking ahead, the June 30, 2027, expiration of the State of Connecticut’s Healthcare and Pension agreement with the State Employees Bargaining Agent Coalition (SEBAC) is expected to have significant workforce implications. Many employees may retire before the expiration date to preserve current benefits. WCSU views this as an opportunity to realign staffing with long-term strategic goals—enhancing diversity in hiring, strengthening student services, and increasing administrative flexibility.

Position Review Committee (PRC)

As previously discussed, the newly reformed Position Review Committee (PRC) is a key mechanism for aligning staffing with institutional priorities. Based on anticipated enrollment trends (serving approximately 4,000 students), the PRC manages the review and recommendation process for each staffing request. Between August 1, 2024, and January 31, 2025, WCSU hired 30 full-time employees. This reflects a deliberate strategy of maintaining a steady-state workforce through targeted hires and strategic reallocations. Community feedback has led to several proposed PRC process enhancements:

- Publicize meeting schedules and outcomes on the HR website
- Increase meeting frequency (e.g., quarterly)
- Revise evaluation criteria to reduce year-specific financial weighting

See *Appendix 5-3: Position Review Committee*.

Mentorships and Onboarding

To strengthen professional development, retention, and institutional belonging, WCSU has launched structured mentoring programs that support both new and continuing employees. These initiatives are integrated into the broader HR Master Plan and aligned with the University’s goals for workforce sustainability and inclusive excellence.

- **Formal Mentoring:** A structured program designed for new leaders at the director level or above. Mentors—who are not the supervisor—meet regularly with new hires for the first six months to support their integration into campus culture and strategic priorities.
- **Informal Mentoring:** This peer-based model is embedded in the Western Welcoming Committee and connects new employees with experienced colleagues to navigate university systems and build early connections.
- **Group Mentoring:** A flexible model where experienced staff engage with multiple new employees to foster collaboration, shared learning, and a sense of community.

WCSU is also coordinating with the AAUP and SUOAF Minority Recruitment & Retention Committees to expand their impact on mentoring and retention, particularly for underrepresented employees. These efforts reflect institutional commitments to equity, inclusion, and employee development.

Employee Retention Strategies

Recognizing that recruitment is only part of the staffing equation, WCSU is committed to a multi-pronged, evidence-informed retention strategy that supports employee satisfaction, recognition, and advancement. The average full-time employee turnover rate at WCSU over the last 10 years has been 10.4%. The University aims to reduce this rate to 7.5% over the next three to five years.

Ongoing Initiatives

- Social Committee events to foster employee engagement
- Annual Employee Recognition Ceremony
- Regular exit interviews and follow-up by Human Resources
- Monthly labor-management meetings to address concerns early
- Access to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Flexible telework policy where appropriate

New and Upcoming Strategies

- Launch of the Western Welcoming Committee to support early onboarding and orientation
- Stay interview implementation to identify and address employee concerns proactively
- Expanded and formalized mentoring pathways to support leadership development and upward mobility

These strategies are monitored as part of WCSU's institutional effectiveness framework and will be reviewed annually by HR with updates to the senior team. HR will track retention rates and employee satisfaction indicators annually to evaluate the impact of these initiatives, with results informing any needed adjustments to our retention strategy.

Digitization and Process Modernization

WCSU has made significant progress in process modernization to increase efficiency, enhance transparency, and improve service delivery for staff and students. The University has prioritized the digitization of high-volume workflows, especially within Human Resources.

Recent Advances

- **Student Employment Appointment App:** Replaced a paper-based system with an end-to-end electronic process. The app supports hiring for 700+ student employees per semester and eliminates delays associated with manual approvals.
- **Adjunct Employment Appointment App:** Streamlined hiring and budgeting for over 400 adjunct faculty per semester. The new process removes duplication, accelerates approvals, and builds a permanent digital record for planning and compliance.
- **Telecommuting Request App:** Simplified telework request workflows for multiple bargaining units. The app supports supervisory approvals, routing, tracking, reducing processing time, and improving policy adherence.
- **Hyland/OnBase Workflow:** Expanded and optimized the use of Hyland/OnBase to more efficiently and effectively submit, receive and process university appeals including Cost of Attendance Appeals, Deposit Deferment Requests, SAP, Scholarship Appeals, and WCSU Cares Student Assistance Fund Applications.

Together, these systems have reduced administrative burden, improved user experience, and increased data accessibility. Additional workflow enhancements are planned as part of a broader digital transformation strategy. These efforts align with NECHE expectations for institutional planning, assessment, and resource alignment. WCSU views digitization as a foundational component of operational excellence and employee support.

In sum, WCSU has confronted its staffing shortfalls through data-informed planning and interim innovations. While financial limitations preclude an immediate fix to all gaps, the University has a clear roadmap and is committed to phasing in critical hires as resources allow. We will continue to

monitor staffing levels against student needs and peer benchmarks, adjusting our plans to ensure the University has the human resources necessary to fulfill its mission. This ongoing commitment to right-sizing and supporting our workforce is essential to sustained NECHE compliance and institutional effectiveness.

AREA OF FOCUS #6

Systematic Development and Implementation of Assessment Processes

NECHE emphasized the need for WCSU to “develop an assessment plan for its general education program and University learning outcomes,” and to demonstrate progress on implementing systematic assessment processes in advance of the Fall 2025 visit. These expectations relate directly to the call for:

- Clearly articulated learning outcomes for all academic programs,
- Systematic and regular assessment of student learning using multiple methods, and Institution- wide assessment of general education and University learning outcomes.

Institutional Effectiveness Framework

WCSU has made significant progress in strengthening its institutional assessment infrastructure since the Fall 2023 NECHE visit. To improve the institution’s overall culture of educational effectiveness, WCSU developed a comprehensive Institutional Effectiveness Framework (*See Figure 1.*). The framework has been shared with the Cabinet, Provost’s Council, department chairs, and directors within Student Affairs. Full operationalization is scheduled for Fall 2025, including integration with strategic planning, assessment cycles, and reporting structures.

Led by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, the framework identifies key focus areas for continuous improvement across both academic and administrative functions.

1. **Continuous Improvement & Quality Assurance:** This element focuses on staying on track, improving, and consistently performing well. Continuous Improvement & Quality Assurance serves as the overarching component that is supported by and interacts with the other three areas: Planning, Assessment, and Institutional Research. University-wide support for this involves closing the planning and assessment loop, providing accreditation support, building capacity for stakeholders, documenting and communicating institutional effectiveness activities, creating a feedback loop to keep stakeholders informed, and promoting a culture of institutional effectiveness.
2. **Planning:** This involves making strategic choices about the institution's identity, its goals, and the impact it wants to achieve. The strategic choices made during the Planning phase about an institution's identity, goals, and desired impact lay the foundation for what will be continuously improved upon. The University-wide Strategic Planning guides various unit-level plans, including the Enrollment Management Plan, Academic Plan, Technology Plan, Facilities Plan, Student Success and Retention Plans, and the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan.
3. **Assessment:** This component determines whether strategic choices are effective and making a difference. The Assessment area provides the crucial feedback needed for continuous improvement. It determines how well strategic choices are working and making a difference, allowing the institution to identify what needs to be improved or what is already being done well. University-wide Assessment includes tracking, monitoring, and evaluating institutional and unit-level plans, assessing learning outcomes, and conducting program reviews.
4. **Institutional Research:** This is focused on transforming data into usable information for decision-making. This area supports continuous improvement by transforming raw data into usable information for decision-making. This includes things like institutional reporting, predictive analytics, and environmental scans, which provide the data-driven insights necessary to guide improvement efforts. University-wide support for this area includes Institutional

Reporting (both internal and external), Data Governance, Institutional Survey Research, Environmental Scans, Predictive Analytics & Modeling, and Accreditation Reporting Support.

Figure1. Institutional Effectiveness Framework



In all cases, the ultimate goal is not just to gather data, but to use that evidence to improve curricula, teaching, and services – a principle at the core of WCSU’s assessment philosophy.

Learning Outcomes and Assessment

In Fall 2024, the University’s Assessment Working Group—charged with coordinating institution-wide responses—conducted a comprehensive inventory of learning outcomes across all undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral programs. These results were validated in collaboration with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and the deans of the four academic divisions: the School of Professional Studies, Ansell School of Business, Macricostas School of Arts and Sciences, and the School of Visual, Performing, and Communication Arts.

As of Spring 2025, all academic programs now have clearly defined learning outcomes that describe the knowledge, skills, and abilities students are expected to demonstrate upon completion. These are published in either the University’s undergraduate and graduate catalogs or on program websites—and, moving forward, will be published in both locations for consistency and accessibility. During the inventory process, two areas for improvement were identified:

- **Terminology Consistency:** Programs previously used a range of labels (e.g., learning goals, competencies). Following consultation, the academic leadership agreed to adopt the term “learning outcomes” uniformly across all programs.
- **Location of Outcomes:** Learning outcomes were previously split across different platforms. It has since been agreed that all outcomes will be published in both the catalog and program websites to ensure full transparency and alignment with NECHE standards.

Spring 2025 Dean’s Reports and the Completed [E-Series Forms](#) submitted to the Office of the Provost shows evidence of the use of both qualitative and quantitative [assessment methods](#) and [descriptions of current and planned use of findings](#) from assessment for curricular or pedagogical improvements. (See links for data and examples).

In addition, the deans submitted summary reports of learning outcomes assessment data from their academic programs. These reports indicated whether students met established benchmarks for specific learning outcomes within each program. Across all four schools, data was submitted for 29 programs: School of Professional Studies (17), School of Arts and Sciences (5), School of Visual, Performing, and Communication Arts (5), and School of Business (2). In some cases, the reports covered one learning outcome per program; in others, they addressed multiple outcomes for a single program. For example, in the School of Visual, Performing, and Communication Arts, assessment data showed that 94% of students in the BA Art program met the benchmark for the outcome “*Development and creation of a significant body of work, along with the ability to understand and evaluate works of art.*” See *Appendix 6-1* for additional examples from this school. The complete combined report will be available during the Fall site visit.

This process marks meaningful progress toward institutionalizing a sustainable, evidence-informed culture of assessment.

In sum, WCSU has taken deliberate and collaborative steps to address NECHE’s concerns by establishing learning outcomes across all programs and embedding assessment into annual reporting processes. Continued work is planned over the next year to strengthen institutional-level learning assessment and reinforce a culture of continuous improvement.

Student Success and Survey Data: Availability, Accessibility, and Use

NECHE has emphasized the importance of institutions ensuring the availability and active use of student success and survey data. WCSU remains committed to fostering student success and tracks key indicators using multiple data sources.

Data is available for traditional student success metrics such as *persistence, retention, graduation,* and *post-graduation employment*. These data are published on the University’s [consumer information webpage](#) and are reported annually through the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). The Office of Institutional Research also produces the [IPEDS Data Feedback Report](#) for internal use and leadership review.

Data is also available to track other internal metrics such as gateway course pass rates, DWF (drop, withdraw, fail) rates, academic standing, and course fill rates. The Office of Institutional Research extracts and shares data from Banner with stakeholders across the University.

In addition, WCSU tracks licensure exam pass rates across professionally accredited programs,

including Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) for Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), Praxis for teacher education, NCLEX for nursing, and DUCK and American Chemical Society (ACS) exams for chemistry. These data are housed within the programs and used to inform continuous improvement.

WCSU administered the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) in 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021, and again in 2025. Although a prior data breach prompted caution, the Spring 2025 administration proceeded successfully. Reports are available through the NSSE institutional interface and are also archived locally by Institutional Research. In Fall 2024, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness presented [a summary of historical NSSE findings](#) to the Student Government Association. The presentation was also shared with members of the Provost Council.

WCSU's Career Success Center administers the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) First Destination Survey (FDS), which captures employment outcomes six months after graduation. The University has been administering this survey since 2009. In Summer 2024, a longitudinal trend report was shared with the Provost's Council (see *Appendix 6-2*).

Student Affairs units administer department-specific surveys. These include AccessAbility Services, Tutoring Resource Center, Health Services, Counseling Services, and Housing & Residence Life, and are summarized in the [Student Affairs Impact Report](#).

These data sources inform institutional decision-making. Notable examples since Fall 2023 include:

- **Strategic Planning Alignment:** Historical enrollment and retention data directly shaped Priority 1 of WCSU's strategic plan (Western Rising): to stabilize enrollment and improve retention and completion.
- **AccessAbility Services (AAS):** Survey data in Fall 2024 highlighted strong demand for structured study hall spaces. As a result, AAS expanded its offerings.
- **Tutoring Resource Center:** Usage data indicated higher retention among users but also revealed low awareness. Planned responses include a marketing campaign, increased outreach to departments, and a proposed relocation to increase visibility.

Regular Assessment of General Education and University Learning Outcomes

WCSU has continued revising its General Education program to address inefficiencies in the prior framework, provide clearer pathways to degree completion, and deliver a liberal arts education responsive to contemporary social and global realities. In Spring 2024, the University Senate approved a revised General Education framework organized into 11 Learning Areas:

1. First Year (FY)
2. Writing 1 (W1)
3. Writing 2 & Information Literacy (WIL)
4. Speech Communication (SC)
5. Personal Wellness (PW)
6. Racial Justice (RJ)
7. Global Diversity (GD)
8. Arts & Humanities (AH)
9. Social & Behavioral Sciences (SBS)
10. Natural Science and Technology (NST)
11. Mathematical Reasoning (MR)

This action built on the Senate's Fall 2023 recommendation to overhaul General Education; see *Area of*

Focus #1, University Senate section. Following approval of the new framework in May 2024, WCSU undertook several coordinated steps toward full implementation:

Program Sheets and Four-Year Plans

- Sample program sheets were developed in Summer 2024 and shared with departments.
- Departments submitted revised plans through Fall 2024–Spring 2025 to the General Education Committee and Registrar to support Degree Works updates.
- Committee co-chairs met with every department chair (or designee) and worked with Deans to address concerns.

Course Alignments

- Specific courses were designated for FY, W1, WIL, SC, RJ, GD, and HW Learning Areas.
- For AH, SBS, NST, and MR, courses were aligned based on course prefixes.
- Course descriptions were revised and approved for Writing and Information Literacy courses across several departments.
- WRT 210 was approved as WIL for Fall 2025 only, with potential renewal pending revision.
- UNI 101 was approved as the required FY course for all incoming students.

Framework and Assessment Updates

By the end of Spring 2025, the General Education Committee had:

- Finalized definitions and learning outcomes for all Learning Areas and distribution requirements.
- Approved a formal assessment proposal.
- Added guidance to support transfer student placement, including Composition 101, lab sciences, Global Diversity, and Racial Justice.

As a result, WCSU is prepared to launch the new [General Education program](#) in Fall 2025.

In addition, the University has defined institutional-level learning outcomes (e.g., communication, critical thinking, etc.) and that these are being assessed through the new Gen Ed curriculum and other tools. These learning areas also map to WCSU’s five University Learning Objectives (approved by the Senate in 2022), ensuring that institutional outcomes in areas like communication, critical thinking, and global understanding are systematically assessed across the curriculum. WCSU has developed overarching outcomes and is now implementing assessment for them, directly addressing Standard 8.2 on clear and public expectations for student learning at the institutional level. University Learning Objectives are modeled after AAC&U VALUE rubrics and assessed across the university (See www.wcsu.edu/assessment).

Assessment Plan

[Assessment of General Education](#) courses will follow a staggered, multi-year cycle over a five-year period. By 2030, all Learning Areas will have undergone at least one full cycle of direct assessment. This long-term assessment model is designed to ensure coverage, build capacity, and institutionalize a sustainable review process.

Other Assessments of Educational Effectiveness

Strategic Plan Assessment

To ensure the success of its 2024–2030 Strategic Plan, WCSU is developing a formal process to prioritize goals and strategies, track then track and measure progress toward each strategic priority.

This includes:

- Collecting data aligned with defined metrics and targets
- Analyzing and reporting on institutional progress
- Using results for mid-course corrections
- Informing the design of the next strategic planning cycle

Master Plan Integration

WCSU has also developed supporting institutional plans—specifically an HR planning effort, Multi-Year Financial Plan, and Strategic Enrollment Management Plan. Each will follow a similar assessment cycle, coordinated by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. These efforts include defined objectives, performance indicators, and aligned metrics that will guide annual review and reporting.

Academic Program Review

All undergraduate and graduate degree programs at WCSU that are approved by the BOR, along with all BOR-approved centers, undergo a formal review every seven years. Program review is designed to be rigorous, collegial, and supportive, and includes participation by department faculty, external evaluators, deans, governance bodies, and the Office of the Provost. For programs with specialized accreditation, the most recent self-study or mid-cycle report may be submitted as the program's self-study and action plan. These programs must also complete a crosswalk showing alignment between accrediting standards and WCSU's internal program review elements. In 2023–24, eleven programs completed Academic Program Reviews. Reports were reviewed by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, and a [summary](#)—including assessment of student learning—was submitted to the BOR. Nine additional programs were scheduled for review in 2024–25, following the same process.

General Education Assessment

Beginning in Fall 2025, WCSU will initiate a formal assessment of its revised General Education program. The General Education Assessment Plan outlines a five-year rotating cycle to ensure that all Learning Areas are evaluated for student learning outcomes. The first full assessment cycle will conclude by 2030, after which continuous cycles of evaluation will follow.

Implementation of these assessment processes is underway, with full cycle completion (including analysis and reporting) expected by the end of AY2025–26. WCSU acknowledges the need for consistent documentation and follow-up to achieve a sustainable culture of assessment.

Classroom Evaluation

Every year, professors collect classroom evaluations to assess coursework, teaching, and student satisfaction. This information is used to improve coursework and learning environments. See www.wcsu.edu/assessment.

Student Affairs Assessment

In Student Affairs, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness has collaborated closely with unit leaders to enhance assessment of practice. Weekly planning meetings between the Associate Vice President and the Interim Dean of Student Affairs led to the development of a division-wide assessment plan that now anchors the annual Student Affairs Impact Report. This plan ensures that co-curricular outcomes are aligned with institutional goals, and that assessment informs decision-making and resource allocation.

The Division of Student Affairs continues to evaluate the effectiveness of its services through an

annual Impact Report. Each department follows a process that includes:

- Identifying Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), where applicable
- Developing an assessment plan and methodology
- Collecting and analyzing data to inform decisions

Departments use varied methods, including satisfaction surveys and service usage tracking, to gather actionable insights. The 2023-2025 Impact Report documents how these efforts contribute to student success and institutional effectiveness (see <https://books.wcsu.edu/books/hrck/>).

Writing Center Assessment

The Writing Center provides individualized, in-person, and online support for students across disciplines and genres. As part of its service evaluation, the Center conducts ongoing assessments to ensure effectiveness and alignment with student needs. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness worked closely with the faculty member in charge of the center and provided support to analyze data collected in Fall 2023 through Spring 2025. The data collected specifically focused on freshmen. Here are key highlights of the analysis:

- The total number of freshmen served doubled (68 to 136) between Fall 2023 and 2024.
- The percentage of freshmen making 1-2 visits to the center increased significantly (52 to 95) as well those making 3-5 visits (8 to 36) between Fall 2023 and 2024.
- Overall, although low, the center saw an increase in the percentage of freshmen visiting the center from 10% (Fall 2023) to 16% (Fall 2024).
- The grade patterns in Writing 101 are different for freshman who visited the center in Fall 2023 -- 86% passed the class (D or higher) compared to 76% of those who did not visit the center.
- The grade patterns in Writing 101 are different for freshman who visited the center in Fall 2024 -- 95% passed the class (D or higher) compared to 86% of those who did not visit the center.

The center also conducted pre- and post-test surveys for students enrolled in Composition 1. Students self-assess including their dispositions about writing and confidence level in completing certain writing tasks. Two main highlights from the data include:

1. In Fall 2024 across 51 items, the post-test survey saw significant positive changes across 29 items. The top five significant changes were in the following areas - outlining a draft, documenting and citing sources using MLA style, documenting and citing sources using APA style, remembering what I have read, and documenting and citing sources using another style other than MLA or APA.
2. In Spring 2025, across 51 items, the post-test survey saw significant positive changes across 29 items. The top five significant changes were in the following areas - documenting and citing sources using another style other than MLA or APA, outlining a draft, documenting and citing sources using MLA style, writing a summary of something I've read such as a book report, and documenting and citing sources using APA style.

Institutional Effectiveness and Use of Data

Institutional Infrastructure Supporting Assessment

NECHE emphasizes that effective assessment must be supported by academic and institutional leadership and involve faculty and appropriate staff systematically. WCSU has established an infrastructure designed to support both instructional and non-instructional assessment efforts.

University Senate Assessment Committee

The University Senate Assessment Committee includes broad representation from faculty (both administrative and instructional), staff (including the provost's designee, Dean of Student Affairs, and Director of Institutional Research), and students (two representatives from the Student Government Association). The committee's bylaws (see *Appendix 6-3*), revised and approved during the 2024-2025 academic year, outline its role in guiding and supporting assessment practices across the institution. By closing the assessment loop, WCSU ensures that students experience ongoing enhancements to teaching, curriculum, and support services driven by evidence of what works.

Office of Institutional Effectiveness

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness, led by the Associate Vice President, serves as the primary resource for coordinating assessment. The AVP is the provost's designee to the Assessment Committee and co-chaired it during 2024-2025. The goal of the office is to provide strategic leadership, consultative support, and oversight for academic and administrative assessment activities.

Role of Academic Leaders and Faculty

Academic deans participate in the academic program review process by reviewing and commenting on departmental reports before submission to the Provost's Office. Their annual reports also include dedicated sections on assessment of progress and outcomes. Department chairs work closely with faculty throughout the assessment cycle, including the collection, analysis, and use of learning outcome data. As documented in the E-Series forms, faculty are actively engaged in interpreting assessment results and planning program improvements.

Assessment Technology Tools

To support data collection and reporting, WCSU has invested in several technology platforms:

- Qualtrics: Used for institutional surveys and feedback collection
- Strategic Planning Online (SPOL): Acquired in Fall 2024, SPOL will serve as a centralized repository for documenting assessment activities, program review, and accreditation evidence

Identified Infrastructure Needs

While WCSU has made progress in building assessment capacity, four key areas require further development:

1. **Increased Engagement:** Expanded communication and collaboration between the Senate Assessment Committee and individual programs will ensure consistent support and implementation. The revised committee bylaws address this priority.
2. **Improved Dissemination:** Findings from assessment activities must be more broadly shared. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness has developed a proposed calendar of standard reports, including an annual institutional assessment report, to strengthen communication and transparency.
3. **Technology and Data Infrastructure:** The University needs a centralized, user-friendly platform for storing and accessing assessment data, academic program reviews, and key performance indicators. A shared dashboard or portal would promote consistency, reduce duplication, and support data-informed decision-making across units.
4. **Professional Development and Support:** Faculty and staff require ongoing training in

assessment methods, use of data for improvement, and alignment with institutional learning outcomes. A coordinated approach to professional development, led by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Academic Affairs, is essential to embed a culture of continuous improvement.

