Enrollment Management Subcommittee
White Paper
November 9, 2009

INTRODUCTION

Washburn serves traditional first time freshman, adults, and transfer students who attend part time and full time in both face-to-face and online courses. For the past several years the cost of attending college has been rising at a rate greater than the cost of living while at the same time state support for public institutions has been decreasing. Further, regional public institutions like Washburn are in the most competitive market niche of higher education. According to The College of 2020: Students Executive Summary, they (regional publics) “can expect to compete for students based on price, convenience, and the perceived strengths of the institution.” In order to remain a viable institution in the changing world of higher education, Washburn must adapt to these changes by identifying additional target markets for recruitment, embrace diversity, improve retention and graduation rates, eliminate barriers to enrollment, develop more online and hybrid courses and create new programs in order to meet the needs of the students of 2020.

INITIATIVES

While maintaining the campus culture, Washburn will develop a sustainable model for identifying additional markets for, recruiting and retaining quality students, embracing diversity, and maintaining a tradition of academic excellence for the purpose of enhancing student learning, satisfaction and growth.

Increase the sources of qualified students
In an effort to maintain the viability of the University, Washburn must continue to grow enrollments by recruiting quality students and improving retention rates.

- Develop campaigns and create communities within Washburn for the direct from high school matriculant
- Review Washburn’s perceived and noted issues surrounding transferability while collaborating with community colleges to become known as a “transfer friendly” institution, while at the same time maintaining its academic integrity
- Seek opportunities to reach more of the adult population
- Encourage stronger faculty-to-faculty ties with high school and community colleges and expand the Concurrent Enrollment Partnership program with local high schools
Develop a more comprehensive conditional admission program.

Develop a first year experience and revise the honor's program

Evaluate institutional scholarship programs and better leverage our financial resources in an effort to maximize enrollment

Conduct a review of the Washburn Transformational Experience program

Eliminate obstacles to enrollment
There are both perceived and real obstacles in the enrollment process. These barriers may be a factor in a student choosing another school over Washburn. The University needs to focus on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the enrollment process.

Create a one-stop shop student services center

Review and revise policies that affect the student enrollment process for increased efficiency and effectiveness

Revise the Washburn webpage to improve access to information and make the page more attractive to students

Re-evaluate Washburn’s non-resident tuition policy to increase enrollment from contiguous states

Conduct a review of the Washburn Transformational Experience program (duplication intentional)

Expand hybrid course offerings and degree time frame options
The research shows many universities are developing hybrid course offerings including accelerated degree programs to provide convenience to students. Washburn needs to explore both of these options.

Expand online course offerings

Provide additional technical and pedagogical support to assist faculty with online course development

Increase enrollment options through the development of hybrid course packaging, including accelerated degree options
Appendix A

INITIATIVES

While maintaining the campus culture, Washburn will develop a sustainable model for identifying additional markets for, recruiting and retaining quality students, embracing diversity, and maintaining a tradition of academic excellence for the purpose of enhancing student learning, satisfaction and growth.

Increase the sources of qualified students
In an effort to maintain the viability of the University, Washburn must continue to grow enrollments by recruiting quality students and improving retention rates.

- Develop campaigns and join with learning and social communities within Washburn for the direct from high school matriculant

  Enrollment Management needs to develop a campaign to coordinate with learning communities and social communities within the university to enhance our recruitment and student retention efforts. The music (band scholarships) and athletics departments are examples of good models for such joint ventures.

- Review Washburn’s perceived and noted issues surrounding transferability while collaborating with community colleges to become known as a “transfer friendly” institution

  Comments were noted during open forums about transfer issues related to general education and special courses unique to Washburn. Faculty need to review these issues when revising general education requirements and all-University requirements. We also need to conduct more in-depth surveys with transfer students to identify other issues that give Washburn a reputation of being perceived as transfer “unfriendly.”

- Seek opportunities to reach more of the adult population

  For the past six years Washburn’s adult enrollment (over 25) has stabilized around 33 percent. With the continuing restructuring of area businesses, recruitment staff need to develop a marketing plan to reach adults who wish to improve their employment options and help them transition into an educational program at either WIT or at the main campus. The University should also
encourage alumni and other adults to continue their formal education as part of life long learning.

