

# THE CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY

P.O. Box 2008 • New Britain, Connecticut 06050 • (203) 827-7700



## RESOLUTION

concerning

### FIVE YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN FOR RACIAL AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY AT WESTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY

November 1, 1985

WHEREAS, Western Connecticut State University has developed a Five Year Strategic Plan for Racial and Ethnic Diversity in response to guidelines from the Board of Governors for Higher Education, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Trustees approve the plan and direct that it be transmitted to the Board of Governors, and be it further

RESOLVED, That, subject to concurrence by the Board of Governors, the Trustees direct the President of Western Connecticut State University to undertake vigorous efforts to attain the goals established in the plan.

A Certified True Copy:

Dallas K. Beal  
President

WESTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY  
MINORITY STUDENT ACCESS AND RETENTION PLAN

October 1985

OVERVIEW OF W.C.S.U.

Western Connecticut State University is situated in Danbury, a northern Fairfield County city 65 miles north of Manhattan, in the center of one of the fastest growing regions in Connecticut and one of the top growth areas of the nation. Reflecting this community expansion, Western recently added a new 315-acre Westside campus to complement its 25-acre, 10-building Midtown campus in the heart of downtown Danbury. Constant evaluation and improvement of programs and curriculum sharpens Western's "edge of excellence" and keeps it responsive to the progressive community it serves. Students and graduates of Western are surrounded by healthy economic growth and employment opportunity. The University works with -- and is supported by -- a forward-looking, innovative business community.

The University is organized into three schools: Ansell School of Business, School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Professional Studies. Each school has its own standards, retention criteria, and faculty. All programs, graduate or undergraduate, are offered through one of the three schools. The Division of Graduate Studies and Extension Services coordinates graduate and evening offerings. The University Center for Lifelong Learning (UCLL) offers non-credit programs for career advancement and professional enrichment.

Founded in 1903, it is the mission of Western Connecticut State University, one of four state universities comprising The Connecticut State University, to pursue excellence in the preservation and advancement of knowledge; to respect freedom of speech and thought in all aspects of the academic process; to support the state's economy through instruction, research, and service; and to encourage Connecticut students of all ages, races, religions, national origins, and social conditions to develop their full potentials so that they may contribute more effectively to our society and live richer, fuller lives. As an urban, multi-purpose, comprehensive state university, Western offers a broad, diverse range

of undergraduate and graduate programs in liberal arts, professional studies, business and career preparation so as to be responsive to and serve the life and career needs of Connecticut citizens. Inherent to Western's mission is the maintenance of cooperative efforts with regional business, industry, government, and social service and educational agencies to develop coordinated pre-service and in-service programs. Western also seeks to provide a campus climate (physical, social, philosophical and intellectual) conducive to learning and to the development of human values, social responsibility, and a personal philosophy. Research, both basic and applied, are an essential part of Western's mission. Western Connecticut State University is also committed to providing public service through continuing education, educational extension, faculty and administration expertise, cultural and educational programming, various centers and clinics, and, in general, to serve as an educational resource center.

## STUDENT MARKET

Western serves the entire State of Connecticut by regularly enrolling students from more than 125 Connecticut cities and towns. Proximity to New York State accounts for a somewhat higher percent of out-of-state enrollment than is average for other Connecticut State University campuses.

Regional impact is strong; eighty-four percent (84%) of full-time students live within a 30 mile radius of Danbury; eighty-five (85%) of part-time students live within the same 30 mile radius. A shaded map of Connecticut, referred to in Appendix A identifies the cities and towns in which Connecticut students, admitted to Western, live. The greater Danbury region accounts for a very large number of students admitted to Western.

MINORITY ENROLLMENT

WCSU 1984

FULL-TIME STUDENTS

	<u>Non-Resident Alien</u>	<u>Black</u>	<u>American Indian</u>	<u>Asian</u>	<u>Hispanic</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Total</u>
Number:	41	74	88	29	40	2,743	3,015
Percent:	1.4	2.5	2.9	1.0	1.3	91	100

PART-TIME STUDENTS

Number:	14	41	27	34	28	2,619	2,763
Percent:	.5	1.5	1.0	1.2	1.0	94.8	100

The racial identification of students enrolled at the University is obtained through questioning full-time students on the admissions application, and part-time students on registration forms. The student's self-identification of race is optional. Due to this fact, the University feels tht the figures reported may not be accurate, and may be incomplete. For instance, the University believes its Hispanic student population is greater than reported, due to the large Portuguese community which resides in Danbury, and the number of students from this community who attend Western.