Addressing Identified Gaps

Academic Assessment

A review of the 2024-2025 Dean's Annual Reports and E-Series forms revealed three areas in need of improvement:

1. **Consistent Reporting of Learning Outcomes Assessment:** There is a need for a common reporting template across programs to ensure consistency and clarity. Currently, E-Series forms emphasize process (e.g., outcome location, assessment methods, faculty participation, and most recent review date), while Annual Reports focus more on impact (e.g., progress on learning outcomes, areas of strength and concern, and next steps). In some cases, programs submit assessment details in one document and program review content in the other, creating inconsistencies and the potential appearance of limited assessment engagement. To address this: the adoption of SPOL will provide a single platform for assessment of data, reporting, and archival. A full rollout of SPOL is scheduled for Fall 2025.
2. **Strengthening Data Analysis and Use:** While many programs are collecting data, there is a need to more clearly demonstrate how that data is used to inform curricular or instructional changes. In Spring 2025, the University Senate Assessment Committee recommended that members attend an external assessment conference in Fall 2025 to strengthen their capacity to support departments in analyzing and acting on results.
3. **Improved Review and Dissemination of Findings:** Closing the loop remains an institutional priority. Disseminating assessment findings beyond departmental reports is critical to reinforcing institutional learning and transparency. The revised bylaws of the Senate Assessment Committee, along with the clarified role of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, aim to address this by requiring post-cycle assessment summaries, integrating assessment results into annual institutional reports, and encouraging cross-unit sharing of practices.

WCSU recognizes that shifting to an evidence-driven culture requires ongoing training and encouragement. Faculty and staff development in assessment methods will be expanded (through workshops, conferences, and peer mentoring) to ensure that the practice of using data for improvement is embedded in every department.

Student Success and Survey Data Accessibility

A key institutional challenge identified is not the availability of student success and survey data, but its accessibility and dissemination. Currently, much of this information is housed within the Institutional Research Office or the units that generate the data and is made available upon request. To enhance transparency and increase utilization across the campus community, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness has developed a calendar of reports (see *Appendix 6-4*), set for implementation beginning in Fall 2025. This calendar will

- Standardize the timing and frequency of data reports
- Ensure alignment with institutional planning cycles
- Provide broad access to reports via institutional dashboards

The calendar has been reviewed and endorsed by the Provost Council. Additionally, the Office

of Institutional Effectiveness is working in partnership with the Office of Information Technology and Innovation to develop secure data blocks and shared datasets to automate and streamline reporting.

Conclusion

Since the Fall 2023 NECHE visit, WCSU has made measurable progress in developing and implementing systematic assessment processes. These efforts include:

- Establishing consistent program-level learning outcomes across all academic programs
- Finalizing a revised general education framework and initiating a long-term assessment plan
- Expanding student affairs assessment with divisional coordination
- Launching platforms and reporting structures to improve data dissemination and use
- Developing a comprehensive institutional effectiveness framework to support continuous improvement

Going forward, all program and unit assessments will include documented examples of how findings are used to improve curriculum, services, or resource allocation, ensuring that assessment results drive measurable institutional improvement.

At the same time, the University has identified specific areas that require further attention—including integration of assessment reporting systems, deeper data analysis to inform change, and expanded dissemination of results. As indicated throughout this section, key milestones over the next year include: launching the SPOL platform by Fall 2025, publishing the first annual Institutional Assessment Report in Spring 2026, completing the first cycle of Gen Ed assessment by 2029-2030, and fully integrating assessment results into the FY2025-2026 planning and budget cycle. Progress on these milestones will be monitored by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and reported to campus governance. WCSU believes it has made strong progress in addressing the Commission’s concerns in this area of emphasis and is committed to sustaining this momentum in the years ahead. WCSU also embraces assessment as a continuous journey – one that will always evolve to meet new educational challenges and ensure accountability to our students and constituents.

AREA OF FOCUS #7

Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Through Shared Understanding and Supportive Policies

In March 2024, the Commission issued a Notice of Concern calling on WCSU to meet its goals for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), including establishing a shared understanding of DEI and implementing supportive policies and procedures. In response, the University has adopted a coordinated, campus-wide approach to embed DEI into its leadership, policies, programs, and culture.

In 2023, WCSU identified significant gaps in the clarity, coordination, and visibility of its DEI efforts. At that time, there was no shared institutional definition of DEI, and existing structures lacked transparency and integration into governance. Since then, the University has reinvigorated its DEI committees, integrated them into the shared governance structure (see *Area of Focus #1 – DEI Governance*), and developed strategies to ensure DEI is both structurally supported and meaningfully experienced by all members of the campus community. Notably, the University is proud to recruiting, retaining, and developing a more diverse population of faculty, staff, and administrators—including diversity in race, ethnicity, socioeconomic background, first-generation status, and other characteristics that reflect and support our student body demographics.

This work has evolved from isolated initiatives into a strategic, institution-wide priority shaping policy, practice, and culture. Through new leadership, integrated planning, and strengthened assessment tools, WCSU has laid a foundation for sustainable and measurable progress—evidenced by more diverse hiring, greater participation in DEI programming, and stronger compliance practices. The University recognizes that lasting impact will require ongoing reflection, accountability, and responsiveness to community voices.

As WCSU finalizes its DEI Strategic Plan and further integrates this work into institutional priorities, it remains committed to ensuring equal opportunity, inclusive staffing, and a climate that respects diversity—embedding equity and belonging into every facet of campus life so that all members of the community can thrive. In addition, as part of the DEI Strategic Plan development, WCSU’s Diversity Council will articulate a shared definition of diversity, equity, and inclusion for our campus, which will be published in the plan and guiding documents. This shared language will help align all units on our DEI values and goals.

Leadership and Governance Infrastructure

In 2023, WCSU lacked a clearly defined, shared understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in its written policies and procedures. While the University had an Office of DEI and three other entities supporting related efforts—the Diversity Council, the Racial Justice Coalition, and the Pride Center—there were concerns about transparency in their member selection processes and the clarity of their missions, objectives, responsibilities, and bylaws.

To address these gaps, WCSU set out to:

- Establish clear missions, governance structures, and formal integration of DEI bodies into university governance.
- Refine job descriptions and search processes to broaden candidate pools and strengthen faculty/staff diversity.
- Expand DEI programming and ensure consistent visibility and access across campus.
- Maintain and expand assessment of DEI-related learning outcomes, integrating them into the revised general education curriculum.

- Use assessment data to guide interventions, resource allocation, and program development to close equity gaps.

WCSU remains committed to fostering a campus culture that celebrates diversity and prioritizes inclusion, equity, and belonging for all students, faculty, and staff.

Since then, WCSU has:

- **Hired key leadership positions:** A Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer (Fall 2024) and a Director of Inclusion and Belonging (Summer 2024). The Chief DEI Officer oversees civil rights investigations, coordinates EEO compliance with HR, leads DEI initiatives and programming, manages Affirmative Action planning, and supervises the Diversity Council and the Campus Resource and Response Team. The Director of Inclusion and Belonging has launched a robust schedule of events, trainings, and listening sessions to advance education, community, and belonging across campus. The Chief DEI Officer, Jennifer Labate, J.D., is an attorney with more than two decades of experience in employment law, civil rights compliance, and higher education leadership. Before joining WCSU, she served as Director of Title IX and Disability Services at Post University, where she oversaw compliance with federal and state laws, coordinated campus-wide training, and led responses to allegations of sexual misconduct, harassment, and discrimination. Earlier in her career, she worked with the New York City Administration for Children’s Services in the Employment Law Unit, handling discrimination and labor cases, and also served as an Employee/Labor Relations Specialist with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. At WCSU, she oversees civil rights investigations, coordinates EEO compliance with HR, leads DEI initiatives and programming, manages Affirmative Action planning, and supervises the Diversity Council and the Campus Resource and Response Team.
- **Strengthened governance and transparency:** Monthly Diversity Council meetings have resumed, and its bylaws, goals, and mission statement are now publicly available (see [webpage](#)). Recruitment for new members is underway to broaden representation and encourage renewed dialogue.
- **Advanced strategic planning:** The [LGBTQ+ Resource Committee](#) has been reestablished and has drafted a preliminary DEI Master Plan with defined goals and objectives. This plan will undergo a campus-wide review via a Fall 2025 Town Hall and is on track for finalization and implementation in the upcoming academic year.

Campus Climate and Compliance Assessment

WCSU is committed to fostering a positive and inclusive institutional climate for all community members. To assess and continuously improve this climate, the University conducted multiple surveys and community listening sessions during the 2024–2025 academic year.

Employee Climate Survey

From February 10 to March 10, 2025, WCSU administered a comprehensive employee climate survey to understand workplace experiences and perceptions of diversity and inclusion. The survey received 264 responses, with representation from full-time faculty (32%), faculty (19%), full-time staff (33%), part-time staff (3%), and administrators (7%). Results, shared with the community in May 2025 showed that the majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed they are treated fairly by supervisors, that their departments are committed to diversity, and that WCSU offers a safe workplace. However, areas needing improvement included dialogue on career advancement and perceived voice in decision-making. In response, WCSU is launching a series of focus groups across the 2025-2026 academic year to explore these themes. This effort is led by the Office of Institutional

Effectiveness in partnership with university leadership and aligns with our commitment to continuous improvement and inclusive dialogue.

Sexual Misconduct Climate Assessment

In compliance with [Public Act No. 21-81](#), WCSU conducted the Sexual Misconduct Climate Assessment in November 2024. The results, reviewed by the Chief DEI Officer and Title IX Coordinator in January 2025, were shared with campus leadership and the University community. The majority of students reported high levels of perceived safety and confidence in campus resources. To address gaps in awareness of reporting options, WCSU launched a campus-wide poster campaign with QR code access and streamlined the Title IX [webpage](#) to improve usability and visibility of reporting tools.

In partnership with the Center for Empowerment, WCSU hosted a series of educational events during [Sexual Assault Awareness Month](#) in April 2025, addressing topics including healthy relationships, stalking, and bystander intervention.

National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

WCSU has participated in NSSE since 2007, most recently in Spring 2025. The survey assesses student engagement across several areas including academic challenges, peer learning, faculty interaction, and campus environment, along with six high-impact practice areas. Survey results were collected in Spring 2025, with institutional reports expected in Fall 2025. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness will guide the dissemination of results and action planning.

Community Engagement and Listening

Throughout the year, WCSU also hosted multiple DEI listening sessions, including post-election community “safe spaces” and Spring 2025 forums focused on campus culture and inclusion (See <https://www.wcsu.edu/diversity/dei-listening-session-2-19-25/> and <https://www.wcsu.edu/events/calendar/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-listening-session/> . These forums inform the University’s DEI framework and support long-term planning.

Compliance and Policy Improvements

WCSU remains current on compliance obligations, including submission of its [2024 Affirmative Action Plan](#) in October 2024, approved by the system office in January 2025. In alignment with the CSCU Interim Resolution Procedures (<https://www.wcsu.edu/diversity/what-is-title-ix-and-cart/>) WCSU has improved complaint processes, added QR-code enabled forms, and updated training for Resident Assistants and Orientation programs.

Together, these assessments and engagements illustrate a campus-wide effort to elevate transparency, inclusion, and evidence-informed decision-making.

Recruitment, Hiring, and Workforce Equity

WCSU is also committed to recruiting, retaining and developing a more diverse population of faculty, staff, and administrators that more closely reflects its student body demographics. That includes daily collaboration between HR and the DEI office; incorporating Racial Justice Coalition members on search committees; adding diversity questions to every interview process; tracking/analyzing Affirmative Action data from the newly acquired Jazz HR software; using inclusive language in job postings to attract a wide range of candidates; highlighting the institution’s commitment to diversity in job descriptions and recruitment materials; and advertising in diverse outlets, like *Diverse Issues in Higher Ed*, the Higher Ed jobs diversity, and inclusion email posting upgrade. WCSU also created an

HSI Task Force and is considering a job posting subscription package with Latinos in Higher Ed.

The DEI office was tasked with developing recruitment targets and tracking progress toward those targets, which are reported to the [Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities](#). Job descriptions and recruitment plans have been revised to broaden applicant pools and improve inclusive language. Although early progress was slowed due to COVID-19 and budget constraints, hiring results in 2024-2025 show marked improvement. In that academic year, 36% of new faculty hires and 41% of new professional staff hires identified as Black, Latino/a, or Indigenous. These outcomes reflect deliberate changes to search processes, including training on equitable hiring practices, the use of demographic tracking tools such as JazzHR, and the presence of DEI representatives on search committees.

WCSU is also promoting its HSI designation in marketing and recruitment materials to attract both prospective students and faculty.

Education, Training, and Campus Engagement

WCSU hosts a wide range of educational and community-building programs each year in collaboration with the DEI Office, Pride Center, Racial Justice Coalition, academic departments, and student organizations. These events promote cultural awareness, inclusion, and belonging.

Signature initiatives include [Black History Month events](#), [Women’s History Month programming](#), and [Pride Center activities](#). Additional offerings have addressed civil rights, reproductive justice, immigrant rights, and allyship, often in partnership with organizations such as ACLU Connecticut and Connecticut Students for a Dream.

To further strengthen inclusive practice, WCSU offers ongoing training on cultural competency, implicit bias, inclusive pedagogy, and Safe Zone allyship. Systemwide trainings (e.g., Title IX and discrimination reporting) complement campus-based professional development. Most sessions are open to students, faculty, and staff, with efforts made to ensure broad visibility and engagement.

The DEI Office remains committed to continuous learning, with staff participating in external development opportunities such as CT Title IX Coordinator meetings and SUNY SCI training. These efforts are reinforced by recent updates to the general education curriculum, which now requires students to complete courses in “exploring racial justice” and “understanding global diversity.”

Access and Community Engagement

WCSU advances access and equity through intentional outreach, inclusive admissions practices, and wrap-around student support. Recent initiatives—such as auto-admit policies, test-optional admissions, and [free application month](#)—have helped expand the applicant pool and increase new student enrollment.

Retention efforts focus on underrepresented and first-generation students, with redesigned academic advising, expanded bilingual tutoring, and targeted co-curricular supports through the [First Year Program](#). Campus-wide wrap-around services include accessibility services, mental health and counseling, food pantries, transportation support, and a partnership with Swipe Out Hunger to combat food insecurity.

WCSU’s [Pre-Collegiate and Access Programs](#) play a critical role in preparing students from historically underserved backgrounds. These include the EA²P Bridge Program, PASS,

ConnCAP/Upward Bound collaborations, and the Excel Program for middle school students—all of which provide academic enrichment, mentoring, and early college exposure.

As a federally designated [Hispanic-Serving Institution \(HSI\)](#), WCSU is investing in culturally responsive services and funding strategies to support its growing Latino/a student population. In addition to pursuing federal grants, the University seeks support from foundations and state agencies (e.g., Connecticut State Department of Education, CT Humanities, and the Just One More Foundation). WCSU is also participating in the [HACU Volare Institute](#), which pairs institutions with expert mentors to strengthen their federal funding capacity. Community-facing DEI events like the Latin Block Party and Hispanic Community Celebración continue to build meaningful connections between WCSU and the region’s diverse communities.

Strategic Planning and Impact

WCSU’s evolving DEI efforts are now being woven into broader institutional strategies, including the Western Rising strategic plan, general education reform, and enrollment planning. The preliminary DEI Plan incorporates mechanisms for assessment and program evaluation, aligning with NECHE expectations for continuous improvement and accountability. The Office of DEI has made meaningful progress in advancing a comprehensive, cross-functional DEI framework. However, WCSU recognizes that progress must be measured not only by activity but by outcomes. In addition to structural enhancements, WCSU has begun to track and report data reflecting the emerging impact of these efforts.

- **Event Participation:** Over 40 DEI events were hosted in AY2024–25, with a cumulative attendance of 2,100+ (approx. 44% students, 32% staff, 24% faculty).
- **Safe Zone & Bias Trainings:** 198 individuals completed formal training modules, including 64% of Residence Life staff and 52% of full-time faculty.
- **Hiring Pipeline:** In AY2024–25, 36% of new faculty hires and 41% of professional staff hires identified as Black, Latino/a, or Indigenous, up from 21% and 28% respectively in the prior year.
- **Climate Survey Response Rate:** 264 respondents; results highlighted strong perceptions of safety but mixed perceptions of inclusion in decision-making.

Conclusion

WCSU recognizes that building an inclusive culture is an ongoing journey. Some community members have voiced concerns about representation in decision-making, workload inequities, and campus climate concerns. The University is actively working to address these through various efforts, including the Office of DEI and cabinet-level strategies. Moving forward, WCSU will measure the effectiveness of its DEI efforts not only by the presence of plans and structures but by tangible outcomes—greater representation among faculty and staff, broader engagement in equity-focused initiatives, and clear evidence that campus policies foster inclusion and respect. The DEI Master Plan (expected to be finalized in 2025–26) will set specific goals and metrics for diversity and inclusion, such as recruitment and retention targets for diverse faculty, frequency of climate assessments, and participation rates in DEI training, to ensure accountability. Progress on this plan will be reported publicly each year. By this work and associated expectations into planning, governance, and assessment, the University aims to ensure that DEI remains a lived institutional value, integral to decision-making and to the daily experiences of students, employees, and the broader community. In addition, WCSU hopes to consult with NECHE reviewers during the Fall 2025 visit to ensure our DEI approaches and terminology align with evolving standards.

RETENTION AND SAFETY OF ACADEMIC RECORDS

In accordance with NECHE's *Policy on Notice of Concern*, when a concern is issued under the Institutional Resources standard, the Commission requires a focused evaluation to include a review of the institution's policies and procedures governing the retention, safety, security, and disposal of academic records for students and alumni.

WCSU affirms its commitment to robust records management protocols and demonstrates ongoing compliance with federal and state regulations. Significant progress has been made to ensure that academic and financial aid records are managed with integrity, consistency, and proper oversight.

Progress Since Notice of Concern (March 2024)

- Policy adherence and operational review have been reinforced through collaboration between the Registrar, Financial Aid, and Administrative Services offices.
- Documented procedures for record retention and secure destruction were reviewed and affirmed by the WCSU Records Management Liaison Officer (RMLO).
- A new internal review process was established to track RC-108 record destruction forms and ensure that no record is destroyed before receiving proper sign-off from the Connecticut State Library.
- WCSU now retains most records well beyond required timelines, further ensuring audit readiness and regulatory compliance.

Institution-Wide Records Retention and Destruction

WCSU follows the Connecticut State Library's mandatory retention schedules, as outlined at <https://atlas.ct.gov/Portal/pages/index.jsp>. The university frequently retains academic records longer than required, as a proactive measure. Records are destroyed only after the completion of the RC-108 Certificate of Records Disposition, which is:

1. Completed and signed by the department head
2. Submitted to the University's Records Management Liaison Officer (RMLO)
3. Approved by the Connecticut State Library
4. Returned to the institution, after which secure destruction is scheduled

The RMLO for WCSU is the Director of Procurement Services, who is responsible for coordinating and enforcing state-approved procedures across all departments.

Financial Aid Record Retention: Federal and State Compliance

WCSU's Office of Financial Aid maintains full compliance with federal and Connecticut laws governing student record retention, including:

- 34 C.F.R. § 668.24 (Federal): Retaining all student financial aid records (e.g., eligibility documentation, verification, disbursement, R2T4) for a minimum of five years, exceeding the federal three-year minimum.
- Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10a-40 and Regs. Conn. Agencies § 10a-22x-4: Maintaining all state-funded aid records (e.g., Roberta B. Willis Scholarship) for at least three years, readily available for audit or inspection by the Office of Higher Education.

Records are stored securely in both physical and digital formats, with access strictly limited to

authorized personnel. Paper files are shredded on-site using secure “Shred It” services, with Financial Aid staff physically witnessing the destruction. Digital records are stored in compliance with Connecticut General Statute § 11-8a, which defines such documents as public records and governs their retention and destruction.

Cross-Institutional Management and Oversight

- WCSU’s record management policies are implemented in collaboration with the Administrative Services Office, which monitors compliance across units.
- Procedures and schedules are available on the University’s internal and external websites for transparency.
- Institutional records span academic, personnel, fiscal, administrative, and information systems categories, all governed by relevant general and education-specific retention guidelines.
- Information systems records are retained and disposed of in accordance with the RC-109 Certificate of Records Disposition for Information Systems.

See CT State Record Retention specific links for more information:

- [CT State Records site](#)
- [EDU Records](#)
- [INFOSYS Records](#)
- RC-109: “Destroy in agreement with *Certificate of Records Disposition for Information Systems Records* (Form RC-109).”

Note: WCSU is also subject to the full General records that cover Administration, Personnel, Fiscal, etc. beyond Academic records.

Commitment to Compliance and Readiness: Strengthening Monitoring, Training, and Institutional Culture

WCSU is fully prepared to demonstrate its record retention and destruction policies and procedures during the Fall 2025 focused evaluation. Our institutional practices reflect:

- A strong culture of compliance and audit readiness
- Careful cross-departmental coordination
- A proactive commitment to the privacy, integrity, and security of academic records

Our practices reflect our commitment to responsible stewardship of financial aid data, privacy protection, and full regulatory compliance.

WCSU recognizes that records retention, compliance, and student data management are not static, one-time responsibilities, but ongoing institutional commitments that require continual monitoring, education, and system-level improvement. In keeping with NECHE’s expectations for effective governance, institutional resources, and data stewardship, the University is actively exploring a range of initiatives to strengthen its culture of compliance, transparency, and accountability.

Several examples under consideration or in early-stage development include:

Strengthening Monitoring and Internal Controls

- Creation of a records compliance checklist to assist departments in evaluating their adherence to key policies and procedures.
- Exploration of a routine audit cycle for departmental compliance with state-mandated retention forms (e.g., RC-108 and RC-109), with findings to be reviewed by designated records officers and shared with senior leadership.
- Design of a shared dashboard for tracking records, retention requests and approvals across departments.

Training and Capacity Building

- Development of annual FERPA and records retention training for academic leaders, program directors, and administrative support staff.
- Consideration of a dedicated onboarding module for new student-facing employees that highlights their responsibilities related to recordkeeping and data privacy.

Communication and Transparency

- Plans for a public-facing records management webpage to serve as a centralized hub for laws, policies, forms, FAQs, and training documentation.
- Aiming to clarify departmental responsibilities and streamline student and employee access to data-related resources and procedures.

Technology and Digital Transformation

- Assessing the feasibility of embedding retention tags or compliance triggers within existing information systems (e.g., Ellucian Banner).
- Exploring digital tools that can automate records lifecycle management, including destruction date alerts and digital filing protocols, to support WCSU's broader transition toward paperless operations.

Together, these explorations reflect WCSU's desire to build an enterprise-wide framework for data stewardship that aligns with institutional goals and evolving regulatory expectations. They serve to promote operational efficiency, minimize risk, and ensure that data and records management practices support long-term institutional effectiveness.

SUMMARY APPRAISAL AND PLANS

Since the last comprehensive review, WCSU has made demonstrable progress in addressing key areas of concern related to governance, financial stability, enrollment and retention, and educational effectiveness. This report outlines significant improvements, strengthened processes, and the implementation of more systematic planning and assessment practices.

Governance and Communication

Progress has been made in enhancing shared governance structures and campus-wide communication:

- The University Senate has streamlined subcommittees and created new advisory councils to support academic advising, registration, and student access programs.
- Regular engagement now occurs between the President, Provost, union leadership, and the Senate.
- The strategic planning process included broad representation and stakeholder input.