- **Encourage stronger faculty-to-faculty ties with high school and community colleges and expand the Concurrent Enrollment Partnership program with local high schools**

  Our faculty should be encouraged to develop relationships with faculty in area community colleges who are participating in the Concurrent Enrollment Partnership (CEP) program. Such relationships could result in more students choosing to transfer to Washburn. Strong faculty relationships also result in increased enrollments through the Early Start Option (ESO) program that allows high school students to earn Washburn credit while still in high school.

- **Develop a more comprehensive conditional admission program.**

  Institutional Research data indicates a high correlation between low GPA and students that leave after one semester. The research shows retention could be improved by establishing some minimum criteria for admission and those below that level could enter a conditional admittance program. A conditional admittance program would require completion of skill building classes as a prerequisite to full admission to the university and would enhance the success rate of many of these students. The University should consider adding a Coordinator of Retention position, reporting to the VPAA, to track and treat students in a more comprehensive manner to improve success.

- **Develop a first year experience and revise the honors program**

  Students and faculty commented on developing some type of first year experience program to help students transition into college life. The University honors program should also be revised, strengthened, and promoted to attract more students and encourage academic excellence. The University must investigate ways to recognize the accomplishments of students and faculty who participate in the Honors program.

- **Evaluate institutional scholarship programs and better leverage our financial resources in an effort to maximize enrollment**

  The University needs to review successful models for distributing scholarship awards in the most effective manner to recruit outstanding students. That information should be shared among all faculty through a workshop.
• **Conduct a review of the Washburn Transformational Experience program (duplication intentional)**

The WTE is viewed as a signature program by some and as a barrier to enrollment by others. There is no evidence to show WTE either has or has not had any impact on recruitment. Because of the range of comments on WTE it is recommended that a thorough study of the program be conducted to determine whether it should or should not remain as a graduation requirement.

**Eliminate obstacles to enrollment**

There are both perceived and real obstacles in the enrollment process. These barriers may be a factor in a student choosing another school over Washburn. The University needs to focus on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the enrollment process.

• **Create a one-stop student services center**

Recent trends indicate colleges are creating one-stop enrollment centers to better serve students with all activities related to the enrollment process. Staff could be cross-trained in order to improve services. Pittsburg State and Johnson County Community College are two examples of schools with state of the art student service centers. The University will need to identify new or remodeled space to accommodate the center.

• **Review and revise policies that affect the student enrollment process for increased efficiency and effectiveness**

Students, parents, and faculty have expressed frustrations with obtaining information on the status of both their application for admission, and their financial aid package, including grants, scholarships, etc. Policies need to be reviewed to simplify the process.

• **Revise the Washburn webpage to improve access to information and make the page more attractive to students**

Students commented on experiencing difficulty in accessing information on academic programs and other information on our website. Other students also commented they were not enamored with the appearance of the Washburn website compared with other universities. We should consider making the webpage bilingual to make information accessible to Spanish-speaking parents of Latino students.
• **Re-evaluate Washburn’s non-resident tuition policy to increase enrollment from contiguous states**

  University research indicates only a small percentage of students pay the out of state differential. By removing this barrier, recruitment of students from contingent states should increase.

• **Conduct a review of the Washburn Transformational Experience program (duplication intentional)**

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**Expand hybrid course offerings and degree time frame options**

The research shows many universities are developing hybrid course offerings including accelerated degree programs to provide convenience to students. Washburn needs to explore both of these options.

• **Expand online course offerings**

  Provide incentives (stipends, course release, etc.) to those faculty who develop courses and participate in Quality Matters™.

• **Provide additional technical and pedagogical support to assist faculty with online course development**

  The faculty need more assistance with improving the development of course materials to enhance the teaching/learning process. The University needs to identify additional staffing to achieve this goal.

• **Increase enrollment options through the development of hybrid course packaging, including accelerated degree options**

  Some departments at Washburn have offered courses in three, five, six, and eight-week formats. Faculty need to explore increasing the number of hybrid courses, as opposed to the traditional 16-week semester. Washburn should also explore opportunities to add compressed time frame degree options.