Next Steps

- Ensure more equitable representation from all bargaining units (e.g., SUOAF, A&R, Clerical, Maintenance, Police).
- Reinforce that shared governance is substantive and sustained beyond consultation.
- Relaunch the President's Leadership Council to include cabinet, deans, student affairs, and governance representatives.

Financial Sustainability and Institutional Resources

WCSU has developed a five-year financial plan with conservative assumptions and realistic enrollment projections. This plan is integrated with multi-year budgeting, staffing models, and enrollment planning to address structural deficits while maintaining mission-critical functions.

WCSU has made progress in forecasting and aligning resources, but its financial position remains fragile. FY25 closed with a \$4.5M surplus and \$11.9M in reserves, though these results were enabled by \$24.2M in one-time funds. Projections show only modest surpluses in FY26 (+\$0.4M) and FY27 (+\$0.9M after mitigation), with recurring structural deficits of approximately \$10.5M annually projected in FY28–30 absent continued system support and new revenues. Without this support, deeper reductions would be required.

The administration has prioritized accelerated innovation and revenue generation, but long-term success will require cultural change and shared effort across the institution. With strengthened governance, scenario modeling, and quarterly risk monitoring by the President's Council, WCSU is committed to transparency, discipline, and adaptability to achieve long-term sustainability.

Next Steps

- Refine multi-scenario budget models to account for contingencies and long-term liabilities.
- Complete the *Master Facilities Plan* and evaluate space utilization and deferred maintenance across both campuses.
- Use the *Institutional Effectiveness Framework* to assess the measurable impact of key plans (HR Master Plan, Financial Plan, Enrollment Plan) on staffing, retention, and resource alignment.
- Monitor quarterly risk indicators (enrollment, state budget, fringe rates) through the President's Council.

- Accelerate innovation in auxiliary ventures, housing, philanthropy, grants, and partnerships to reduce reliance on system support.
- Deepen cost containment strategies tied to efficiency and alignment with mission-critical functions.
- Report regularly to the BOR and campus on progress, shortfalls, and mid-course corrections.

Enrollment and Retention Planning

WCSU has seen early signs of enrollment stabilization and growth, driven by investments in predictive analytics (Othot), program realignment, and a new recruitment and retention strategy. A revised general education framework and improved student support structures are now in place.

Next Steps

- Finalize and institutionalize assessment protocols for academic programs and general education outcomes.
- Operationalize and map enrollment goals to program-level projections and long-term financial sustainability.
- Continue academic program redesign aligned with student demand and labor market needs using Gray DI analytics.

Educational Effectiveness and Assessment

WCSU has taken major steps to strengthen assessment practices:

- All programs now have published learning outcomes.
- The new General Education framework includes a six-year assessment cycle.
- Student affairs units are contributing data through a new divisional impact report.
- Strategic planning, enrollment, and student success efforts are now linked to institutional assessment.

Next Steps

- Improve coordination of assessment reporting through Strategic Planning Online (SPOL).
- Develop metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of institutional plans (e.g., how staffing levels impact student success).
- Expand dissemination and use of assessment results across academic and administrative units.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

WCSU has significantly strengthened its DEI infrastructure, with new leadership positions, active councils, and integration of DEI into governance and the curriculum. Campus climate assessments and improved hiring practices have begun to yield a more inclusive environment and more diverse faculty/staff.

Next Steps

- Finalize and implement the DEI Strategic Plan with clear goals and accountability measures.
- Continue to improve climate through dialogue and training.
- Maintain momentum in diversifying recruitment and retention of employees and students.
- Ensure DEI principles remain embedded in all institutional policies and plans.

Closing

WCSU affirms its continued commitment to full compliance with NECHE Standards. The progress documented in this report—while meaningful—is not yet complete. We recognize the

persistent challenges outlined in the Notice of Concern, and we view this moment as a pivotal opportunity to transform our systems, culture, and outcomes. With a permanent president now in place, renewed system collaboration, enhanced planning tools, and a clear strategic direction, WCSU is well-positioned to demonstrate continued improvement through the Fall 2025 focused evaluation and beyond.

APPENDIX

Appendix 0-1: NECHE 2025 Working Groups

Oversight Team

- **Stephen Hegedus**, Provost & Vice President of Academic Affairs
- **John Osaе-Kwapong**, Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness & Planning

Working Group Area of Emphasis #1

Developing an effective system of shared governance that supports communication, transparency, and accountability at all levels

- **Manoj Misra**, AAUP President
- **Jeff Schlict**, Senate President
- **Brian Vernon**, Dean, School of Visual, Performing, and Communication Arts
- **Rebecca Woodward**, Digital Innovation Officer; SUOAF President — *Chair*

Other Key Personnel

- **Charmaine Lloyd**, Presidential Assistant
- **Ron Thomas**, Chief Financial Officer
- **Fred Cratty**, Chief Human Resources Officer
- **Jennifer Labate**, Chief Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Officer

Working Group Area of Emphasis #2

Ensuring the stability of senior leadership, including the hiring of and transition to a permanent president

- Search and Advisory Committees

Working Group Area of Emphasis #3

Achieving goals for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), including development of a shared understanding of DEI and implementation of policies and procedures that support DEI at the institution

- **Jennifer Labate, J.D.**, Chief Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Officer
- **Josh Sumrell**, Director of Inclusion and Belonging

Working Group Area of Emphasis #4

Developing a multi-year financial plan that ensures stability, adequate resources to carry out the mission, and financial processes that include ongoing enterprise risk management

- **Ron Thomas**, Chief Financial Officer — *Chair*
- **Pete Rosa**, Controller
- **Jim Donegan**, University Planning & Budget Committee
- **Fred Cratty**, Chief Human Resources Officer
- **Aaron Lin**, Faculty, Department of Finance
- **Orlando Edwards**, Director of Financial Planning & Budgets

Other Key Personnel

- **Yaseen Hayajneh**, Dean, Ansell School of Business
- **Brian Stevens**, Archivist
- **Deanna Cibery-Schaab**, Associate Vice President, Facilities

Working Group Area of Emphasis #5

Ensuring sufficient levels of staffing across the University, particularly in student support services and facilities

- **Fred Cratty**, Chief Human Resources Officer

Working Group Area of Emphasis #6

Developing and implementing systematic assessment processes, including the development of learning outcomes for all programs; the availability and use of student success and survey data; and the regular assessment of general education and University learning outcomes

- **Sharon Young**, Faculty, Social Work — *Chair*
- **Kelli Custer**, Faculty, General Education Committee
- **Julie Perrelli**, Dean of Student Affairs
- **Jerry Wilcox**, Director, Institutional Research
- **Elise Budnick**, Ancell School of Business
- **Mary Nelson**, Faculty, Psychology
- **John Osae-Kwapong**, Associate VP for Institutional Effectiveness & Planning
- **Emilio Collar**
- **Patricia Cumella**
- **Antonia Giannakakos-Ferman**
- **Truman R. Keys**
- **H. Howell Williams**
- **Michelle Brown**, Dean, Macricostas School of Arts & Sciences
- **Joan Palladino**, Dean, School of Professional Studies
- **Jim Donegan**, Dean, Ancell School of Business
- **Brian Vernon**, Dean, School of Visual, Performing, and Communication Arts

Working Group Area of Emphasis #7

Achieving enrollment and retention goals

- **Jay Murray**, Vice President, Enrollment Management & Student Affairs
- **Stephen Hegedus**, Provost & Vice President of Academic Affairs
- **Ron Thomas**, Chief Financial Officer
- **Melissa Stephens**, Associate Dean, Enrollment Management & Financial Aid
- **Brian Vernon**, Dean, School of Visual, Performing, and Communication Arts
- **Julie Perrelli**, Dean of Student Affairs
- **Marcia Firsick**, Director of Communications & Marketing
- **Luis Santiago**, Director of Admissions
- **Yaseen Hayajneh**, Dean, School of Graduate, International, and Career Studies

Appendix 0-2: NECHE Finance and Enrollment Spreadsheets

Standard 7: Institutional Resources												
(Headcount of Employees by Occupational Category)												
For each of the occupational categories below, enter the data reported on the IPEDS Human Resources Survey (Parts B and D1) for each of the years listed.												
If your institution does not submit IPEDS, visit this link for information about how to complete this form: https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/IPEDS/Downloads/Forms/package_1_43.pdf												
	3 Years Prior			2 Years Prior			1 Year Prior			Current Year		
	(Fall 2021)			(Fall 2022)			(Fall 2023)			(Fall 2024)		
	FT	PT	Total	FT	PT	Total	FT	PT	Total	FT	PT	Total
Instructional Staff	204	381	585	194	348	542	186	309	495	179	380	559
Research Staff	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Public Service Staff	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Librarians	7	9	16	5	11	16	5	13	18	6	9	15
Library Technicians	6	0	6	6	0	6	6	0	6	6	0	6
Archivists, Curators, Museum staff	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Student and Academic Affairs	31	0	31	32	0	32	39	0	39	40	18	58
Management Occupations	39	0	39	36	0	36	33	0	33	36	0	36
Business and Financial Operations	32	0	32	31	0	31	31	0	31	27	11	38
Computer, Engineering and Science	28	0	28	27	0	27	30	0	30	31	6	37
Community, Social Service, Legal, Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	28	34	62	27	73	100	27	72	99	28	93	121
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	6	0	6	5	0	5	4	0	4	6	3	9
Service Occupations	77	0	77	59	0	59	62	0	62	66	0	66
Sales and Related Occupations	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Office and Administrative Support	55	0	55	49	0	49	50	0	50	52	0	52
Natural Resources, Construction, Maintenance	27	0	27	24	0	24	25	0	25	27	0	27
Production, Transportation, Material Moving	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	540	424	964	495	432	927	498	394	892	504	520	1,024

Standard 7: Institutional Resources					
(Statement of Financial Position/Statement of Net Assets)					
Fiscal Year ends - month & day: (/)	2 Years Prior (FY 21)	1 Year Prior (FY 22)	Most Recent Year FY23	Percent Change yr prior	2 yrs-1 1 yr-most recent
ASSETS (in 000s)					
☞ Cash and Short Term Investments	\$20,305,007	\$24,548,631	\$31,901,583	20.9%	30.0%
☞ Cash held by State Treasurer	\$0	\$0	\$0	-	-
☞ Deposits held by State Treasurer	\$8,688,464	\$15,421,498	\$16,033,580	77.5%	4.0%
☞ Accounts Receivable, Net	\$3,969,004	\$4,262,602	\$2,409,142	7.4%	-43.5%
☞ Contributions Receivable, Net	\$0	\$0	\$0	-	-
☞ Inventory and Prepaid Expenses	\$118,531	\$188,257	\$296,528	58.8%	57.5%
☞ Long-Term Investments	\$0	\$0	\$0	-	-
☞ Loans to Students	\$0	\$0	\$0	-	-
☞ Funds held under bond agreement	\$953,267	\$735,371	\$623,854	-22.9%	-15.2%
☞ Property, plants, and equipment, net	\$232,385,821	\$235,753,157	\$243,958,276	1.4%	3.5%
☞ Other Assets	\$12,000	\$259,481	\$0	2062.3%	-100.0%
Total Assets	\$266,432,094	\$281,168,997	\$295,222,963	5.5%	5.0%
LIABILITIES (in 000s)					
☞ Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$14,067,919	\$21,307,029	\$16,349,911	51.5%	-23.3%
☞ Deferred revenue & refundable advances	\$3,132,765	\$4,977,614	\$5,401,622	58.9%	8.5%
☞ Due to state	\$0	\$6,947	\$162	-	-97.7%
☞ Due to affiliates	\$0	\$0	\$0	-	-
☞ Annuity and life income obligations	\$14,178,477	\$12,055,252	\$10,328,856	-15.0%	-14.3%
☞ Amounts held on behalf of others	\$585,129	\$412,040	\$131,966	-29.6%	-68.0%
☞ Long-term investments	\$0	\$0	\$0	-	-
☞ Refundable government advances	\$1,080,956	\$902,606	\$880,569	-16.5%	-2.4%
☞ Other long-term liabilities	\$213,843	\$1,171,847	\$3,859,853	448.0%	229.4%
Total Liabilities	\$33,259,089	\$40,833,335	\$36,952,939	22.8%	-9.5%
NET ASSETS (in 000s)					
Unrestricted net assets					
Institutional	(\$2,274,358)	\$1,365,831	\$11,167,718	-160.1%	717.7%
☞ Foundation	\$0	\$0	\$0	-	-
Total	(\$2,274,358)	\$1,365,831	\$11,167,718	-160.1%	717.7%
Temporarily restricted net assets					
Institutional	\$3,061,542	\$3,216,674	\$6,320,598	5.1%	96.5%
☞ Foundation	\$0	\$0	\$0	-	-
Total	\$3,061,542	\$3,216,674	\$6,320,598	5.1%	96.5%
Permanently restricted net assets					
Institutional	\$232,385,821	\$235,753,157	\$240,781,708	1.4%	2.1%
☞ Foundation	\$0	\$0	\$0	-	-
Total	\$232,385,821	\$235,753,157	\$240,781,708	1.4%	2.1%
Total Net Assets	\$233,173,005	\$240,335,662	\$258,270,024	3.1%	7.5%
TOTAL LIABILITIES and NET ASSETS	\$266,432,094	\$281,168,997	\$295,222,963	5.5%	5.0%

Standard 7: Institutional Resources
(Statement of Revenues and Expenses)

Fiscal Year ends - month& day: (/)	3 Years Prior (FY21)	2 Years Prior (FY22)	Most Recently Completed Year (FY 23)	Current Year (FY 24)	Next Year Forward (FY 25)
OPERATING REVENUES (in 000s)					
?	\$57,239,067	\$52,246,689	\$51,537,977	\$50,448,479	\$56,679,699
?	\$13,211,127	\$15,015,446	\$15,239,810	\$15,664,623	\$15,494,922
?	\$-6,563,208	\$-7,269,827	\$-6,693,314	\$-8,944,156	\$-10,401,465
	\$63,886,986	\$59,992,308	\$60,084,473	\$57,168,946	\$61,773,156
?	\$3,964,265	\$7,187,555	\$10,274,816	\$4,869,338	\$3,166,864
?	\$57,351	\$0	\$21,390	\$37,922	\$0
?	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
?	\$855,964	\$765,273	\$1,077,883	\$982,942	\$2,316,206
	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$68,764,566	\$67,945,136	\$71,458,562	\$63,059,148	\$67,256,226
OPERATING EXPENSES (in 000s)					
?	\$72,510,343	\$71,835,470	\$70,194,077	\$58,022,363	\$60,368,459
?	\$896,232	\$919,314	\$750,147	\$1,284,166	\$1,334,025
?	\$371,386	\$594,735	\$1,772,791	\$2,035,710	\$2,117,508
?	\$12,558,574	\$12,883,983	\$11,282,193	\$11,889,547	\$12,361,409
?	\$21,792,683	\$23,137,904	\$23,982,106	\$21,376,095	\$22,222,383
?	\$19,005,674	\$19,627,114	\$19,554,230	\$19,323,214	\$20,084,769
	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
?	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
?	\$13,024,491	\$20,596,770	\$16,598,463	\$11,435,564	\$11,778,631
?	\$12,003,891	\$12,077,418	\$10,941,773	\$10,987,001	\$11,354,047
?	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
?	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$152,163,274	\$161,672,708	\$155,075,780	\$136,353,660	\$141,621,231
	\$-83,398,708	\$-93,727,572	\$-83,617,218	\$-73,294,512	\$-74,365,005
NON OPERATING REVENUES (in 000s)					
?	\$54,423,997	\$68,024,461	\$66,192,907	\$38,923,537	\$32,367,223
?	\$22,481	\$66,220	\$1,149,965	\$2,148,347	\$2,073,252
?	\$0	\$-10,126	\$-186,464	\$47,593	\$49,021
	\$3,214	\$36,495	\$49,408	\$27,484	\$28,309
?	\$7,047,359	\$6,524,509	\$6,524,657	\$6,787,505	\$8,822,824
	\$12,150,423	\$14,083,841	\$14,448,729	\$13,929,907	\$18,231,999
	\$68,579	\$117,691	\$235,129	\$202,664	\$208,744
	\$73,716,053	\$88,843,091	\$88,414,331	\$62,067,037	\$61,781,372
	\$-9,682,655	\$-4,884,481	\$4,797,113	\$-11,227,475	\$-12,583,633
?	\$1,687,971	\$14,481,050	\$15,237,372	\$3,673,363	\$3,783,564
?	\$-2,684,370	\$-2,433,912	\$-2,100,123	\$-5,560,099	\$-4,500,000
	\$-10,679,054	\$7,162,657	\$17,934,362	\$-13,114,211	\$-13,300,069

Standard 7: Institutional Resources

(Statement of Debt)

FISCAL YEAR ENDS month & day (/)		3 Years Prior (FY2)	2 Years Prior (FY2)	Most Recently Completed Year (FY2)	Current Year (FY2)	Next Year Forward (FY2)
	Long-term Debt					
	Beginning balance					
	Additions					
	Reductions					
	Ending balance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Interest paid during fiscal year					
	Current Portion					
	Bond Rating					
	Debt Service Coverage Operating Income / (Annual Interest + Current Portion of Debt)					
	Debt to Net Assets Ratio Long-term Debt / Total Net Assets					
	Debt to Assets Ratio Long-term Debt / Total Assets					

Debt Covenants: (1) Describe interest rate, schedule, and structure of payments; and (2) indicate whether the debt covenants are being met. If not being met, describe the specific covenant violation (i.e., requirement of the lender vs. actual achieved by the institution). **Also, indicate whether a waiver has been secured from the lender and/or if covenants were modified.**

Debt is held at the System Office

Standard 7: Institutional Resources

(Supplemental Data)

FISCAL YEAR ENDS month & day (/)	3 Years Prior (FY21)	2 Years Prior (FY22)	Most Recently Completed Year (FY 23)	Current Year (FY 24)	Next Year Forward (FY 25)
NET ASSETS					
Net assets beginning of year	\$243,852,059	\$233,173,005	\$240,335,662	\$258,270,024	\$245,155,813
Total increase/decrease in net assets	(\$10,679,054)	\$7,162,657	\$17,934,362	(\$13,114,211)	\$4,508,285
Net assets end of year	\$233,173,005	\$240,335,662	\$258,270,024	\$245,155,813	\$249,664,098
FINANCIAL AID					
Source of funds					
Unrestricted institutional	\$5,083,200	\$5,967,268	\$5,019,666	\$7,031,413	\$7,182,612
Federal, state and private grants	\$10,051,203	\$10,055,746	\$10,861,963	\$10,937,504	\$14,632,195
Restricted funds	\$1,480,008	\$1,302,559	\$1,673,648	\$1,912,743	\$1,387,709
Total	\$16,614,411	\$17,325,573	\$17,555,277	\$19,881,660	\$23,202,516
% Discount of tuition and fees	29.0%	33.2%	33.1%	39.4%	40.9%
? % Unrestricted discount	26.4%	30.7%	30.8%	35.6%	38.5%
Net Tuition Revenue per FTE	\$11,442	\$11,202	\$12,120	\$12,386	\$13,073
? FEDERAL FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY COMPOSITE SCORE					
Please indicate your institution's endowment spending policy:					
Only Interest awarded					
Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below.					
Federal Financial Responsibility Composite Score not applicable to publics					

Standard 7: Institutional Resources

(Liquidity)

FISCAL YEAR ENDS month & day (/)	3 Years Prior (FY21)	2 Years Prior (FY22)	Most Recently Completed Year (FY 23)	Current Year (FY 24)	Next Year Forward (FY 25)
CASH FLOW					
Cash and Cash Equivalents beginning of year	\$23,553,323	\$21,258,274	\$25,284,002	\$32,525,437	\$36,477,678
Cash Flow from Operating Activities	(\$71,112,005)	(\$74,456,458)	(\$77,451,286)	(\$58,792,932)	(\$60,556,720)
Cash Flow from Investing Activities	\$22,482	\$56,094	\$1,149,965	\$2,195,940	\$2,300,000
Cash Flow from Financing Activities	\$68,794,474	\$78,426,092	\$83,542,756	\$60,549,233	\$62,765,005
Cash and Cash Equivalents end of year	\$21,258,274	\$25,284,002	\$32,525,437	\$36,477,678	\$40,985,963
LIQUIDITY RATIOS					
Current Assets	\$31,532,864	\$42,300,640	\$50,241,404	\$45,548,679	\$50,056,964
Current Liabilities	\$19,381,331	\$28,438,568	\$24,674,585	\$20,175,884	\$20,781,161
Current Ratio	1.63	1.49	2.04	2.26	2.41
Days Cash on Hand [Cash and Cash Equivalents / (Operating Expenses + Depreciation and other noncash expenses)] / 365	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below that may impact the institution's cash flow					
Has the institution needed to access its restricted net assets or liquidate other financial assets to fund operations? If so, please describe and indicate when approvals (if required) were obtained from the state's authority.					
No					

Standard 5: Students

(Admissions, Fall Term)

Complete this form for each distinct student body identified by the institution (see Standard 5.1)

Credit Seeking Students Only - Including Continuing Education						
	3 Years Prior (Fall 2021)	2 Years Prior (Fall 2022)	1 Year Prior (Fall 2023)	Current Year (Fall 2024)	Goal (specify year) (Fall 2025)	
Freshmen - Undergraduate	?					
Completed Applications	?	4,688	5,093	5,457	5,910	6,386
Applications Accepted	?	3,978	4,253	4,440	5,142	5,739
Applicants Enrolled	?	733	629	711	861	846
% Accepted of Applied		84.9%	83.5%	81.4%	87.0%	89.9%
% Enrolled of Accepted		18.4%	14.8%	16.0%	16.7%	14.7%
Percent Change Year over Year						
Completed Applications		na	8.6%	7.1%	8.3%	8.1%
Applications Accepted		na	6.9%	4.4%	15.8%	11.6%
Applicants Enrolled		na	-14.2%	13.0%	21.1%	-1.7%
Average of statistical indicator of aptitude of enrollees: (define below)	?					
SAT combined math & verbal		1135	1122	1028	1133	1150
Transfers - Undergraduate	?					
Completed Applications		868	853	865	906	859
Applications Accepted		588	574	554	529	480
Applications Enrolled		314	312	282	289	211
% Accepted of Applied		67.7%	67.3%	64.0%	58.4%	55.9%
% Enrolled of Accepted		53.4%	54.4%	50.9%	54.6%	44.0%
Master's Degree	?					
Completed Applications		341	371	309	387	454
Applications Accepted		212	231	240	268	267
Applications Enrolled		179	188	190	222	186
% Accepted of Applied		62.2%	62.3%	77.7%	69.3%	58.8%
% Enrolled of Accepted		84.4%	81.4%	79.2%	82.8%	69.7%
First Professional Degree	?					
Completed Applications						
Applications Accepted						
Applications Enrolled						
% Accepted of Applied		-	-	-	-	-
% Enrolled of Accepted		-	-	-	-	-
Doctoral Degree	?					
Completed Applications		12	6	17	25	18
Applications Accepted		9	5	13	21	16
Applications Enrolled		7	3	13	19	13
% Accepted of Applied		75.0%	83.3%	76.5%	84.0%	88.9%
% Enrolled of Accepted		77.8%	60.0%	100.0%	90.5%	81.3%

Standard 4: The Academic Program
(Summary - Degree-Seeking Enrollment and Degrees)

Fall Enrollment* by location and modality, as of Census Date

Degree Level/ Location & Modality	Associate's	Bachelor's	Master's	Clinical doctorates (e.g., Pharm.D., DPT, DNP)	Professional doctorates (e.g., Ed.D., Psy.D., D.B.A.)	M.D., J.D., DDS	Ph.D.	Total Degree- Seeking
Main Campus FT	2	3,166	48	0	0	0	0	3,216
Main Campus PT	2	292	153	0	0	0	0	447
Other Principal Campus FT								0
Other Principal Campus PT								0
Branch campuses FT								0
Branch campuses PT								0
Other Locations FT								0
Other Locations PT								0
Overseas Locations FT								0
Overseas Locations PT								0
Distance education FT	0	13	9	0	3	0	0	25
Distance education PT	1	35	267	3	43	0	0	349
Correspondence FT								0
Correspondence PT								0
Low-Residency FT			12					12
Low-Residency PT			21					21
Unduplicated Headcount Total	5	3,506	510	3	46	0	0	4,070
Total FTE	2.80	3,268.48	292.33	1.50	19.17	0.00	0.00	3,584.28
Enter FTE definition:	15 semester credits = 1 FTE	15 semester credits = 1 FTE	12 sem. credits = 1 FTE	12 semester credits = 1 FTE	12 semester credits = 1 FTE			
Degrees Awarded, Most Recent Year	6	777	153	0	9	0	0	945

Standard 4: The Academic Program
(Summary - Non-degree seeking Enrollment and Awards)

Fall Enrollment* by location and modality, as of Census Date

Degree Level/ Location & Modality	Title IV-Eligible Certificates: Students Seeking Certificates	Non-Matriculated Students	Visiting Students	Total Non-degree-Seeking	Total degree-seeking (from previous page)	Grand total
Main Campus FT		0		0		0
Main Campus PT		59		59		59
Other Principal Campus FT				0		0
Other Principal Campus PT				0		0
Branch campuses FT				0		0
Branch campuses PT				0		0
Other Locations FT		0		0		0
Other Locations PT		14		14		14
Overseas Locations FT				0		0
Overseas Locations FT				0		0
Distance education FT		0		0		0
Distance education PT		15		15		15
Correspondence FT				0		0
Correspondence PT				0		0
Low-Residency FT				0		0
Low-Residency PT				0		0
Unduplicated Headcount Total	0	88	0	88		88
Total FTE		31.00		31		31.00
Enter FTE definition:		15 semester credits = 1 undergrad FTE; 12 sem. credits = 1 grad				
Certificates Awarded, Most Recent Year						

Standard 5: Students

(Financial Aid, Debt, Retention, and Graduation)

Complete this form for each distinct student body identified by the institution (see Standard 5.1)

	(FY 2021)	(FY 2022)	(FY 2023)		
Three-year Cohort Default Rate	0.3				
Three-year Loan repayment rate (from College Scorecard)	0				
	3 Years Prior	2 Years Prior	Most Recently Completed Year	Current Year	Goal (specify year)
	(FY 2022)	(FY 2023)	(FY 2024)	(FY 2025)	(FY 2026)
Student Financial Aid (Dollars)					
Total Federal Aid	\$24,243,280	\$22,967,306	\$22,367,783	\$25,273,752	\$23,713,030
Grants	\$6,761,430	\$6,470,054	\$7,035,692	\$9,465,874	\$7,433,263
Loans	\$17,227,190	\$16,190,140	\$15,037,452	\$15,406,333	\$15,965,279
Work Study	\$254,660	\$307,112	\$294,639	\$401,545	\$314,489
Total State Aid	\$2,050,046	\$2,707,074	\$2,305,963	\$3,106,208	\$2,542,323
Total Institutional Aid	\$7,761,850	\$7,193,799	\$8,784,553	\$9,516,737	\$8,314,235
Grants	\$5,858,189	\$5,023,005	\$6,861,509	\$7,244,449	\$6,246,788
Waivers	\$1,903,661	\$2,170,794	\$1,923,044	\$2,272,288	\$2,067,447
Total Private Aid	\$5,444,812	\$4,955,164	\$5,203,735	\$4,500,327	\$5,026,010
Grants	\$1,306,250	\$1,476,271	\$1,698,309	\$1,667,869	\$1,537,175
Loans	\$4,138,562	\$3,478,893	\$3,505,426	\$2,832,458	\$3,488,835
Student Debt					
Percent of students graduating with debt (include all students who graduated in this calculation)					
Undergraduates	69%	71%	68%	64%	62%
Graduates	56%	56%	62%	55%	53%
First professional students					
For students with debt:					
Average amount of debt for students leaving the institution with a degree					
Undergraduates	\$27,705	\$28,096	\$27,399	\$27,644	\$27,711
Graduates	\$39,214	\$36,576	\$36,037	\$35,110	\$36,734
First professional students					
Average amount of debt for students leaving the institution without a degree					
Undergraduates	\$12,489	\$12,018	\$12,793	\$12,555	\$12,464
Graduate Students	\$32,424	\$24,962	\$29,218	\$19,026	\$26,408
First professional students					
Student Persistence and Graduation					
	3 Years Prior	2 Years Prior	1 Year Prior	Current Year	Goal; specify year
	(FY 2022)	(FY 2023)	(FY 2024)	(FY 2025)	(FY 2026)
IPEDS Retention Data					
Full-time Associate degree students (fewer than 10)					
Part-time Associate degree students (fewer than 10)					
Full-time Bachelor's degree students	74%	69%	70%	73%	80%
Part-time Bachelors degree students	61%	32%	27%	38%	50%
IPEDS Graduation Data (150% of time)					
Associate degree students (fewer than 10)					
Bachelors degree students	53%	51%	50%	52%	60%

Standard 5: Students

(Enrollment, Fall Term)

Complete this form for each distinct student body identified by the institution (see Standard 5.1)

?

Credit-Seeking Students Only - Including Continuing Education

			3 Years Prior (Fall 2021)	2 Years Prior (Fall 2022)	1 Year Prior (Fall 2023)	Current Year (Fall 2024)	Goal (specify year) (Fall 2025)
UNDERGRADUATE		?					
First Year	Full-Time Headcount	?	1,065	974	1,004	1,187	1,234
	Part-Time Headcount	?	91	68	58	43	45
	Total Headcount		1,156	1,042	1,062	1,230	1,279
	Total FTE	?	1,103	988	1,025	1,173	1,220
Second Year	Full-Time Headcount		702	705	655	695	723
	Part-Time Headcount		68	50	66	46	48
	Total Headcount		770	755	721	741	771
	Total FTE		726	717	671	711	740
Third Year	Full-Time Headcount		849	743	682	660	686
	Part-Time Headcount		115	105	94	56	58
	Total Headcount		964	848	776	716	744
	Total FTE		882	771	714	684	711
Fourth Year	Full-Time Headcount		824	743	656	639	665
	Part-Time Headcount		314	291	219	185	192
	Total Headcount		1,138	1,034	875	824	857
	Total FTE		922	823	721	704	732
Unclassified	Full-Time Headcount	?	0	0	0	0	0
	Part-Time Headcount		144	120	108	56	58
	Total Headcount		144	120	108	56	58
	Total FTE		46	41	34	20	21
Total Undergraduate Students							
	Full-Time Headcount		3,440	3,165	2,997	3,181	3,308
	Part-Time Headcount		732	634	545	386	401
	Total Headcount		4,172	3,799	3,542	3,567	3,709
	Total FTE		3,679	3,340	3,165	3,292	3,423
	% Change FTE Undergraduate		na	-9.2%	-5.2%	4.0%	4.0%
GRADUATE		?					
	Full-Time Headcount	?	81	69	70	72	75
	Part-Time Headcount	?	549	549	525	530	551
	Total Headcount		630	618	595	602	626
	Total FTE	?	337	330	324	330	344
	% Change FTE Graduate		na	-2.1%	-1.8%	1.9%	4.2%
GRAND TOTAL							
	Grand Total Headcount		4,802	4,417	4,137	4,169	4,336
	Grand Total FTE		4,016	3,670	3,489	3,622	3,767
	% Change Grand Total FTE		na	-8.6%	-4.9%	3.8%	4.0%

Standard 4: The Academic Program
(Headcount by UNDERGRADUATE Major)

WCSU Undergraduate Headcounts	Number of credits*	3 Years	2 Years	1 Year	Current	5 Year
		Prior (Fall 2021)	Prior (Fall 2022)	Prior (Fall 2023)	Year (Fall 2024)	Projection (Fall 2029)
For Fall Term, as of Census Date						
Certificate (add more rows as needed)						
Not applicable						
Total		0	0	0	0	0
Associate (add more rows as needed)						
AS Liberal Arts	60	8	8	6	5	6
Total		8	8	6	5	6
Baccalaureate (add more rows as needed)						
BBA Accounting	120	161	148	153	178	203
BA Economics	120	19	22	17	15	17
BBA Finance	120	142	113	142	161	184
BBA Cybersecurity	120	81	82	82	82	93
BBA Management Information Systems	120	38	44	34	39	44
BBA Business Adm. Undeclared	120	164	156	137	113	129
BBA Management	120	204	183	166	187	213
BBA Marketing	120	159	147	152	139	158
BA Biology	120	170	160	136	138	157
BS Secondary Ed. & Biology	120	5	4	2	2	2
BA Earth & Planetary Sciences	120	4	2	1	-	-
BS Meteorology	120	27	34	30	16	18
BS Chemistry	120	41	42	45	32	36
BS Secondary Ed. & Chemistry	120	0	1	-	1	1
BA Applied Computing	120	6	5	6	6	7
BS Computer Science	120	108	102	108	92	105
BA Mathematics	120	22	17	9	7	8
BS Secondary Ed. & Mathematics	120	14	9	8	9	10
BS Applied & Computational Mathematics	120	4	10	10	16	18
BA English	120	28	24	16	20	23
BS Secondary Ed. & English	120	14	18	15	11	13
BA Interdisciplinary Studies	120	39	39	33	20	23
BA American Studies	120	2	1	-	-	-
BA History	120	48	37	36	30	34
BS Sec. Ed. & History/Social Studies	120	34	29	21	24	27
BA/BS Contract Major	120	0	2	1	1	1
BA Undeclared / Exploratory Studies	----	279	317	198	230	262
BA Psychology	120	289	276	261	223	254
BA Anthropology/Sociology	120	23	19	23	21	24
BA Political Science	120	40	42	35	30	34
BA Social Sciences	120	11	10	5	-	-
BA Spanish	120	6	4	7	4	5
BS Secondary Ed. & Spanish	120	3	3	3	5	6
BS Elementary Education Interdisciplinary	120	55	53	55	90	103
BS Pre-Interdisc. Elementary Education	----	55	37	29	-	-
BS Health & Wellness Management	120	0	-	7	58	66
BS Health Education	120	20	20	24	26	30
BS Public Health	120	187	193	180	148	169
BS Criminal Justice (Justice & Law Admin.)	120	332	273	255	258	294
BS Nursing	120	226	183	174	176	201
BS Pre-Nursing	----	70	70	68	128	146
BS Registered Nursing (RN-to-BS)	120	29	26	12	8	9
BA Social Work	120	132	102	101	101	115
BA Art/ BFA Visual Arts	120	108	100	96	111	127
BA Communication	120	129	101	90	75	86
BA Digital Interactive Media Arts	120	51	41	46	62	71
BA Media Arts	120	38	32	39	38	43
BA Professional Writing	120	69	48	46	44	50
BA Music	120	27	26	23	20	23
BA Popular Music	120	0	-	7	5	6
BM Bachelor of Music	120	66	75	78	77	88
BS Music Education	120	84	66	72	80	91
BFA Musical Theatre	120	51	51	60	62	71
BA Theatre Arts	120	106	72	40	31	35
BFA Theatre Arts	120	0	-	34	56	64
Total		4,020	3,671	3,428	3,506	3,997
Total Undergraduate Degree-Seeking		4,028	3,679	3,434	3,511	4,003

Standard 4: The Academic Program
(Headcount by GRADUATE Major)

WCSU Graduate Headcounts							
	Number of credits*	3 Years Prior (Fall 2021)	2 Years Prior (Fall 2022)	1 Year Prior (Fall 2023)	Current Year (Fall 2024)	5 Year Projection (Fall 2029)	
For Fall Term, as of Census Date							
Master's (add more rows as needed)							
?	MBA Business Administration	37	36	42	41	42	49
	MHA Health Administration	36	18	13	12	20	23
	MS Integrative Biological Diversity	30	17	20	17	17	20
	MA Mathematics	30	5	2	5	3	4
	MA History	30	10	13	13	14	16
	MS Addiction Studies	37	22	18	16	6	7
	MAT Secondary Education	45	18	14	21	17	20
	MS Education	30	24	0	0	0	0
	MSED Special Education	36	7	6	12	13	15
	MSED Literacy & Language Arts	36	0	13	8	7	8
	MS Applied Behavior Analysis	30	121	111	94	112	131
	MS Counselor Education	48-60	98	113	100	96	112
	MS Human Nutrition	38	5	4	0	0	0
	MS Homeland Security	36	0	10	16	19	22
	MS Nursing	41	91	91	93	99	116
	MFA Visual Arts	60	8	12	12	11	13
	MFA Creative & Professional Writing	60	36	40	39	34	40
	MM Master of Music (prev. Music Educ.)	30	5	0	0	0	0
	Total		521	522	499	510	597
Doctorate (add more rows as needed)							
?	Ed.D. Instructional Leadership	60	33	23	28	41	48
	Ed.D. Nursing Education	51	11	10	8	5	6
	DNP Doctor of Nursing Practice	39	0	3	2	3	4
	Total		44	36	38	49	57
First Professional (add more rows as needed)							
?	Not Applicable						
	Total		0	0	0	0	0
Other; specify (add more rows as needed)							
?	Cert. School Counseling	18	1	2	2	1	1
	PMC Applied Behavior Analysis	22	9	7	6	6	7
	CAS Advanced Practice Nursing	18	8	5	2	4	5
	Total		18	14	10	11	13
	Total Graduate Degree-Seeking		583	572	547	570	667

**Standard 6: Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship
(Appointments, Tenure, Departures, and Retirements)**

		3 Years Prior		2 Years Prior		1 Year Prior		Current Year	
		(FY 2022)		(FY 2023)		(FY 2024)		(FY 2025)	
		FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT
?	Number of Faculty Appointed								
	Professor								
	Associate								
	Assistant	3		6		8		4	
	Instructor	2				2		2	
	No rank								
	Other		379		350		331		339
	Total	5	379	6	350	10	331	6	339
?	Number of Faculty in Tenured Positions								
	Professor	104		105		104		104	
	Associate	51		51		54		44	
	Assistant	2		5		6		4	
	Instructor								
	No rank								
	Other								
	Total	157	0	161	0	164	0	152	0
?	Number of Faculty Departing								
	Professor	1		3		1			
	Associate	1		1		1			
	Assistant	5		4		2			
	Instructor	1		2					
	No rank								
	Other								
	Total	8	0	10	0	4	0	0	0
?	Number of Faculty Retiring								
	Professor	8		4		12		3	
	Associate	3				2		2	
	Assistant	1							
	Instructor								
	No rank								
	Other								
	Total	12	0	4	0	14	0	5	0

Appendix 1-1: A Year Since Our Last NECHE Visit — The State of Shared Governance
The following section was provided by the Western Connecticut State University Chapter of the American Association of University Professors (WCSU-AAUP).

WCSU-AAUP recently surveyed members of our bargaining unit to measure perceptions of the state of shared governance about one year after a visit from the New England Commission for Higher Education (NECHE). The survey consisted of ten questions, a mix of open and closed-ended, and was anonymous and confidential to encourage respondents to share their thoughts freely and honestly. It is important to note that no questions were required to encourage busy members to respond during their limited free time. Thus, not all questions were answered by all respondents.

We received a total of 61 responses. The graphs below break down the respondents by employment status (Figure 1) and by academic school (Figure 2).

Figure 1

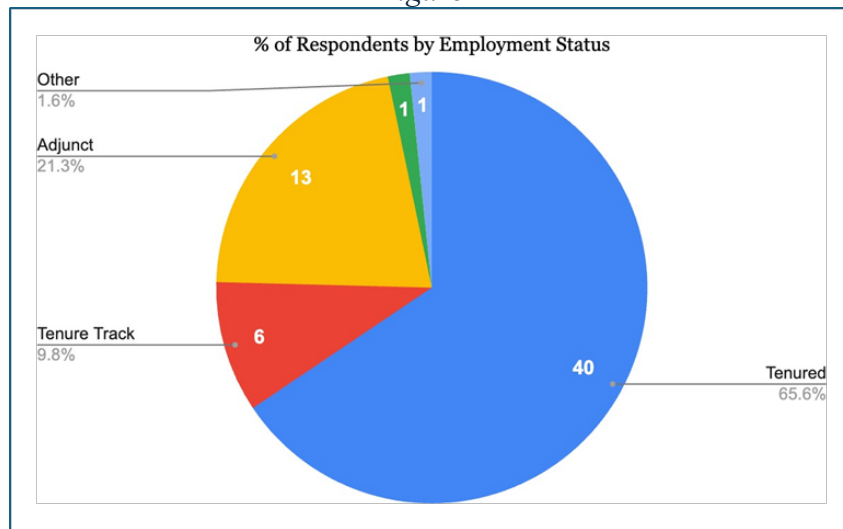
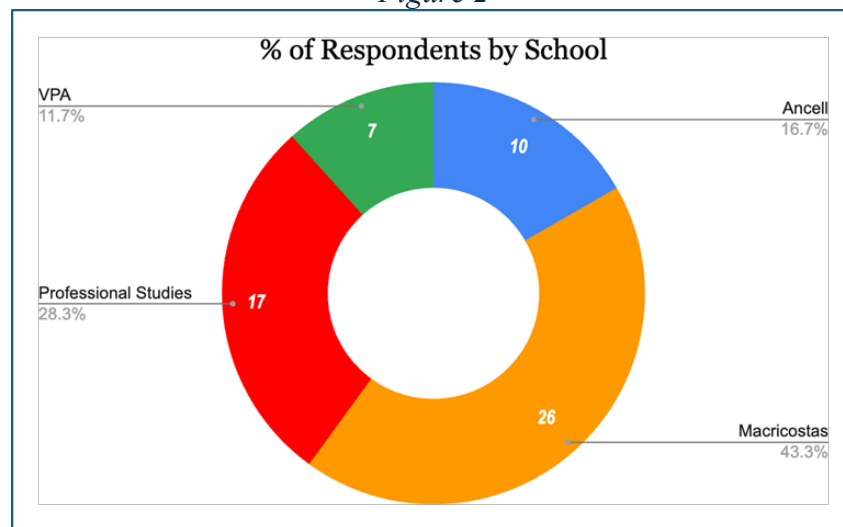


Figure 2



As shown, tenure and tenure-track members were overrepresented in this sample, and the Macricostas

School of Arts and Sciences demonstrated the most participation in the survey.

Shared Governance Pre-NECHE Visit

Respondents by far reported that shared governance was lacking prior to and at the time of the last NECHE visit. When asked to rate the state of shared governance at the time of the last NECHE visit from 0-10, the average rating was 4.77 and the mode was 3. In open-ended questions, members largely shared negative experiences with previous administrators. One member surveyed wrote:

They were attempting to hack programs (majors and minors); faculty were being flung between schools; students were taking over our Senate meetings ... the provost was making seasoned department chairs CRY and/or pull out their hair and lose sleep. We were terribly abused by the old administration.

Much of the criticism surrounding the state of shared governance, at that time, was leveled at top university administrators, particularly Provost Missy Alexander and Interim-President Paul Beran. Members felt decisions were being made not just without them, but in direct opposition of them. They complained of a lack of transparency, “a tight control on the flow of information” (especially financial information during a financial crisis), a lack of collaboration and, as one respondent put it, that “consultation” guidelines on the CBA had become a restricted code for directive mandates.”

Shared Governance Post-NECHE Visit

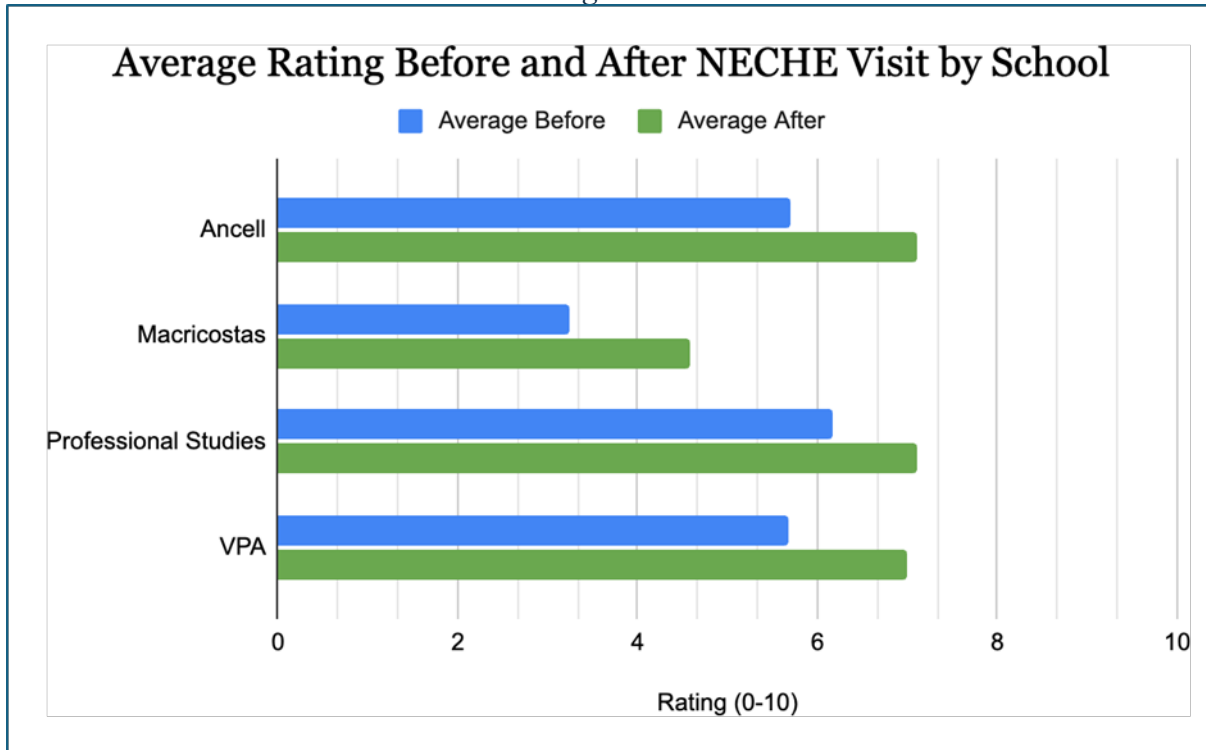
Now, respondents feel that things have changed for the better. When asked if they feel shared governance has improved at WCSU since the visit, 61% of respondents said “Yes.” Many respondents expressed that new leadership, particularly Interim-President Singh and Provost Hegedus, demonstrated more appreciation for shared governance and a willingness to incorporate input into decision-making. Many discussed Singh’s visits to department meetings and felt that, in general, things are improving, and communication and transparency have increased. The respondent who is quoted above as saying they felt “terribly abused by the old administration,” shared a much rosier view of the current state of things, saying:

We have a provost who is firm, but whom we all feel we can have a fair conversation with. Departments are settled. The focus is no longer on saving ourselves, but on improving what we offer to students. It's a new day at WCSU.

The stark difference between this respondent’s responses, along with the other data collected in the survey, demonstrates that, for a large number of members, changes post-NECHE have made some level of difference — albeit, for some not as dramatically as for others. Figure 3 shows the average “before” and “after” ratings by academic school. In each school, the average “after” rating was higher than the average “before.”

Even respondents who feel things are improving are not without criticism, however. Several respondents, for example, expressed dissatisfaction with the recent strategic planning process. Many felt that while it did bring in stakeholders from across the university, it was rushed.

Figure 3



Conclusion

The takeaway from this survey is that the majority of respondents felt that shared governance has seen some improvements post-NECHE but still assert that there is more work to be done. Also, while many respondents were happy with changes at the admin level, there remains much discontentment with administration at the top levels. Some areas identified for improvement are listed below.

Major Areas for Improvement as Identified by Respondents:

- Instability of administration at the university level
- Many want less turnover among management and a permanent president. One respondent said, “This interim culture, which is so attractive to self-serving careerists, prevents shared governance as faculty are less likely to trust or collaborate with someone who is just passing through and not truly invested in our students’ success.”
- Communication with university community (faculty, staff, and students)
- Feeling unheard by the BOR
 - Some argued eliminating the Board altogether and returning to a Board of Trustees which they felt was more democratic and representative
- Representation issues with the University Senate
 - Some suggested new Senate leadership was needed.
- Top-down decisions
- Erosion of academic departments through attrition

Appendix 1-2: President's Council: Overview and Charge (Draft)

To be approved by the Council in Fall 2025.

The President's Council at Western Connecticut State University serves as the university's primary forum for inclusive planning, budget consultation, and cross-divisional dialogue. Re-established under the new president and expanded in both scope and membership, the Council is designed to foster institutional alignment, increase transparency, and ensure diverse perspectives inform key decisions. Meeting at least every other month, the Council advises the president and senior leadership on matters related to strategic priorities, institutional policies, and resource allocation.

This effort reflects WCSU's commitment to advancing shared governance and continuous improvement in decision-making structures.

Goals

- Serve as the principal university-wide forum for collaborative planning, budgeting, and policy review.
- Strengthen alignment of institutional decisions with WCSU's mission, strategic priorities, and financial sustainability.
- Increase transparency in the rationale and process behind major decisions.
- Provide space for cross-functional dialogue, shared accountability, and coordination across divisions.

Planned Outcomes

- Greater visibility and trust in institutional decisions through structured, recurring dialogue.
- Documented advisory input reflected in strategic planning updates, budget submissions, and policy proposals.
- Regular tracking of progress against strategic priorities and alignment with key institutional metrics.
- Enhanced communication and feedback loops between leadership and campus constituencies.

Membership

Membership in the President's Council includes institutional leaders from across divisions and functional areas. It is composed of individuals in academic leadership, finance and operations, student affairs, enrollment, diversity and equity, advancement, human resources, and institutional planning, as well as designated representatives of faculty, staff, and students. This inclusive structure ensures that the Council reflects both administrative functions and the perspectives of shared governance bodies, including the Faculty Senate, SGA, AAUP, SUOAF, Admin. Clerical, Maintenance & Svc. Unit, and Protective Svcs. Additional participants may be invited at the discretion of the president based on the university's evolving priorities and initiatives.

Appendix 1-3: Advisory Committees

Committee for Advising and Registration

Mission:

The Committee for Advising and Registration is established to enhance coordination and effectiveness in enrollment and retention services. The committee will streamline processes, support student success, and review opportunities, initiatives, and challenges related to the enrollment of First Time (First-Year and Transfer), and retention and graduation rates of continuing students. The committee's work will support student success and equitable access to advisement and registration services.

Objectives:

- 1. Enhance Coordination Across Departments:** Foster collaboration between academic and administrative departments, including University Advisement, the Registrar, Precollegiate and Access Programs, First-Year Programs, Housing and Residence Life (HRL), and faculty representatives to streamline the advising and registration process.
- 2. Improve Enrollment and Retention Services:** Develop strategies to enhance the enrollment experience for First Time students while addressing retention and graduation rates for continuing students by identifying and resolving registration bottlenecks and advising challenges.
- 3. Streamline Advisement and Registration Processes:** Review and improve existing registration and advising systems to increase efficiency, reduce bottlenecks, and provide clear, timely information regarding academic planning and course selection. Use data analytics to identify inefficiencies such as course availability issues, scheduling conflicts, and student advising bottlenecks.
- 4. Support Student Transition and Success:** Facilitate the smooth transition of First Time students by integrating HRL into the advisement model with residential life and commuter support programs. This will build essential life skills, academic success, and social engagement.
- 5. Ensure Equitable Access to Advising and Registration Resources:** Promote equitable access to advising services to ensure that underrepresented students, including those in Precollegiate and Access Programs, have the necessary support to navigate the registration and academic planning process successfully.
- 6. Improve Retention and Graduation Rates:** Monitor and address issues affecting retention and graduation rates of continuing students by collaborating with various departments to develop strategies that promote academic success and timely graduation.
- 7. Promote Equity and Accessibility in Advisement:** Ensure equitable policies and practices to meet the diverse needs of all students, especially those from underrepresented backgrounds, through data collection and analysis on advising and registration equity metrics.
- 8. Monitor and Improve Student Outcomes:** Use data-driven analysis, including student feedback, enrollment trends, and retention rates, to continuously assess and improve advisement and registration processes.
- 9. Provide Ongoing Faculty Training on Advisement Best Practices:** Develop faculty training programs that enhance understanding of academic advisement, university policies, and student support services. Provide a continuous learning environment for faculty to improve advising effectiveness.

Committee Structure:

- 1. Director of University Advisement (Chair):** Collaborates with student affairs and academic affairs areas, provides feedback on student experiences, contributes to conversations regarding improvements in academic planning.

2. **Registrar, or Designee:** Oversees registration logistics, course schedules, and academic records, and works to resolve registration bottlenecks.
3. **Precollegiate and Access Program Director, or Designee:** Provides insight into the needs of underrepresented students and precollegiate programs, including dual enrollment programs and activities.
4. **First-Year Program Coordinator, or Designee:** Focuses on onboarding and transition for first-year students, coordinating initiatives aimed at improving student success in their first year.
5. **Housing and Residence Life (HRL) Director, or Designee:** HRL's expanded role integrates student success initiatives within residential life, supporting continuing, first-year, and transfer student transitions and life skills development.
6. **Faculty Representative(s):** Academic policies, curriculum coordination, and serves as a trainer for new faculty on advising best practices.
7. **Ad hoc members as needed** (e.g. DEI office, Early College Faculty liaison)

Data Collection and Analysis:

- **Data Needs:** Enrollment, retention data, graduation rates, course registration patterns, advising session attendance, and student satisfaction feedback. Equity metrics to assess engagement and access for underrepresented and precollegiate students.
- **Data Collection Procedures:** Use institutional research and data analytics to monitor student feedback, registration bottlenecks, academic performance, and retention trends.
- Implement predictive modeling tools to identify at-risk students for targeted interventions.
- Collect and assess demographic data and evaluate academic, enrollment, and student services for appropriate engagement for students.

Analysis & Reporting:

- Regularly analyze trends in student retention, advising outcomes, course success, and student satisfaction to inform committee decisions.
- Use data-driven insights to refine and implement targeted improvements to advisement and registration services, with regular reports to university leadership.

Educational Achievement and Access Bridge Program (EA²P) Advisory Board

Members:

- Melissa Stephens (Associate Dean of Enrollment Management and Financial Aid)
- Dr. Kelli Custer (Professor/Associate Chair World Languages & Composition/Writing Center)
- Dr. Stavros Christofi (Professor Mathematics/Math Clinic)
- AnnMarie Puleo (Director of University Advisement Center)
- Lauren Arvisais (Tutoring Resource Center Coordinator)
- Rob Pote (Director Pre-Collegiate & Access Programs)
- Student Representative (Appointed by the Pre-Collegiate and Access Program Director)

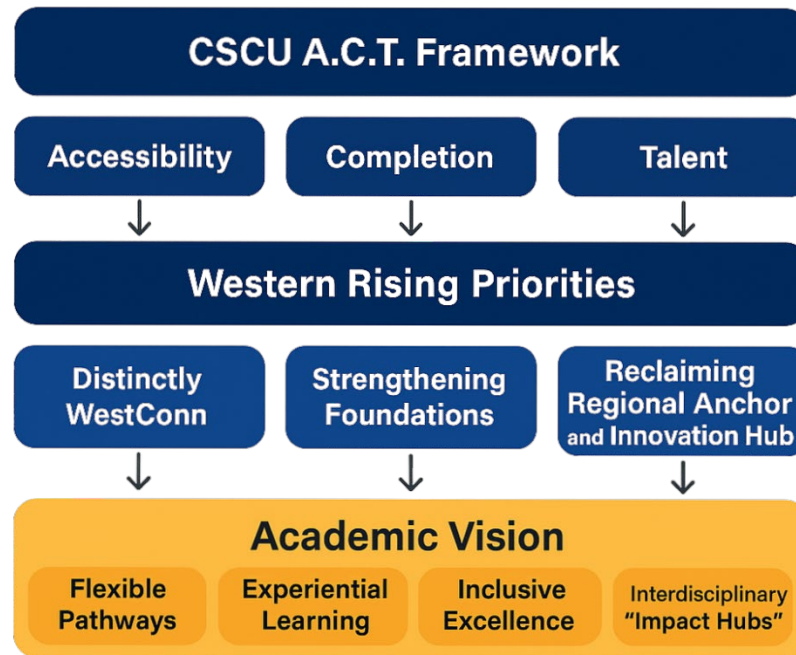
Responsibilities

To evaluate existing and future strategies for assisting EA²P students in achieving their academic goals while considering enrollment and capacity to support initiatives. Research best practices in student success programming and provide recommendations to the university community for implementing academic success programs.

1. **Enrollment Data Analysis:** Examine current enrollment trends of Educational Achievement and Access Bridge Program cohorts; including total student numbers, demographic breakdowns, and growth patterns over recent years. Understand which programs or courses are experiencing high demand and if any are under-enrolled.
2. **Capacity Assessment:** Assess the capacity of our institution's resources, including classroom space, faculty availability, tutoring services, and other academic support resources. Identify if these capacities are sufficient to meet current and projected enrollment numbers of EA²P.
3. **Resource Allocation:** Use the data on EA²P student enrollment and capacity to allocate resources more effectively. For instance, if certain support services (like tutoring or academic advisement) are overburdened due to high demand, consider hiring additional staff or increasing hours.
4. **Predictive Modeling:** Implement predictive modeling to anticipate future enrollment trends and capacity needs. Use historical data to forecast growth areas and prepare by scaling up or adjusting resources accordingly.
5. **Targeted Enrollment Strategies:** Align recruitment and enrollment strategies with the institution's capacity and strategic goals.
6. **Continuous Monitoring and Feedback:** Regularly monitor EA²P enrollment numbers and capacity metrics to ensure they align. Gather feedback from students and staff about any constraints or challenges caused by capacity issues and adjust strategies accordingly.

By considering both enrollment and capacity EA²P Bridge Program, we can ensure that the institution's academic support strategies to support initiatives are scalable and sustainable, providing adequate support to all students.

Appendix 2-1: Strategy Alignment (Draft)



The following Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were developed by aligning WCSU’s *Western Rising 2024–2030* strategic plan. The process consolidated inputs from multiple sources—including system-level CSCU ACT (Accessibility, Completion, Talent) metrics, University Senate–approved KPIs, financial and enrollment modeling, and program-level planning data. Targets were set to be both ambitious and realistic, grounding baseline measures in recent institutional performance (e.g., retention, graduation, fundraising, employment outcomes) while projecting forward in ways that directly support WCSU’s financial plan, accreditation standards, and mission as Connecticut’s largest Hispanic-Serving Institution.

**Baseline metrics, accountability designations, timelines, and focused strategies will be finalized in early Fall 2025, with campus input.*

Appendix 3-1: Summer 2025 BOR Reviewed 5-Year Expenditure Plan (to be revised regularly)

Connecticut State University
Expenditure Plan (Operating) - By Object Account

Account Name	FY2024-25 Revised Budget		FY2025-26 Projection				FY2026-27 Projection			
	FTE	\$	FTE	\$	FY 2025-26 Proj Increase/(Decrease) FY 2024-25 Budget		FTE	\$	FY 2026-27 Proj Increase/(Decrease) FY 2025-26 Proj	
					\$	%			\$	%
Revenue:										
Tuition (Gross)		23,255,732		24,185,961	930,229	4.00%		25,153,400	967,438	4.00%
Part Time Tuition (Gross)		4,936,024		5,133,448	197,424	4.00%		5,338,786	205,338	4.00%
General University Fee (PT Students)		3,962,444		4,121,232	158,788	4.01%		4,286,081	164,849	4.00%
University General Fee (includes Accident Ins.)		15,726,476		16,355,535	629,059	4.00%		17,009,756	654,221	4.00%
University Fee (DS)		3,329,320		3,462,493	133,173	4.00%		3,600,993	138,500	4.00%
Extension Fee (Gross)		3,367,632		3,502,337	134,705	4.00%		3,642,431	140,093	4.00%
All Other Student Fees		1,951,178		2,090,202	139,024	7.13%		2,173,810	83,608	4.00%
Accident Insurance		150,893		156,929	6,036	4.00%		163,206	6,277	4.00%
State Appropriations		31,546,067		32,412,638	866,571	2.75%		40,515,167	8,102,529	25.00%
Additional State Appropriation (Dev Edu and IMRP)		443,086		443,086	0	0.00%		443,086	0	0.00%
Fringe Benefits Paid By State		378,070		378,070	0	0.00%		378,070	0	0.00%
Operations Support, Deficiency Funding for Wages FY23 (Leg. Source)		17,631,973		0	(17,631,973)	-100.00%		0	0	0.00%
Provide Support for Salary Cost of the 27th Payroll		0		0	0	0.00%		0	0	0.00%
Provide Operations Support Through Short-Term Recovery Funds		6,571,777		0	(6,571,777)	-100.00%		0	0	0.00%
Housing		9,626,833		10,994,743	1,367,910	14.21%		12,670,530	1,675,787	15.24%
Food Service		5,868,089		6,170,637	302,548	5.16%		7,505,161	1,334,524	21.63%
All Other Revenue		4,394,605		5,156,153	761,548	17.33%		5,236,152	79,999	1.55%
Less: ContraRevenue		(1,831,144)		(1,831,144)	0	0.00%		(1,831,144)	0	0.00%
Total Revenue		131,309,055		112,732,320	(18,576,735)	-14.15%		126,285,484	13,553,165	12.02%
Expenditures:										
Personnel Services:										
Total Full Time	501	49,525,094	481	49,218,231	(306,863)	-0.62%	481	51,433,051	2,214,820	4.50%
Part Time										
Lecturers (PTL)	431	7,085,789	431	7,404,650	318,861	4.50%	431	7,737,859	333,209	4.50%
Lecturers (NCL)	57	520,242	57	543,653	23,411	4.50%	57	568,117	24,464	4.50%
Perm/Intermt PT	2	109,987	2	114,936	4,949	4.50%	2	120,109	5,172	4.50%
University Assistants	41	723,699	41	723,699	0	0.00%	41	756,265	32,566	4.50%
Graduate Assistants / Interns	31	254,286	31	228,672	(25,614)	-10.07%	31	228,672	0	0.00%
Student Workers	788	2,024,220	788	2,024,220	0	0.00%	788	2,024,220	0	0.00%
Other Part Time	39	581,405	39	607,568	26,163	4.50%	39	634,909	27,341	4.50%
Total Part Time	1,389	11,299,528	1,389	11,647,398	347,870	3.08%	1,389	12,070,151	422,753	3.63%
Overtime		2,304,345		2,004,345	(300,000)	-13.02%		2,004,345	0	0.00%
All Other Personnel Services (inc. LGVT, Shift Diff, Sick, Vac, Accr. Abs.)		1,558,145		1,501,761	(56,384)	-3.62%		1,501,761	0	0.00%
Subtotal Personnel Services		64,687,212		64,371,735	(315,477)	-0.49%		67,009,308	2,637,573	4.10%
Fringe Benefits		15,342,152		15,414,640	72,488	0.47%		16,185,372	770,732	5.00%
Worker's Comp. Recovery		127,492		133,229	5,737	4.50%		139,224	5,995	4.50%
Total P.S. & Fringe Benefits		80,156,856		79,919,604	(237,252)	-0.30%		83,333,905	3,414,300	4.27%
Other Expenses:										
Inst. Financial Aid/Match		7,182,612		7,536,887	354,275	4.93%		7,536,887	0	0.00%
Waivers		1,387,709		1,239,420	(148,289)	-10.69%		1,239,420	0	0.00%
Utilities		4,672,218		4,672,218	0	0.00%		4,627,934	(44,284)	-0.95%
All Other Expenses		26,115,883		24,970,540	(1,145,343)	-4.39%		25,719,656	(196,187)	-0.76%
Total Other Expenses		39,358,422		38,419,065	(939,357)	-2.39%		39,323,897	(134,525)	-0.34%
Total Expenditures		119,515,278		118,338,669	(1,176,609)	-0.98%		122,657,801	4,319,132	3.65%
Addition to (Use of) Funds Before Designated Items		11,793,777		(5,606,349)	(17,400,126)	-147.54%		3,627,683	9,234,032	-164.71%
Designated Transfers Per BOR Policies										
Debt Service (University Fee)		(3,329,320)		(3,462,493)	(133,173)	4.00%		(3,600,993)	(138,500)	4.00%
Debt Service Residence Halls		(1,200,972)		(1,422,941)	(221,969)	18.48%		(1,422,941)	0	0.00%
Debt Service Parking Garage		(555,068)		(817,822)	(262,754)	47.34%		(817,822)	0	0.00%
Debt Service WS Parking Garage		(65,559)		(67,265)	(1,706)	2.60%		(67,265)	0	0.00%
Auxiliary Renewal and Replacement		(568,139)		(343,308)	224,831	-39.57%		(403,514)	(60,206)	17.54%
Provide debt relief from SO designated UNP		0		4,885,434	4,885,434	0.00%		0	0	0.00%
Transfer to SO - GF/OF swap		(1,366,434)		(1,230,037)	136,397	-9.98%		(1,401,763)	(171,726)	13.96%
Total Set Aside Funds		(7,085,492)		(2,458,432)	4,627,060	-65.30%		(7,714,297)	(5,255,866)	213.79%
Other Requests										
Reserved for IT Equip (CISCO Financing Funds set aside)		0		0	0	0.00%		0	0	0.00%
Transfer from current reserves (UNP)		0		1,500,000	1,500,000	0.00%		0	(1,500,000)	-100.00%
Other Transfer - to Plant Fund Reserve		(200,000)		0	200,000	-100.00%		0	0	0.00%
System Support from SO undesignated UNP		0		7,000,000	7,000,000	0.00%		7,000,000	0	0.00%
Total Other Designated Fund Requests		(200,000)		8,500,000	8,700,000	-4350.00%		7,000,000	(1,500,000)	-17.65%
Addition to (Use of) Funds		4,508,285		435,219	(4,073,066)	-90.35%		2,913,386	2,478,167	569.41%

FY2027-28 Projection				FY2028-29 Projection				FY2029-30 Projection			
Total Funds		FY 2027-28 Proj Increase/(Decrease) FY 2026-27 Proj		Total Funds		FY 2028-29 Proj Increase/(Decrease) FY 2027-28 Proj		Total Funds		FY 2029-30 Proj Increase/(Decrease) FY 2028-29 Proj	
FTE	\$	\$	%	FTE	\$	\$	%	FTE	\$	\$	%
	26,426,162	1,272,762	5.06%		27,763,326	1,337,164	5.06%		29,168,150	1,404,824	5.06%
	5,608,928	270,143	5.06%		5,892,740	283,812	5.06%		6,190,913	298,173	5.06%
	4,502,957	216,876	5.06%		4,730,807	227,850	5.06%		4,970,185	239,379	5.06%
	17,870,450	860,694	5.06%		18,774,695	904,245	5.06%		19,724,694	950,000	5.06%
	3,673,012	72,020	2.00%		3,746,473	73,460	2.00%		3,821,402	74,929	2.00%
	3,826,738	184,307	5.06%		4,020,371	193,633	5.06%		4,223,801	203,431	5.06%
	2,239,024	65,214	3.00%		2,306,195	67,171	3.00%		2,375,380	69,186	3.00%
	168,102	4,896	3.00%		173,145	5,043	3.00%		178,339	5,194	3.00%
	41,933,198	1,418,031	3.50%		43,400,860	1,467,662	3.50%		44,919,890	1,519,030	3.50%
	443,086	0	0.00%		443,086	0	0.00%		443,086	0	0.00%
	378,070	0	0.00%		378,070	0	0.00%		378,070	0	0.00%
		0	0.00%			0	0.00%			0	0.00%
		0	0.00%			0	0.00%			0	0.00%
		0	0.00%			0	0.00%			0	0.00%
	13,050,646	380,116	3.00%		13,442,165	391,519	3.00%		13,845,430	403,265	3.00%
	7,925,450	420,289	5.60%		8,369,275	443,825	5.60%		8,837,954	468,679	5.60%
	5,454,837	218,685	4.18%		5,686,242	231,405	4.24%		5,931,365	245,123	4.31%
	(1,831,144)	0	0.00%		(1,831,144)	0	0.00%		(1,831,144)	0	0.00%
	131,669,516	5,384,032	4.26%		137,296,305	5,626,788	4.27%		143,177,518	5,881,213	4.28%
481	53,747,539	2,314,487	4.50%	481	56,166,178	2,418,639	4.50%	481	58,693,656	2,527,478	4.50%
431	8,086,062	348,204	4.50%	431	8,449,935	363,873	4.50%	431	8,830,182	380,247	4.50%
57	593,683	25,565	4.50%	57	620,398	26,716	4.50%	57	648,316	27,918	4.50%
2	125,513	5,405	4.50%	2	131,162	5,648	4.50%	2	137,064	5,902	4.50%
41	790,297	34,032	4.50%	41	825,861	35,563	4.50%	41	863,025	37,164	4.50%
31	228,672	0	0.00%	31	228,672	0	0.00%	31	228,672	0	0.00%
788	2,024,220	0	0.00%	788	2,024,220	0	0.00%	788	2,024,220	0	0.00%
39	663,480	28,571	4.50%	39	693,336	29,857	4.50%	39	724,536	31,200	4.50%
1,389	12,511,927	441,777	3.66%	1,389	12,973,584	461,657	3.69%	1,389	13,456,015	482,431	3.72%
	2,094,541	90,196	4.50%		2,188,795	94,254	4.50%		2,287,291	98,496	4.50%
	1,569,340	67,579	4.50%		1,639,961	70,620	4.50%		1,713,759	73,798	4.50%
	69,923,347	2,914,039	4.35%		72,968,517	3,045,170	4.36%		76,150,721	3,182,203	4.36%
	16,994,641	809,269	5.00%		17,844,373	849,732	5.00%		18,736,591	892,219	5.00%
	139,224	0	0.00%		139,224	0	0.00%		139,224	0	0.00%
	87,057,212	3,723,307	4.47%		90,952,114	3,894,903	4.47%		95,026,536	4,074,422	4.48%
	7,762,994	226,107	3.00%		7,995,883	232,890	3.00%		8,235,760	239,877	3.00%
	1,276,603	37,183	3.00%		1,314,901	38,298	3.00%		1,354,348	39,447	3.00%
	4,970,001	142,068	2.94%		5,116,331	146,330	2.94%		5,267,050	150,719	2.95%
	26,491,246	771,590	3.00%		27,285,983	794,737	3.00%		28,104,562	818,579	3.00%
	40,500,843	1,176,946	2.99%		41,713,098	1,212,255	2.99%		42,961,720	1,248,622	2.99%
	127,558,055	4,900,254	4.00%		132,665,213	5,107,157	4.00%		137,988,257	5,323,044	4.01%
	4,111,461	483,778	13.34%		4,631,092	519,631	12.64%		5,189,261	558,169	12.05%
	(3,673,012)	(72,020)	2.00%		(3,746,473)	(73,460)	2.00%		(3,821,402)	(74,929)	2.00%
	(1,465,629)	(42,688)	3.00%		(1,509,598)	(43,969)	3.00%		(1,554,886)	(45,288)	3.00%
	(842,357)	(24,535)	3.00%		(867,627)	(25,271)	3.00%		(893,656)	(26,029)	3.00%
	(69,283)	(2,018)	3.00%		(71,361)	(2,078)	3.00%		(73,502)	(2,141)	3.00%
	(419,522)	(16,008)	3.97%		(436,229)	(16,707)	3.98%		(453,668)	(17,439)	4.00%
	(1,443,816)	(42,053)	3.00%		(1,487,130)	(43,314)	3.00%		(1,531,744)	(44,614)	3.00%
	(7,913,619)	(199,322)	2.58%		(8,118,418)	(204,799)	2.59%		(8,328,858)	(210,440)	2.59%
	0	0	0.00%		0	0	0.00%		0	0	0.00%
		0	0.00%			0	0.00%			0	0.00%
		0	0.00%			0	0.00%			0	0.00%
		(7,000,000)	-100.00%			0	0.00%			0	0.00%
	0	(7,000,000)	-100.00%		0	0	0.00%		0	0	0.00%
	(3,802,158)	(6,715,544)	-230.51%		(3,487,326)	314,832	-8.28%		(3,139,597)	347,729	-9.97%

Appendix 3-2: Risk Management

RISK CATEGORY	MONITORING STRATEGIES	MITIGATION ACTIONS
Enrollment and Demographic Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use predictive analytics, enrollment management software and dashboards to track projected population shifts and adjust recruitment strategies. • Monitor regional high school graduation trends. • Segment undergraduate and graduate recruitment strategies by region, demographics, and academic interests. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data-Driven Enrollment Forecasting: Use predictive analytics to track and project trends. • Diversify Student Pipeline: Recruit non-traditional, adult learners, international students, and online learners. • Enhance Retention Strategies: Strengthen student support services, advising, and engagement. • Flexible Program Offerings: Develop workforce-aligned, short-term credentials and hybrid programs.
State and Federal Funding Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track legislative agendas, budget bills, and appropriations at federal and state levels. • Participate in higher professional organizations and consortia. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy and Policy Engagement: Actively engage in lobbying and consortia to influence funding policies. • Scenario-Based Budgeting: Prepare for low, moderate, and high funding scenarios. • Diversify Revenue Sources: Increase grant applications, partnerships, and auxiliary income (e.g., rentals, services).
Tuition Revenue Dependence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct in-state and out-of-state tuition elasticity studies periodically to evaluate the impact of price changes. • Track revenue from diverse sources: sponsored research, monetized assets, auxiliary services, program innovation. • Maintain a multi-year tuition revenue projection model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balanced Revenue Portfolio: Strengthen continuing education, online programs, and certificate programs. • Tuition Elasticity Analysis: Understand price sensitivity to avoid over-reliance on tuition hikes. • Improve Enrollment Yield: Invest in marketing, financial aid optimization, and student onboarding.

<p>Cost Structure and Fixed Expenses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use dashboards to review budget and expenses quarterly to identify variances and opportunities. • Benchmark against sister, regional and national peer institutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost Containment Reviews: Regularly assess staffing levels, vendor contracts, and facility use. • Shared Services: Pool resources with other institutions for IT, HR, or procurement. • Outsource Select Non-Core Functions: Consider dining, maintenance, or bookstore operations.
<p>Infrastructure and Capital Risks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct annual facilities condition assessments and track deferred maintenance. • Use health and safety, ROI and strategic alignment criterion to prioritize capital projects and develop renewal plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deferred Maintenance Planning: Maintain a capital renewal plan with clear prioritization. • Energy Efficiency Initiatives: Reduce utilities and maintenance through sustainable upgrades. • Leverage Public-Private Partnerships (P3s): For new buildings, housing, or infrastructure.
<p>Operational Inefficiencies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct process audits and effectiveness reviews across all divisions. • Utilize Ellucian Banner system and functionality fully. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lean Process Improvement: Adopt Lean or Six Sigma to streamline workflows. • Integrated ERP Systems: Consolidate platforms for HR, finance, and student information. • Performance Dashboards: Track KPIs in real time to identify inefficiencies early.
<p>Debt</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow CSCU System Office policies as applicable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debt Policy and Limits: Establish clear thresholds tied to operating revenues and reserves. • Refinancing Opportunities: Monitor rates for opportunities to reduce debt servicing costs. • Transparent Long-Term Planning: Align borrowing with strategic priorities and ROI analysis
<p>Competitive Market Risks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct competitor analysis and market demand studies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Differentiation: Emphasize unique value propositions in programs and outcomes.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor rankings, pricing trends, and program offerings at regional peer institutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand Positioning: Invest in targeted digital marketing and brand identity. • Strengthen Employer Ties: Co-develop curricula and pipelines to jobs in growing sectors.
Regulatory and Compliance Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use compliance management software and compliance dashboards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance Office and Training: Centralize oversight and provide regular policy education. • Policy Management System: Ensure current, accessible, and well-communicated policies. • Third-Party Audits: Periodic reviews of compliance controls and risk exposure.
Philanthropy and Endowment Volatility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversify the endowment portfolio and stress test investment assumptions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversify Donor Base: Broaden outreach to alumni, corporate partners, and foundations. • Endowment Spending Policy: Use a smoothing formula to protect against market volatility. • Transparent Impact Reporting: Show measurable impact of donor gifts to encourage ongoing support.
External Shocks - <i>Pandemics or Natural Disasters</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and regularly update business continuity plan • Partner with health agencies and other public agencies to conduct tabletop emergency exercises. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP): Maintain and update COOPs for various scenarios. • Remote Learning and Work Infrastructure: Ensure scalability and readiness of platforms. • Crisis Communication Protocols: Keep stakeholders informed with clear, timely updates.
External Shocks - <i>Political or Legislative Changes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor higher education legislation via state policy centers and national groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Watch Function: Monitor legislation affecting higher ed at all levels.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work closely with the Government Relations Office at the System Office. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agile Strategic Planning: Build responsiveness into planning cycles to pivot when needed. • Engagement with Government Relations: Maintain relationships to stay informed and influential.
External Shocks - <i>Cybersecurity Threats and Data Breaches</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct regular vulnerability assessments and penetration testing. • Use data security and event management tools. • Conduct periodic refresher training for faculty and staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robust Cybersecurity Framework (e.g., NIST): Follow recognized standards and best practices. • Regular Penetration Testing: Identify vulnerabilities before attackers do. • Staff and Student Training: Mandatory annual cybersecurity awareness programs.

Appendix 3-3: Danbury High School Partnership

Western Connecticut State University & Danbury High School Partnership Report

Submitted: August 2025

I. Introduction

Western Connecticut State University (WCSU) maintains a long-standing and evolving partnership with Danbury High School (DHS), under the broader Danbury Public Schools (DPS) district. This partnership reflects a strategic and mission-aligned commitment to improving college access, equity, and local engagement. Our initiatives aim to establish sustainable enrollment pathways for Danbury students and increase postsecondary attainment through early exposure, academic support, and financial accessibility.

This report provides an overview of current programs, impact metrics, challenges, and strategic next steps, demonstrating WCSU's role as a community-engaged institution deeply invested in the success of its local students.

II. Danbury High School Profile

- **Student Population:** Over 3,200 students
 - **Diversity:** Highly diverse population including many first-generation college students, low-income families, and students from immigrant and undocumented backgrounds.
 - **Postsecondary Transition:** Danbury High School graduates approximately 700–800 students annually. Data collected through WCSU programs indicates that a significant percentage are interested in higher education, though affordability and access remain key barriers.
-

III. Current Partnership Initiatives

1. Concurrent Enrollment (Early College Courses)

- **Subjects Offered:** Statistics, Calculus I & II, General Biology I & II, General Chemistry I & II, Composition, Spanish, English Literature.
- **Student Participation:** ~150 DHS students enrolled in 2024–25, up from 41 in the previous year.
- **Cost:** Free under current grant (through Dec 2026); \$65/course for non-waiver students afterward.
- **Equity Focus:** Waivers for free/reduced lunch students post-grant.
- **Quality Assurance:** Teachers must meet university-level credentialing standards.
- **Enrichment:** Campus visits and academic sessions are planned (e.g., Nov 13).

2. Dual Enrollment

- **Model:** DHS juniors/seniors take WCSU courses taught by university faculty on campus.
- **Access:** Students pay non-matriculated tuition rates.
- **Benefit:** Provides rigorous, early college exposure in an authentic setting.

3. Bridge Programming (ConnCAP, Upward Bound, Excel)

- **On-site Presence:** WCSU maintains offices at two DHS campuses (Clapboard Ridge and West Campus).
- **Current Reach:** Serves 162 students across DHS and three middle schools.
- **Signature Events:**
 - 6-week Summer Program

- Summer Youth College Fair (300–450 attendees, 100+ from DHS)
- First-Gen College Celebration
- Parent Education Nights (FAFSA, literacy, Common App)

4. Educational Achievement & Access Bridge Program (EA²P)

- **Goal:** Support conditionally admitted students in their transition and persistence.
- **Enrollment Data:**
 - Fall 2023: 3 DHS students (1 still enrolled in Fall 2025)
 - Fall 2024: 8 DHS students (7 enrolled for Fall 2025)
 - Fall 2025: 5 DHS students
- **Success Indicator:** High retention rate from 2024 to 2025 cohort.

5. ConnCAP/Upward Bound Student Outcomes

- **WCSU Enrollment:**
 - Spring 2025: 23 CC/UB alumni enrolled at WCSU
 - Fall 2024: 2 new DHS CC/UB graduates enrolled
 - Fall 2025: 4 new DHS CC/UB graduates expected
- **WCSU Graduates:**
 - 2024: 11 CC/UB alumni graduated from WCSU
 - 2025: 1 alumnus (small cohort)

6. Financial Aid Outreach

- **Activities:**
 - FAFSA Completion Events (English and Spanish)
 - Parent nights
 - Assistance for undocumented students (AACTUS)
 - Collaboration with Foundation: ~\$94,000 in scholarships for Danbury students
 - Targeted events for ConnCAP, Upward Bound, and DHS counselors

7. Summer Youth College Fair (2025)

- **Total Students Served:** 212
 - WCSU ConnCAP/Upward Bound & EXCEL: 125
 - Grassroots Academy Danbury: 25
 - Connecticut Students for a Dream: 30
 - Jericho Discovery Program: 12
- **WCSU Faculty/Staff Role:** Workshops and presentations on academics, admissions, and student life.

IV. Strategic Goals & Rationale for Enhancing the Partnership

Need for Enhanced Collaboration:

- DHS student body includes a significant number of low-income, first-generation, and historically underrepresented students.
- Many DHS students face access, affordability, and information barriers.
- Strengthened partnerships promote equity in postsecondary attainment and foster stronger local enrollment pipelines.

Benefits of Enhancement:

- Increases number of Danbury students earning college credit before graduation
- Improves academic readiness and retention at WCSU
- Enhances visibility and trust between WCSU and local families
- Creates efficient pathways aligned with DHS’s Career Academies and WCSU programs

V. Challenges & Areas for Improvement

- **Communication Gaps:** Past miscommunications (e.g., missed field trips) underscore need for structured liaison roles and recurring meetings.
- **Funding Sustainability:** Current grants (e.g., Concurrent Enrollment) expire in 2026; need long-term financial strategy.
- **Dual Enrollment Cost Barriers:** Unlike Concurrent Enrollment, Dual Enrollment requires full tuition—limits accessibility for low-income students.
- **Coordination with DHS Academies:** Need more alignment with Academy pathways to embed WCSU offerings.
- **Marketing & Awareness:** Many eligible students and families remain unaware of available programs and benefits.

VI. Recommendations & Next Steps

1. **Develop Visual Map of Initiatives:**
 - Include program leads, contact info, enrollment timelines, and student data.
2. **Formalize Communication Structure:**
 - Standing meetings with DPS administrators (3x per semester)
 - Clear point-of-contact roles for each initiative
3. **Improve Registration Systems:**
 - Publish drop/add timelines
 - Create smoother, centralized registration portal for dual/concurrent courses
4. **Sustain and Expand Funding:**
 - Secure donor support through WCSU Foundation
 - Explore state and federal grants for concurrent/dual enrollment
5. **Enhance Outreach:**

- Virtual info sessions for families
- Multilingual promotional materials
- Tie program offerings to career and degree pathways explicitly

6. Collaborate with DHS Academies:

- Build course pathways connected to STEM, Health, Education, and Business Academies
- Consider piloting embedded WCSU course sequences

VII. Conclusion

WCSU's partnership with Danbury High School is robust, data-driven, and deeply aligned with institutional priorities around community engagement, equity, and student success. With over 200 students served through early college access programs, and strong enrollment pipelines through ConnCAP, EA²P, and summer programming, WCSU is well-positioned to deepen its impact.

Our next phase requires strategic investment, improved infrastructure, and sustained collaboration. Through these steps, we will enhance educational opportunity for Danbury's youth and fulfill our shared responsibility to serve the community through higher education.

Appendix 4-1: Strategic Enrollment Management Plan (2025-20230) (Draft)

Draft Strategic Enrollment Management & Institutional Planning Framework (2025–2030)

Becoming Distinctly Western: Aligning Growth, Mission, and Fiscal Sustainability

Updated August 17, 2025

Over the course of Summer 2025, WCSU’s Enrollment Team, in partnership with the Senior Leadership Team, conducted a focused review of institutional enrollment trends, market conditions, and fiscal projections to identify a sustainable path forward for student growth. This internal analysis was driven by the university’s need to align enrollment planning with the emerging goals of the *Western Rising* Strategy and the FY26-FY30 biennium budget model, ensure financial stabilization, and support long-term renewal efforts already underway. The review encompassed academic, student support, financial, and enrollment operations to assess future enrollment trajectories. This work has included:

- A review of demographic and market trends in Connecticut and the broader tri-state region, including high school enrollment and graduation trends.
- Evaluation of historical enrollment, retention, and graduation data.
- Early indicators from current enrollment cycles, including promising increases in registered credit hours, housing demand, and first-year applications.

These insights informed a set of scenario-based projections designed to help WCSU plan intentionally and adaptively. Three draft scenarios were developed:

1. A **Baseline/Conservative (No Change/Decline)** scenario projecting continued decline.
2. A **Moderate Adjustment** scenario based on current strategic efforts.
3. A **Bold Transformation** scenario requiring significant investment and cultural shifts.

Through ongoing discussion and financial modeling, a fourth scenario emerged—**Budget-Aligned Growth**—as the most viable path for achieving enrollment stability and progress without overextending institutional capacity. This scenario assumes 4% enrollment growth in Fall 2025 and Fall 2026, followed by 2% growth annually through 2029. It balances ambition with feasibility, and supports the university’s financial recovery goals, including the elimination of reserve use by Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) and rebuilding reserves in the years following. This new scenario reflects not only the fiscal expectations embedded in the FY26–FY30 biennium planning process, but also the real-time adjustments already underway to stabilize undergraduate pipelines, reengage adult learners, and invest in retention.

Importantly, the Budget-Aligned Growth Scenario maintains flexibility. It does not preclude movement toward the Moderate Adjustment Scenario if strategic investments and market conditions allow—but it sets a practical foundation that builds confidence, restores institutional health, and repositions WCSU for long-term success.

The scenarios and projections are part of a living planning document. Final enrollment goals for the FY26–FY30 period and accompanying rationale will be finalized in consultation with the campus community following feedback during Fall 2025 and reviewed annually.

These enrollment projections and strategies demonstrate WCSU’s capacity for sustainable planning, financial responsibility, and support for mission-aligned student enrollment and retention.

Budget-Aligned Growth Scenario (Aligned to FY26–FY30 Biennium Planning)

This scenario reflects the enrollment trajectory required to align with WCSU’s five-year budget planning assumptions: a 4% year-over-year increase in enrollment for Fall 2025 and Fall 2026, followed by 2% annual growth through Fall 2029. It represents a pragmatic, financially responsible path that builds stability without requiring the full investments assumed in the Bold Transformation scenario.

This budget-aligned path builds incremental growth and revenue predictability through measured gains in undergraduate and graduate enrollment. It enables elimination of reserve use by FY27 and supports rebuilding reserves while avoiding overextension of staff, systems, or space. While it lacks the dramatic upside of the Bold Transformation scenario, it maintains WCSU’s viability and resilience.

Justification

- Aligns directly with the biennial budget forecast and FY26–FY30 financial modeling presented to the Connecticut State Colleges & Universities (CSCU) Board of Regents in June 2025.
- Achieves sustainable enrollment growth without requiring unrealistic gains in first-year or graduate populations.
- Allows the university to phase in new programs and partnerships while continuing to strengthen retention.
- Supports long-term stabilization of housing, tuition, and auxiliary revenue, which are projected to grow in parallel.

Table 1: Total Headcount by Year (Budget-Aligned Projections)

Year	Total Headcount	YoY Change	% YoY	Change from 2024
2024	4,169	—	—	—
2025	4,336	+167	+4.0%	+167
2026	4,509	+173	+4.0%	+340
2027	4,599	+90	+2.0%	+430
2028	4,691	+92	+2.0%	+522
2029	4,784	+93	+2.0%	+615

Table 2: Segment-Level Breakout (First-Year UG, Transfer UG, Graduate)

Year	Total Headcount	First-Year UG	Transfer UG	Graduate
2024	4,169	850	325	602
2025	4,336	860 (+1.2%)	340 (+4.6%)	650 (+8.0%)
2026	4,509	875 (+1.7%)	350 (+2.9%)	700 (+7.7%)
2027	4,599	890 (+1.7%)	355 (+1.4%)	715 (+2.1%)
2028	4,691	900 (+1.1%)	360 (+1.4%)	730 (+2.1%)
2029	4,784	910 (+1.1%)	365 (+1.4%)	740 (+1.4%)

Assumptions

- Small, steady gains in first-year undergraduates driven by improved yield strategies, early FAFSA restoration, and focused out-of-region pipelines (e.g., NY, NJ, MA). Growth is capped due to limits in market share without major investment.
- Slower recovery among transfer students, with growth supported by articulation improvements and outreach to adult learners and “some-college-no-degree” (SCND) populations. Nearly 40,000 adults in Western Connecticut fall into this category, with annual growth ranging from 2.9% to 1.4%.
- Strongest proportional growth among graduate students, reflecting momentum from new or online programs and workforce-aligned offerings. Growth is frontloaded in FY25–FY26 and stabilizes in later years.

Strategies Enabling this Projection

- Continued execution of existing *Western Rising* strategies, especially in yield improvement and reengagement of transfer and adult students.
- Modest but targeted growth in graduate enrollment via online expansion and workforce-aligned credentials.
- Retention improvements driven by early academic alerts, integrated advising, and new momentum-based scholarship incentives.

- Gradual expansion of out-of-region pipelines (NY/NJ/MA) and Spanish-language outreach in local high schools.
- Reinvestment of modest surpluses into marketing, CRM infrastructure, and housing conversion.
- Complementing enrollment-driven revenue, WCSU is also pursuing philanthropy and auxiliary ventures. Goals include increasing student scholarship fundraising by 1.5x (from a \$1.54M five-year average), piloting summer housing and rental ventures to generate \$500K annually, and leveraging cultural facilities (VPAC, Ives Concert Park) for external events. These initiatives diversify revenue and reinforce enrollment sustainability.

While the Budget-Aligned Growth Scenario establishes a responsible baseline, WCSU recognizes the possibility of flat or declining enrollment if momentum does not accelerate (see Baseline/Conservative Scenario). At the same time, the University is prepared to pursue more ambitious growth (see Moderate Adjustment Scenario) if conditions and investments align.

Baseline/Conservative Scenario (Flat/Decline)

While the Budget-Aligned Growth Scenario serves as our working model, WCSU has also prepared a conservative projection in which enrollment remains flat or declines modestly through 2029. This scenario assumes enrollment remains flat or experiences modest declines over the FY26-FY30 period. It provides a “stress test” to demonstrate WCSU’s fiscal resilience even if growth strategies do not accelerate as planned. Under this model, total headcount decreases by roughly 0.5% per year, with first-year undergraduate enrollment remaining flat, transfer populations declining gradually, and graduate enrollment experiencing modest erosion. This conservative modeling underscores WCSU’s commitment to realistic planning and risk management, ensuring sustainability even under constrained conditions.

Table 3: Headcount by Year (Baseline/Conservative Scenario)

Year	Total Headcount	First-Year UG	Transfer UG	Graduate
2024	4,169	850	325	602
2025	4,148 (-0.5%)	850 (+0.0%)	322 (-0.9%)	596 (-1.0%)
2026	4,127 (-0.5%)	850 (+0.0%)	319 (-0.9%)	590 (-1.0%)
2027	4,106 (-0.5%)	850 (+0.0%)	316 (-0.9%)	584 (-1.0%)
2028	4,085 (-0.5%)	850 (+0.0%)	313 (-0.9%)	578 (-1.0%)
2029	4,064 (-0.5%)	850 (+0.0%)	310 (-0.9%)	572 (-1.0%)

Assumptions

- First-year undergraduate enrollment remains flat at approximately 850 students annually, reflecting saturation of the local high school pipeline and limited in-state growth without additional investments.
- Transfer enrollment declines gradually (about 1% annually) due to demographic pressures, competition, and slower-than-expected recovery of adult learners.
- Graduate enrollment declines by about 1% annually, assuming delays or underperformance in new program launches and online expansion.
- Other undergraduates decline modestly in parallel with overall headcount.

Strategies Enabling this Projection

If WCSU were to experience flat or declining enrollment, the University would mitigate impacts through the following measures:

- Expansion of alternative revenue generation through the Workforce Education and Lifelong Learning (WELL) platform, new micro-credentials, and greater use of cultural and athletic facilities (Visual & Performing Arts Center, Ives Concert Park, Observatory) for rentals and community programming.
- Space optimization and evaluation of two-campus viability, including co-location opportunities with CT State Danbury and expansion of external leases such as the EdAdvance agreement.
- Continued system support from the CSCU System Office and Board of Regents, including reserve allocations, debt relief, and joint purchasing agreements.

- Cost containment and resource reallocation through Position Review Committee oversight and evidence-based program evaluation using Gray DI.
- Continued focus on retention strategies to offset enrollment volatility, including early alerts, revised probation policies, and expanded wrap-around student supports.

Moderate Adjustment Scenario as Aspirational Option

Reflects current plans under Western Rising, including improved yield strategies, new transfer pathways, and modest graduate expansion.

While the Budget-Aligned Growth Scenario sets a responsible baseline, WCSU recognizes the potential for more ambitious growth should resources, partnerships, and retention strategies scale effectively. In particular, if current momentum can be accelerated—particularly in housing demand, articulation agreements, and brand positioning—WCSU may still reach or exceed the Moderate Adjustment Scenario. This would mean surpassing 5,000 headcount by Fall 2029. However, first-year undergraduate student growth cannot be assumed from in-state demand alone. Consider partnerships (e.g., NY, NJ, MA) and adult learner pipelines. Retention will be the critical variable. Increased registered credits suggest opportunity for progression gains.

Table 4: Headcount by Year (Moderate Scenario Projections)

Year	Total Headcount	First-Year UG	Transfer UG	Graduate
2024	4,169	850	325	602
2025	4,430	850 (+0.0%)	360 (+10.8%)	600 (-0.3%)
2026	4,600	875 (+2.9%)	375 (+4.2%)	650 (+8.3%)
2027	4,750	900 (+2.9%)	390 (+4.0%)	700 (+7.7%)
2028	4,900	925 (+2.8%)	400 (+2.6%)	750 (+7.1%)
2029	5,050	940 (+1.6%)	410 (+2.5%)	750 (+0.0%)

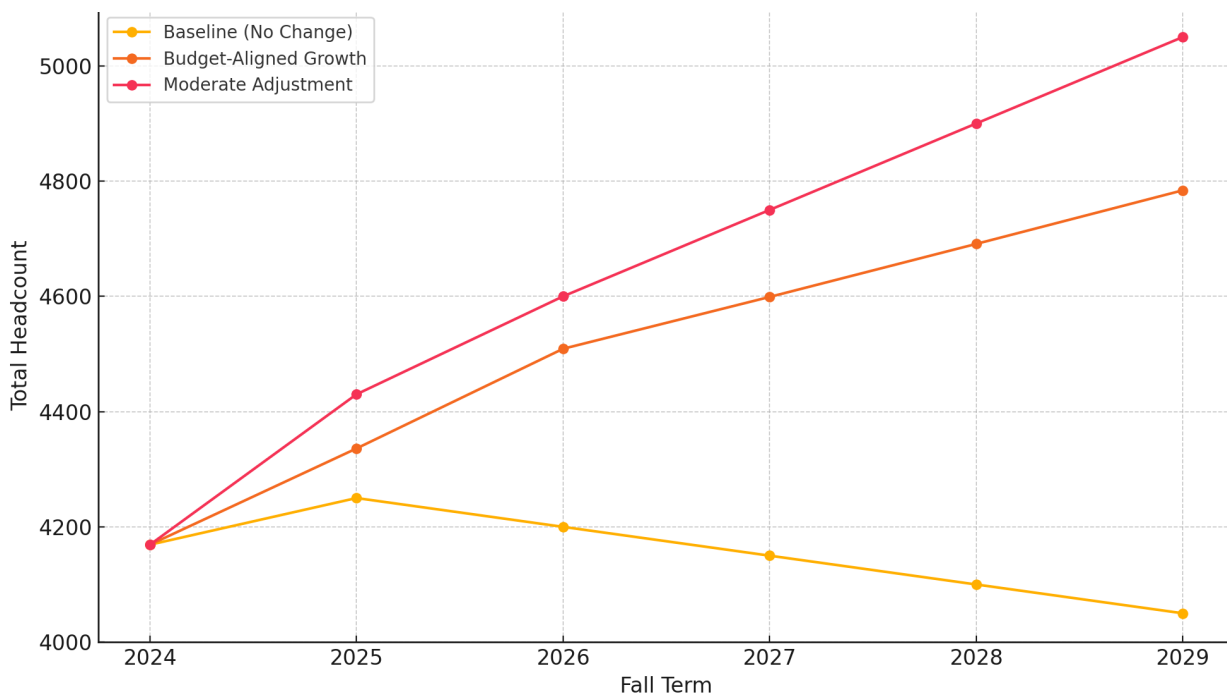
Assumptions

- First-year undergraduate student grows only with investment in out-of-region or new pipelines.
- Transfer student strategy includes improved articulation and adult re-engagement.
- Graduate student growth is contingent on program development, market alignment, potential online expansion, and strategic partnerships.

Strategies Enabling this Projection

- Strategic investments in marketing to adult learners and degree completers.
- Additional transfer pipelines from CT State and NY community colleges.
- Development of new low-cost graduate programs with online delivery.
- Housing partnerships to improve conversion and capacity.
- Boosted HSI identity and outreach through culturally responsive campaigns and events.
- WCSU has also modernized its financial aid strategy to strengthen yield and retention. These strategies raised FAFSA completion 17.8% above the national average and contributed to the 21% increase in the Fall 2024 first-year class. This includes:
 - Adoption of Othot predictive modeling to guide scholarship optimization, improving funnel predictability and net tuition revenue.
 - Automated aid packaging that prioritizes Pell-eligible and first-gen students, increasing accuracy and accelerating award delivery.
 - FAFSA completion campaigns, including 30+ bilingual workshops that assisted more than 500 families in 2025.

Figure 1. Projected Enrollment Trajectories by Scenario (Fall 2024–2029)



Presidential Vision: A Framework for Enrollment and Institutional Renewal

WCSU’s enrollment plan is more than a numbers exercise—it reflects our larger commitment to becoming a distinctly student-ready, regionally responsive, and future-focused public university. Under the leadership of President Bernal, our institutional strategy is rooted in three guiding commitments: to welcome all learners and foster belonging, to weave academic and student supports for seamless completion, and to widen pathways to opportunity through innovative and industry-aligned programming. These principles will shape every aspect of our enrollment vision—from serving adult learners and transfer students, to building out bilingual support systems, micro-credentials, and applied learning in every major. With a focus on shared leadership, equity, and bold investment, WCSU is not just stabilizing—we are building the conditions for transformative growth, sustainability, and impact in service to Connecticut.

Future Actions

WCSU’s enrollment and retention work is not finished. The enrollment modeling presented in this update establishes a grounded, forward-looking foundation for WCSU’s long-term growth and financial sustainability. Building from this work, several key areas of focus will shape the next phase of strategic enrollment management:

1. Segmental Analysis and Opportunity Mapping

In addition to first-year, transfer, and graduate students, deeper analysis of enrollment trends and growth potential by key student subgroups will be conducted to better inform targeted outreach, student support, and academic planning:

- **Adult learners (age 25+):** Adult learners (25+), including the region’s ~40,000 “some college, no degree” adults, will be a core growth segment. This includes stackable credentials, flexible formats, and intentional integration with the new Workforce Education and Lifelong Learning (WELL) platform, which offers non-credit microcredentials, employer-aligned training, and stackable certificates leading into degree pathways. WELL is designed as both a community impact hub and a durable revenue stream.
- **Latino and Hispanic students:** With WCSU’s identity as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI), culturally responsive outreach, affinity-based programming, and bilingual services will be aligned with enrollment and retention strategies. In addition, WCSU will pursue **Title V HSI grants** to support Latino/a student retention and success (if federal support allows). Strategies include embedding bilingual peer mentors in UNI 101, culturally responsive programming, and expanded financial support.

- **Student-athletes:** With athletic enrollment comprising a growing share of first-year and transfer populations, additional attention will be paid to roster management, program capacity, and academic alignment.
- **Pell-eligible and first-generation students:** Support programs will be evaluated for scalability to ensure retention strategies match anticipated demographic shifts.

2. College-Level and Program-Level Analysis

To ensure enrollment growth aligns with WCSU’s academic mission, workforce and community relevance, and institutional sustainability, the university will expand its program-level review and planning efforts, building on work already conducted in several programs. A primary enabler of this next phase is WCSU’s investment in the Gray Decision Intelligence (Gray DI) platform. Gray DI provides real-time, comparative data on academic program performance, labor market alignment, student demand, and competitive benchmarking. This investment will help WCSU move from anecdotal to analytical decision-making in both program planning and resource allocation. Program actions in 2024-2025 demonstrate this evidence-based approach:

- Discontinued low-enrolled/low-completer programs such as Nutrition Studies and Meteorological Studies.
- Redesigned the BA in Social Sciences and launched new high-demand offerings including BS in Atmospheric and Climate Sciences, MS in Artificial Intelligence, and accelerated 4+1 BBA–MBA pathways.
- Expanded high-demand areas such as Homeland Security, Applied Behavior Analysis, and the Doctor of Nursing Practice.

These actions illustrate the university’s capacity to realign offerings with market demand, financial sustainability, and student success.

Enrollment planning is tied directly to the Institutional Effectiveness Framework, including the Strategic Planning Online (SPOL) platform and a campus-wide Calendar of Reports. Annual institutional assessment reports will integrate enrollment, retention, and program performance data, ensuring transparency and continuous improvement.

Key components of this work will include:

- **College-specific enrollment targets:** Each academic college will review program mix, capacity, and net revenue contributions to set segment-specific enrollment goals that align with institutional growth and fiscal targets.
- **Program-level performance dashboards**, including:
 - Student credit hour production and enrollment trends
 - Persistence and graduation rates within majors
 - Student-faculty ratios and instructional cost per credit
 - Labor market outlook and wage data by CIP code
 - Prospective student demand based on search and interest data
- **Review and refinement of program portfolios:**
 - Identify programs for strategic investment, redesign, or other opportunities
 - Align emerging or under-enrolled programs with alternative credentials (e.g., minors, certificates, microcredentials)
 - Strengthen pipeline programs with community colleges, especially in business, education, nursing/allied health, and criminal justice
- **Cross-functional academic planning:** The Office of the Provost, Institutional Research, Finance, and Enrollment will jointly analyze trends to inform:
 - Faculty hiring priorities
 - Marketing and recruitment focus
 - Curriculum design and delivery formats

By using Gray DI’s data visualization and forecasting tools, WCSU will enable deans, chairs, and shared governance bodies to make evidence-based decisions that support both academic excellence and enrollment

sustainability. This effort underscores the university's commitment to ongoing evaluation and strategic resource allocation.

This analysis will also inform budget allocations and long-range faculty hiring and program development priorities.

3. New Academic Delivery Models

WCSU will explore and pilot alternative academic structures to better serve adult learners, workforce partners, and students seeking flexible pathways:

- Cohort-based delivery models for high-interest areas such as business, healthcare administration, and teacher preparation.
- Non-credit to credit pathways and stackable credentials aligned with workforce needs in healthcare, education, energy, and business.
- Accelerated or hybrid formats for transfer and returning students, especially those with significant prior credit.
- Summer session and intersession redesign to increase retention and degree velocity.

These options will support enrollment growth while enhancing student agency and equity.

4. Retention Plan 2025–2030

WCSU is finalizing a comprehensive Retention Plan that organizes 44 strategies across three focus areas:

- Academic Programming & Effectiveness (15 strategies): Expanded accelerated 4+1 programs, revised probation/suspension policies, and new HSI-aligned grants to boost persistence.
- Wrap-Around Support Services (23 strategies): Expansion of peer mentoring (including multilingual mentors), institutionalization of UNI 101, and broadened student engagement in clubs, athletics, and identity-based supports.
- Financial Support (6 strategies): Increased FAFSA completion campaigns, new automation in aid packaging, and an expanded emergency aid fund.

Targets include raising first-year retention by ~1% annually, moving from 73% toward the national average of 78–80% over five years.

Data-Driven Retention Efforts

Retention strategies at WCSU have shifted toward a more proactive, data-driven model that integrates academic, co-curricular, and student support functions. The University has expanded its use of institutional research and predictive analytics to identify at-risk students earlier in the semester and connect them with timely interventions. This includes coordinated outreach by professional advisors, faculty, and Student Affairs staff, as well as increased use of early alert and academic progress reporting systems. The Retention Committee, co-chaired by Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, continues to monitor persistence trends by population group and to recommend targeted support initiatives. These actions have contributed to the recent gains in first-year retention and will remain a central focus as the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan is fully implemented.

Retention Plan 2025-2030 (In Progress)

The WCSU Comprehensive Retention Plan is a collaborative effort between the Division of Academic Affairs and the Division of Enrollment Management & Student Affairs. This partnership strategically identifies the key factors—both within and outside the classroom—that influence student retention and success. Each strategy is embedded within a data-informed decision-making framework supported by the Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness. This office will track outcomes over time, assess program impact, and drive resource reallocation as needed. The focus on measurable impact ensures that interventions are not only implemented but also evaluated and improved over time.

Retention Targets and Context

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the national average retention rate for public four-year institutions similar to WCSU is 78.7%, with the Connecticut state average at 80%. WCSU's

five-year average is approximately 73%. The University has established a realistic goal of reaching the national average within five years, with an incremental 1% increase in retention annually. Achieving this target would result in the retention of approximately 215 additional students over five years, with significant academic, financial, and community benefits. To advance toward this goal, WCSU is prioritizing evidence-based drivers of student persistence, including: (1) the Senate-approved extension of the academic probation period paired with coordinated wraparound academic support, which has already reduced academic suspensions by over 75% in one year; (2) the institutionalization of UNI 101 as a required First Year Experience course, following a pilot that achieved an 86.1% Fall-to-Spring retention rate; and (3) expanded bilingual peer mentoring and targeted HSI-aligned programming to strengthen belonging and success among Latino/a students. Additional strategies, including those related to financial aid optimization, co-curricular engagement, and emergency aid expansion, are described in the “Representative Strategies” below.

Status and Timeline

The Retention Plan is currently in draft form. Work will continue during the Summer and Fall 2025 terms to:

- Prioritize the proposed strategies
- Finalize specific annual and five-year targets (designated by “◆” in the table below)
- Align institutional resources accordingly

Representative Strategies

Below are illustrative examples of actions identified under each strategic area.

Strategies, Draft Goals, Timelines, and NECHE Alignment (as of August 2025)

Key:

◆ = Draft target to be finalized in Summer/Fall 2025

Responsible Office = Primary accountable unit for implementation

Timeline = Anticipated launch period or target completion window

Academic Programming & Institutional Effectiveness

Strategy / Action	Goal / Target (Draft)	Timeline	Responsible Office
Academic Probation & Suspension Policy. [Senate passed a resolution in May 2024 to extend probation period up to 3 semesters.]	Using past 3 years data to baseline suspensions. Require advising plans to include wrap-around support. ◆	Fall 2025 launch	Academic Affairs, Advising Center
Create 8 new accelerated 4+1 programs via new Graduate, International, Career Services structure.	Retain UG students into grad programs. Target: 50 new students ◆. Increase graduate enrollment by 8% by Fall 2027.	2025–2027	School of Graduate & Professional Studies
Secure HSI-aligned grants to retain Hispanic students.	\$1M over 2 years to retain +1% of Hispanic students (disaggregated data) annually. ◆	Fall 2025–Fall 2027	Provost’s office, Institutional Advancement, DEI Office

Wrap-around Support Services

Strategy / Action	Goal / Target (Draft)	Timeline	Responsible Office
Expand Peer-Mentoring (UNI 101) and multilingual mentor capacity.	2x more peer mentors, 4x multilingual mentors. Reach 100% of UNI 101	Spring 2025–Fall 2026	Student Affairs, Academic Affairs

Strategy / Action	Goal / Target (Draft)	Timeline	Responsible Office
	sections. Workshops each semester. ♦		
Increase club & sports engagement (MVB, MBB, Martial Arts).	Launch informally in Spring 2025; full implementation Fall 2025. ♦	Spring–Fall 2025	Student Affairs, Athletics
Institutionalize UNI 101 First Year Experience.	Pass UNI 101 through governance in Spring 2025. Required Fall 2025. Piloted with 86.1% F24–S25 retention. ♦	Spring–Fall 2025	Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, University Senate

Financial Support

Strategy / Action	Goal / Target (Draft)	Timeline	Responsible Office
Increase financial aid awareness and FAFSA completion.	Boost FAFSA completion by 5% ♦ . 90% of first-year students complete FAFSA ♦ .	AY 2025–2026	Financial Aid, Enrollment Management
Grow emergency aid fund; reduce dropouts from financial distress.	Increase scholarship donations by 5% ♦ . Build revolving + endowed funds.	AY 2025–2027	Institutional Advancement, Dean of Students, Financial Aid

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness will work collaboratively with the identified responsible offices to monitor, track, and evaluate the extent to which the enrollment and retention strategies are yielding in the intended results. As part of the office’s Calendar of Reports to be rolled out in Fall 2025, two reports will be produced at the end of the Fall and Spring semesters based on the data collected from monitoring and tracking. The Fall report will provide university leadership with a one semester interim progress while the spring report will be an end of year report. The report will highlight areas of progress, challenges, and recommendations for midcourse corrections and improvements.

5. Strategic Integration, Budgeting, and Institutional Alignment

Enrollment growth and improved retention are not only student success goals but also critical to WCSU’s financial health. The multi-year financial plan relies on these realistic enrollment projections – hence our focus on ensuring these targets are met through the strategies outlined above. If we fall short, we will revise our financial plans accordingly. As WCSU moves forward, we will continue to refine, align, and connect enrollment strategy with the university’s broader strategic, academic, operational, and financial planning efforts. This integrative approach ensures that our efforts are not siloed but mutually reinforcing—anchored in mission and aimed at measurable impact.

Key areas of strategic integration include:

- ***Western Rising***, our campus-wide framework focused on stability, trust, and hope, which defines our priorities across student success, inclusion, fiscal health, and governance.
- **Academic planning and visioning**, including the repositioning of programs, development of interdisciplinary clusters, and new delivery models that respond to workforce and community needs and student demand.

- **IT infrastructure and facilities renewal**, aligned with academic delivery, hybrid learning, and improved access to student services.
- **Campus master planning**, with an emphasis on right-sizing physical space, modernizing student-centered environments, and supporting program growth. Campus master planning includes a review of two-campus viability. Current strategies under discussion tie enrollment stability to space optimization and financial sustainability. include:
 - Short-term leasing through EdAdvance at Midtown.
 - Co-location opportunities with CT State Danbury.
 - Revenue-generating use of Westside facilities (VPAC, Ives Concert Park, Observatory) for cultural events, STEM outreach, and rentals.
 - Summer rental programs with corporate partners and internship cohorts.
 - Distinct branding of Midtown as a city-facing campus and Westside as a residential, nature-rich campus.
- **Budgeting and resource allocation**, including the continued rollout of WCSU’s new budget process with stage-gate reviews; enrollment data and Gray DI analytics will directly inform investment decisions, staffing models, and growth prioritization—supporting a multi-year, all-funds strategy that balances short-term needs with long-term sustainability.
- **Strategic partnerships** are integral to enrollment growth. These partnerships enhance pipelines, applied learning, and regional workforce alignment and include:
 - Danbury Public Schools Promise Program (early awareness, dual enrollment, mentorship).
 - Nuvance Health (clinical placements, interdisciplinary internships, and marketing pipelines).
 - Boehringer Ingelheim (innovation labs, student internships, philanthropic engagement).
- **CSCU system strategy alignment**, ensuring coordination with statewide enrollment, affordability, and student success initiatives.

By weaving together these planning strands and grounding decisions in data, student needs, and fiscal responsibility, WCSU will ensure that enrollment growth is both achievable and transformational—supporting our mission to serve western Connecticut with excellence, equity, and impact.

6. Fall 2025 Campus Engagement and Finalization

To ensure shared ownership and continued momentum:

- The Enrollment Team will present draft projections and assumptions in Fall 2025 to academic departments, student services, and governance bodies.
- Feedback will be solicited through targeted sessions and open forums to refine strategies, test assumptions, and surface innovation.
- A finalized FY26–FY30 Enrollment Plan will be issued by Spring 2026, including year-by-year targets by student segment and college.

Annual reviews of enrollment performance, market trends, and program viability will allow WCSU to remain adaptive and forward-thinking in a changing higher education environment.

Appendix 5-1: Staffing Levels and Enrollment

Statistic	As of 11/11/2014	As of 11/1/2015	As of 11/1/2016	As of 11/1/2017	As of 11/1/2018	As of 11/1/2019	As of 11/1/2020	As of 11/1/2021	As of 11/1/2022	As of 11/1/2023	As of 11/1/2024	Average
Number of Employees (as of End of June Payroll):												
- Managerial Unclassified	15	16	18	14	15	14	15	15	16	15	13	15
- Confidential Unclassified	14	12	12	11	9	10	10	11	10	10	12	11
AAUP (Instructional Faculty)	217	205	222	220	223	223	215	205	190	187	180	208
AAUP (Librarians)	10	8	9	8	8	9	9	8	7	5	6	8
AAUP (Coaches & Trainers)	16	16	16	15	16	16	16	16	16	16	17	16
AAUP (Counselors)	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2
- SUOAF	136	144	141	142	130	137	140	132	126	132	133	136
- Clerical	57	61	60	54	48	52	51	42	39	40	42	50
- Maintenance	106	107	109	105	101	104	97	90	72	65	70	93
- A & R	10	9	8	8	8	7	7	6	6	6	6	7
- Connecticut Police & Fire Union	22	22	17	17	17	21	18	18	14	14	14	18
- Re-Employed Retirees	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
- University Assistants	78	67	74	63	69	66	57	59	61	54	55	64
- Lecturers	466	464	474	385	415	391	482	431	413	389	345	423
- Graduate Assistants/Interns	19	22	23	26	21	20	27	30	29	26	32	25
Subtotals												
Permanent Staff	605	602	614	596	577	595	580	545	498	491	494	563
Contingent Staff	563	553	571	474	505	477	566	520	503	469	433	512
Total Employees (Excluding students)	1168	1155	1185	1070	1082	1072	1146	1065	1001	960	927	1076
Student Headcount (Fall Semester)	5952	5818	5721	5664	5642	5631	5246	4802	4417	4137	4169	5125

Appendix 5-2: Staffing Levels Comparisons

WCSU Staffing Compared to Other CSU's Staffing (April 2025)								
Employment Group	Student to Employee		Student to Employee		Southern FT	Student to	Western FT	Student to
	Central FT Employees	Ratio	Eastern FT Employees	Ratio	Employees	Employee Ratio	Employees	Employee Ratio
A&R	4	2499.25	3	1451.67	5	1875.40	6	694.83
AAUP (Coaches & Trainers)	29	344.72	15	290.33	24	390.71	17	245.24
AAUP (Counselors)	5	1999.40	3	1451.67	3	3125.67	1	4169.00
AAUP (Instructional Faculty)	411	24.32	153	28.46	407	23.04	180	23.16
AAUP (Librarians)	12	833.08	7	622.14	13	721.31	6	694.83
Clerical	63	158.68	31	140.48	73	128.45	41	101.68
Confidential Unclassified	33	302.94	11	395.91	16	586.06	12	347.42
Maintenance	85	117.61	112	38.88	122	76.86	69	60.42
Management Unclassified	24	416.54	16	272.19	22	426.23	14	297.79
Police	17	588.06	18	241.94	21	446.52	15	277.93
SUOAF	275	36.35	168	25.92	281	33.37	143	29.15
Totals	958	10.44	537	8.11	987	9.50	504	8.27

Appendix 5-3: Position Review Committee

Purpose of Committee

The purpose of the Position Review Committee (PRC) is to develop a strategic hiring plan for the university. To do so, it evaluates requests from departments to refill vacant positions, to create new positions, or to reclassify current positions. This committee has been appointed by the university president and is charged with making recommendations to the university president regarding these requests. The final decision on how to proceed with any request is at the discretion of the president.

Committee Membership

The PRC consists of members from the University President's Cabinet. These individuals are the overall decision makers for each division within the university, ensuring that every department or area has representation on the PRC. The specific positions that make up the PRC are as follows:

- Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Vice President for Finance & Administration/Chief Financial Officer
- Vice President for Enrollment Management & Student Affairs
- Vice President for Institutional Advancement
- Chief Information Officer
- Chief Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Officer
- Chief Human Resources Officer

Meeting Schedule

The PRC meets twice per year, during the months of October and March. However, any member of the PRC can request an emergency meeting to be held due to a unique circumstance.

Position Vacancies

Once a vacancy occurs within a department or area, the matter reverts to the PRC to make a recommendation to the university president. A determination may be made to redeploy the monies from the vacancy to another department or area of the university that has a greater need at that point in time.

Evaluation Criteria

The following are the criteria that the PRC considers when evaluating each request:

1. How will the investment address a health and safety priority?
2. How will the investment facilitate students' academic progress?
3. How will the investment facilitate enrollment stability, growth, or retention?
4. How will the investment address an objective in the University's Strategic Plan?
5. How will the investment address the goals or objectives of the FY25 budget or the FY26–FY27 Biennium Budget?
6. How will the investment address the NECHE concerns?
7. How will the investment address an accreditation or compliance priority?
8. How will the investment generate revenue or reduce expense?
9. How will the investment build morale and university spirit?
10. How will the investment eliminate risk and increase productivity?

Final Outcome

If the university president approves a request, the decision will be communicated to the department or area supervisor/chair, the dean/associate vice president, and the vice president by the Chief Human Resources Officer. If the university president denies a request, this decision will be communicated by the division vice president to the original requestors.

Appendix 6-1: Examples of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

School of Visual, Performing, and Communication Arts

Program	Assessment Year	Student Learning Outcome & Assessment Method(s)	What the Data Showed
BA Art	2020–2021	Outcome: Development and creation of a significant body of work along with the ability to understand and evaluate works of art. Method: Rubric used in 6 classes. Benchmark: Majority of students will receive “C” or better.	Combined, 94% of students received “C” or better.
BS, BM, BA Music Degrees	2021–2022	Outcome: Students will demonstrate competence in music history, theory, pedagogy, music technology, and analysis. Method: Survey. Benchmark: >80% of respondents feel adequately prepared for a post-COVID career.	Only 75% felt prepared. Students expressed need for a music technology course for educators. Increased tech training is being implemented.
BFA Musical Theatre	2022–2023	Outcome: Vocal production and techniques for musical theatre are sufficient to present complete roles. Method: Vocal Jury Rubric. Benchmark: 81% Excellent.	81% (17 of 21 students) received Excellent.
BA Media Arts	2023–2024	Outcome: Engage in Communication & Media Arts inquiry and creative activity. Method: Rubric. Benchmark: ≥70% receive “Good” or better.	84.9% received “Good” or higher.
BA Writing	2024–2025	Outcome: Demonstrate ability to identify, assess, and perform writing appropriate to chosen area (creative, professional, journalism). Method: Rubric. Benchmark: ≥60% earn B– or higher on specified assignment.	75% received B– or higher.

School of Business

Program	Assessment Year	Student Learning Outcome & Assessment Method(s)	What the Data Showed
BBA	2024–2025	Outcome: Students will produce acceptable executive summaries (Written Communication). Method: New analytic rubric; double-blind review by two professors. 28 assignments assessed across Structure/Organization, Substantive Ideas, and Mechanics. Benchmark: ≥70% meet standard.	Overall 61% met benchmark (below goal). Subcategories: Mechanics 68%, Substantive Ideas 75%, Structure/Organization 61%.
BBA	2023–2024	Outcome: Students will demonstrate knowledge of global, legal, social, cultural, environmental/sustainability, and ethical issues (Global & Ethical).	Global: 56% met benchmark. Social/Cultural: 74%. Ethics: 79% (close to benchmark). Environmental/Sustainability: 81%.

Program	Assessment Year	Student Learning Outcome & Assessment Method(s)	What the Data Showed
		Method: Peregrine Assessment + pilot homegrown assessment in MKT 305 (Spring 2024). 20 questions across 5 learning objectives. Benchmark: $\geq 80\%$.	Legal: 71%.

School of Arts & Sciences

Program	Assessment Year	Student Learning Outcome & Assessment Method(s)	What the Data Showed
BS Biology	2024–2025	Outcome: Graduates will have broad understanding of core biology concepts (evolution, structure/function, information flow, energy/matter transformations, interconnected systems). Method: Major Field Test–Biology, administered in capstone courses (BIO 480, BIO 490). Benchmark: Student scores align with national trends.	Benchmark not met.
BS Biology	2024–2025	Outcome: Clearly convey understanding of biology through written and oral communication. Method: Random sample of posters from BIO 260 (Scientific Communication) and BIO 480 (Capstone). Benchmark: BIO 260 – $\geq 50\%$ “Meeting” expectations (score ≥ 2). BIO 480 – $\geq 85\%$ “Meeting” expectations (score ≥ 2).	Benchmarks met: Organization, Visual Aids, Language. Benchmarks not met: Style, Content/Central Message, Responsiveness to Audience.

School of Professional Studies

Program	Assessment Year	Student Learning Outcome & Assessment Method(s)	What the Data Showed
MS Special Education	2024–2025	Outcome (ED 620/621): Demonstrate proficient implementation of instructional practices, methods, and curriculum materials for students with special needs. Method: Practicum Evaluation Instrument. Benchmark: Rubric Level 3 (Proficient) on 4-point scale.	Spring/Summer 2025: 100% met benchmark.
BS Public Health	2024–2025	Outcome: Serve as a health promotion professional in diverse communities/organizations using effective communication, promotion, and advocacy. Method: Internship Fair Presentation (rubric) + graduate outcomes within 1 year. Benchmark: $\geq 80\%$.	100% scored $\geq 80\%$ on Internship Fair Presentation. Class of 2024 outcomes: 89.5% employed or in graduate school within 1 year.
BS Health & Wellness Management	2024–2025	Outcome: Display written/oral communication skills for wellness, business, and organizational settings. Method: HPX 410 Final Project (business plan + oral presentation) + HPX 411 Internship Fair Presentation. Benchmark: $\geq 80\%$.	

Appendix 6-2: First Destination Survey

WCSU 2023 First Destination Survey Results with Comparisons Between Schools and National Public Universities (NACE)

The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) First Destination Survey (FDS) captures employment outcomes for all degree levels and provides trends data. NACE is the leading source of national information on the employment of the college educated, and forecasts hiring and trends in the job market; tracks starting salaries, recruiting, and hiring practices, and student attitudes and outcomes; and identifies best practices and benchmarks. NACE's FDS captures information regarding how new college graduates fare in their careers *within six months of graduation*. This is important because research proves the importance and value of that first job upon graduation. [The Gallup study](#) is among those most cited. The annual initiative provides clear, concise, and consistent data on the outcomes associated with a college education on a national scale. Outcomes include 1) types of employment—full or part time, contract, freelance, and so forth; 2) additional education, e.g., accepted to graduate or professional school; 3) still seeking either employment or further education; 4) and starting salary for those employed full time. In addition to providing outcomes for individual classes, the First-Destination Survey is designed to provide trends data over time to inform the discussion about the value of higher education. NACE's First-Destination Survey Standards and Protocols were developed by a task force of practitioners, and reflect feedback provided during a public comment period by more than 100 career services professionals. The standards/protocols are designed to address the needs of individual institutions to track graduate outcomes and can be used to address growing demand by accrediting bodies and governmental agencies.

Three sets of data are included:

1. The WCSU First Destination Survey Results for 2023, reflecting the immediate career outcomes of graduates from the four WCSU Schools: School of Professional Studies, Ancell School of Business, Macricostas School of Arts and Sciences, and the School of Visual and Performing Arts. Degree numbers are verified with the Registrar; students are emailed a minimum of 25 invitations throughout the year to complete the survey and are invited in person at “Grad Salute”.
2. A four-year comparison of the primary data acquired (2019, 2021, 2022, 2023). The survey was not completed in 2020 due to COVID. Graduate surveys were not completed in 2019 and 2022.
3. National NACE data for public universities, years 2019, 2021, 2022 (2023 not yet available)

Definitions for each of the data points are as follows:

- **Graduates:** Total numbers as validated through the Registrar
- **Completed Survey:** Number of graduates who completed the survey
- **Completion Rate:** Percentage of graduates who completed the survey
- **% Positive Outcomes:** Percentage of graduates with a “**Positive Outcome**”: **Working (full or part time) + Grad School + Volunteering Full time + Military**
- **Median Salary:** Median salary of all graduates
- **Mean Salary:** Mean salary of all graduates
- **% Working Full-Time:** Percentage of students who are employed full time
- **NA** = Not Applicable **NR** = Not Reported

This survey does not assess “underemployment. Per a [2024 Strada Study](#), 52% of graduates (public and private) are still underemployed **a year** after graduation. CSC estimates a higher WCSU number.

WCSU FIRST DESTINATION SURVEY: UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE 2023

ALL WCSU Undergraduate Degrees 2023

- Graduates: 842
- Completed Survey: 606
- Completion Rate: 72%
- % Positive Outcomes: 66%
- Median Salary: \$47,840
- Mean Salary: \$52,654
- % Working Full-Time: 41%

ALL WCSU Graduate Degrees 2023

- Graduates: 198
- Completed Survey: 36
- Completion Rate: 18%
- % Positive Outcomes: 67%
- Median Salary: \$60,000
- Mean Salary: \$60,351
- % Working Full-Time: 44%

Anzell School of Business:

Anzell Undergraduate Degrees 2023

- Graduates: 301
- Completed Survey: 216
- Completion Rate: 72%
- % Positive Outcomes: 68%
- Median Salary: \$52,000
- Mean Salary: \$53,354
- % Working Full-Time: 48%

Anzell Graduate Degrees 2023

- Graduates: 28
- Completed Survey: 6
- Completion Rate: 21%
- % Positive Outcomes: 100%
- Median Salary: \$60,333
- Mean Salary: \$60,000
- % Working Full-Time: 50%

Macricostas School of Arts & Sciences

MSAS Undergraduate Degrees 2023

- Graduates: 255
- Completed Survey: 180
- Completion Rate: 71%
- % Positive Outcomes: 61%
- Median Salary: \$39,520
- Mean Salary: \$40,003
- % Working Full-Time: 34%

MSAS Graduate Degrees 2023

- Graduates: 22
- Completed Survey: 6
- Completion Rate: 27%
- % Positive Outcomes: 50%
- Median Salary: NR
- Mean Salary: NR
- % Working Full-Time: NR

School of Professional Studies:

SPS Undergraduate Degrees 2023

- Graduates: 193
- Completed Survey: 140
- Completion Rate: 74%
- % Positive Outcomes: 75%
- Median Salary: \$72,800
- Mean Salary: \$67,247
- % Working Full-Time: 48%

SPS Graduate Degrees 2023

- Graduates: 147
- Completed Survey: 23
- Completion Rate: 16%
- % Positive Outcomes: 65%
- Median Salary: \$72,000
- Mean Salary: \$60,360
- % Working Full-Time: 48%

School of Visual and Performing Arts:

VPA Undergraduate Degrees 2023

- Graduates: 92
- Completed Survey: 70
- Completion Rate: 76%
- % Positive Outcomes: 59%
- Median Salary: \$33,280
- Mean Salary: \$37,220
- % Working Full-Time: 29%

VPA Graduate Degrees 2023

- Graduates: 10
- Completed Survey: 1
- Completion Rate: 1%
- % Positive Outcomes: NA
- Median Salary: NR
- Mean Salary: NR
- % Working Full-Time: NR

First Destination Survey Comparison: All WCSU Schools (2019, 2021, 2022, 2023)*

WCSU (Entire University) Undergraduate Degrees:

Metric	2019	2021	2022	2023
Graduates	601	944	845	842
Completed Survey	439 (73%)	519 (55%)	308 (36%)	606 (72%)
% Positive Outcomes	69%	58%	69%	66%
Median Salary	\$35,000	\$42,500	\$50,000	\$47,840
Mean Salary	\$40,716	\$52,057	\$52,446	\$52,654
% Working Full-Time	26%	35%	43%	41%

WCSU (Entire University) Graduate Degrees:

Metric	2019	2021	2022	2023
Graduates	NA	167	NA	198
Completed Survey	NA	69%	NA	36 (18%)
% Positive Outcomes	NA	78%	NA	67%
Median Salary	NA	\$47,840	NA	\$60,000
Mean Salary	NA	\$53,893	NA	\$60,351
% Working Full-Time	NA	65%	NA	44%

Ancell Undergraduate Degrees:

Metric	2019	2021	2022	2023
Graduates	192	327	273	301
Completed Survey	155 (81%)	172 (53%)	98 (36%)	216 (72%)
% Positive Outcomes	72%	63%	64%	68%
Median Salary	\$40,000	\$42,500	\$52,000	\$52,000
Mean Salary	\$38,444	\$47,966	\$51,132	\$53,354
% Working Full-Time	35%	45%	50%	48%

Ancell Graduate Degrees:

Metric	2019	2021	2022	2023
Graduates	NA	30	NA	28
Completed Survey	NA	15 (50%)	NA	6 (21%)
% Positive Outcomes	NA	80%	NA	100%
Median Salary	NA	\$49,920	NA	\$60,333
Mean Salary	NA	\$61,160	NA	\$60,000
% Working Full-Time	NA	80%	NA	50%

Macricostas School of Arts and Sciences (MSAS) Undergraduate Degrees:

Metric	2019	2021	2022	2023
Graduates	179	330	277	255
Completed Survey	120 (67%)	180 (55%)	106 (38%)	180 (71%)
% Positive Outcomes	75%	54%	62%	61%
Median Salary	\$30,000	\$41,600	\$35,360	\$39,520
Mean Salary	\$30,744	\$57,479	\$37,012	\$40,003
% Working Full-Time	18%	26%	29%	34%

MSAS Graduate Degrees:

Metric	2019	2021	2022	2023
Graduates	NA	25	NA	22
Completed Survey	NA	10 (40%)	NA	6 (27%)
% Positive Outcomes	NA	70%	NA	50%
Median Salary	NA	\$40,000	NA	NR
Mean Salary	NA	\$39,493	NA	NR
% Working Full-Time	NA	40%	NA	NR

School of Professional Studies (SPS) Undergraduate Degrees:

Metric	2019	2021	2022	2023
Graduates	160	184	192	193
Completed Survey	120 (75%)	109 (59%)	69 (36%)	140 (74%)
% Positive Outcomes	67%	62%	78%	75%
Median Salary	\$65,000	\$54,000	\$73,840	\$72,800
Mean Salary	\$55,179	\$56,435	\$67,284	\$67,247
% Working Full-Time	29%	43%	55%	48%

SPS Graduate Degrees:

Metric	2019	2021	2022	2023
Graduates	NA	108	NA	147
Completed Survey	NA	43 (40%)	NA	23 (16%)
% Positive Outcomes	NA	79%	NA	65%
Median Salary	NA	\$52,000	NA	\$72,000
Mean Salary	NA	\$52,564	NA	\$60,360
% Working Full-Time	NA	65%	NA	48%

Visual and Performing Arts Undergraduate Degrees:

Metric	2019	2021	2022	2023
Graduates	70	100	103	92
Completed Survey	44 (63%)	56 (56%)	35 (34%)	70 (76%)
% Positive Outcomes	48%	50%	63%	59%
Median Salary	\$31,200	\$27,040	\$31,200	\$33,280
Mean Salary	\$39,500	\$44,218	\$38,628	\$37,220
% Working Full-Time	7%	25%	29%	29%

VPA Graduate Degrees:

Metric	2019	2021	2022	2023
Graduates	NA	7	NA	10
Completed Survey	NA	1 (14%)	NA	1 (10%)
% Positive Outcomes	NA	100%	NA	NR
Median Salary	NA	NA	NA	NR
Mean Salary	NA	NA	NA	NR
% Working Full-Time	NA	100%	NA	NR

FIRST DESTINATION SURVEY COMPARISON: US PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES (NACE) ****Undergraduate Degrees**

Metric	2019	2021	2022	2023 (N/A)
Graduates	374,642	367,271	433,364	
Completion rate	61%	49%	50.8%	
% Positive Outcomes	82%	79.6%	82%	
Mean Salary	\$53,339	\$58,145	\$59,239	
% Working Full-Time	55%	51.9%	55.6%	

Graduate Degrees:

Metric	2019	2021	2022	2023 (N/A)
Graduates	75,840	86,674	112,499	
Completion rate	51%	45%	43.1%	
% Positive Outcomes	85%	85.3%	87%	
Mean Salary	\$64,506	\$69,818	\$73,330	
% Working Full Time	69%	68.6%	72.4%	

*Results for 2016-2018 available.

**Results also available for Combined Public/Private in the Northeast Region (NACE).

Appendix 6-3: Assessment Committee Bylaws

I. Purpose

Supports the Office of Institutional Effectiveness & Planning to ensure that the University fully develops and implements an ongoing, systematic program for the assessment of student learning outcomes, which includes but is not limited to setting educational and student development goals; gathering and interpreting information and evidence to demonstrate whether students are reaching such goals; and using such evidence for improvement of student learning.

II. Objectives, Responsibilities, and Powers

- A. To advise and make recommendations to the University Senate and Provost/ Vice President for Academic Affairs on assessment matters and assessment quality;
- B. To collaborate with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness & Planning to coordinate assessment efforts of all student involved experiences across the university
 1. This committee will provide guidance and recommendations on the development of objectives and assessment methods
- C. To establish Institutional Outcomes with appropriate assessment with input from the University Senate;
- D. To facilitate assessment programs on an institutional, school, and program level;
- E. To coordinate the maintenance of records of current assessment activities at the University in an accessible electronic format;
- F. To promote ongoing assessment of Student Learning Outcomes information;
- G. To coordinate assessment events for sharing of assessment strategies and results;
- H. To coordinate with the NECHE Compliance Officer each February to assure the assessment processes at the university meet the needs of NECHE accreditation.

III. Membership (13)

Member	Appointed/Elected
Associate VP Institutional Effectiveness & Planning (1)	Appointed
Provost designee (1)	Appointed
Dean of Student Affairs (1)	Appointed
Director of Institutional Research and Assessment (1)	<i>Ex-Officio</i>
Representative of General Education Committee (1)	Appointed by the chair of the General Education Committee
Teaching Faculty (1 from each school) and 1 Librarian/Counselor/Coach (5)	Elected by teaching faculty overlapping for 3-year terms
Administrative Faculty (1)	Appointed for 3-year term (SUOAF)
Students with overlapping 2-year terms (2)	Appointed by SGA

IV. Conduct of Business

- I. The first meeting of each academic year shall be convened by one of or both cochairs.
- J. A quorum will consist of no less than one-half (1/2) of the voting members. Unfilled positions, if any, shall not be counted in determining quorum.
- K. Regular meetings will be held once a month during the fall and spring semesters. As determined by collective agreement by committee members. Attendance and voting may be electronic.
- L. Meetings can be held virtually, or in-person as agreed upon by committee members.

- M. Special meetings may be called by one or both co-chairs.
- N. The call to meetings, accompanied by the agenda, shall be published not less than three days prior to the meeting.
- O. Decisions of the Committee shall be made by majority vote of the members present.
- P. All members of the committee will have the right to vote.
- Q. Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with Roberts Rules of Order, Revised.

V. Officers

- R. The committee will be co-chaired.
 - 1. The faculty co-chair will be chosen by the committee members at the last meeting of the academic year. This Co-Chair should be one of the six faculty on the committee. The Chairperson for the following year shall be elected at the last meeting of the academic year from and by the voting members of the following year. In the absence of a Chairperson, the President of the University Senate shall designate a member to convene a meeting, of the Committee, for the purpose of electing a Chairperson
 - 2. The administrative co-chair will be the Associate VP of Institutional Effectiveness & Planning
- S. The position of Secretary shall be filled by each member, excluding the Cochairs, on an alphabetical rotating basis, unless otherwise agreed to by the committee.
- T. The Director of Institutional Research will be responsible for maintaining a digital archive of all university assessment plans and reports.
- U. Newly elected or appointed members should be invited to the last meeting of the academic year.

Senate Approval: Sept. 21, 1994 (R94-9-4)
Rev. Feb. 16, 2000
Admin. Approval: March 14, 2000
Senate Approval: Feb. 21, 2006 (R-07-02-03)
Admin. Approval: May 4, 2007
Senate Approval: May 19, 2019
Administrative Approval: May 2019
Senate Approval: 3/29/2022
Administrative Approval: 3/29/2022
Senate Approval: 4/19/2023
Administrative Approval: May 17, 2023
Senate Approval: February 19, 2025

Appendix 6-4: Institutional Effectiveness Calendar of Reports (2025-2026 Academic Year)

Responsibility of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

Semester	Month	Report
Fall	August	IPEDS - Institution Identification and Institutional characteristics Enrollment monitoring
	September	Institutional Effectiveness update (planning, assessment, accreditation) Admitted students' profile Spring course completion including DFW analysis Core indicators of institutional effectiveness Consumer Information Page updates Environmental scan alerts Semi-Annual Statistical Report-System report
	October	University at glance (Facts and figures) Fall Enrollment & Retention IPEDS Completions IPEDS 12-month Enrollment Degree completions Environmental scan alerts Institutional Effectiveness roundtable
	November	Financial Aid Equity Gaps Faculty & Staff Demographics Student engagement prior academic year Environmental scan alerts HR Plan updates
	December	Retention Plan updates University Factbook Strategic Plan updates Master Plan updates Environmental scan alerts Transfer students report
Spring	January	Fall course completion including DFW analysis Institutional Effectiveness update (planning, assessment, accreditation) Environmental scan alerts Campus Climate survey (2-year cycle)
	February	IPEDS Student Financial Aid IPEDS Cost II IPEDS Graduation Rates; 200% Graduation Rates IPEDS Admissions IPEDS Outcome Measures Spring Enrollment, Persistence, and Retention Environmental scan alerts Fall Early Momentum Metrics Semi-Annual Statistical Report
	March	Environmental scan alerts Institutional Effectiveness roundtable

	April	IPEDS Fall Enrollment IPEDS Finance IPEDS Human Resources IPEDS Academic Libraries Environmental scan alerts
	May	Retention Plan updates Strategic plan updates Environmental scan alerts HR Plan updates
Summer	June	Special research projects
	July	Enrollment monitoring