IDENTIFIED PROBLEMS IN ACCESS AND RETENTION

## BARRIERS TO MINORITY STUDENT ACCESS

Enrollment of Black and Hispanic students at Western has been quite good but less than we desire for four main reasons. First, Western's student market is strongly regional, given its location in the Western corridor of the state. Eighty-four percent of full-time students live within a thirty mile radius of Danbury, and many of these come from the ten-town area (identified by Dober and Associates, Western's academic planners) which includes Bethel, Brookfield, Bridgewater, Danbury, New Milford, Newtown, Redding, Ridgefield, Sherman and Woodbury. The minority population in these towns is small. For instance, for the Danbury Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area, which includes Bethel, Brookfield, New Fairfield, New Milford, Newtown and Redding, Blacks make up only 2.8 percent of the entire population while Hispanics make up only 2 percent. In Ridgefield .3 percent of the population is Black, while .2 percent of the population is Hispanic. In Woodbury, the figures on minority population are nominal. Therefore, since Western's primary student market area is not highly populated with minorities, the University finds difficulty in recruiting larger numbers of Blacks and Hispanics.

Many minorities reside in major cities just outside the primary 30 mile radius market area, such as Bridgeport, Norwalk and New Haven. Although these cities are within driving distance of Danbury, no public transportation is available, and often students are unable to provide their own transportation to the school.

Some students, including Blacks and Hispanics, are educationally disadvantaged, and do not have the minimum SAT scores, high school rank in class, or grades required by Western. The University maintains a competitive admission policy and it is a goal of the University to continually upgrade its

admission standards. The 1984-85 Barron's Profile of American Colleges and Universities rated Western as "competitive plus", making it the only campus of the Connecticut State University to receive this rating. In addition, some specific academic programs (Nursing, Business School, Education) require standards even more rigorous than the University's general Admission Standards. However, these rigorous admission requirements do impede upon potential college students who would like to attend Western, but cannot fulfill its requirements.

For over ten years, the University has sponsored a Basic Studies Program for students who do not meet the objective and competitive admissions criteria. The program is limited to one hundred students per year. It does not provide gross remedial training or skill development for students who need that preparation prior to enrolling in regular university coursework. Educationally disadvantaged students, again including, but not limited to minorities, might need remedial work prior to attending the regular level of courses at Western.

Finally, minority students may be hesitant to attend a University which does not have a large number of minorities on staff. As of March 1985, 8.7% of Western's workforce was minority. Some disparity with the market place workforce still exists at all levels of the University's workforce. Our 1985 affirmative action short term goals (within one year), based on available workforce, include hiring 4 Blacks, while long term goals (within 5 years) include hiring 6 Blacks and 5 Hispanics, within various areas of the University's workforce.

Students who desire to study under minority professors and who want to attend a school with large numbers of minorities may find Western's minority

workforce figures unacceptable. However, in the past several years, Western has made excellent and verifiable gains in achievement of its affirmative action goals. During the past year a Black male has been hired in Career Development, and a Black female in Admissions, as well as two Black full-time faculty members, and several minority adjuncts. Since the completion of the 1985 affirmative action plan in July, 2 out of 4 hiring goals for minorities have been met. Affirmative action employment efforts will continue in order to eradicate the problem of disparity with the marketplace workforce, and in hopes of drawing more minority students to Western.

## BARRIERS TO MINORITY STUDENT RETENTION

Various factors exist which contribute to Western's attrition rate, and which apply to all students. First, the underprepared or educationally disadvantaged student will have difficulty passing his/her courses. While help is available for these students through the Basic Studies program, placement testing, developmental labs, and tutoring, Western does not provide elementary remedial services.

Other students who are academically prepared for their coursework, will enroll, and then eventually leave the University, for a variety of reasons. Some students may be uncertain about career paths and goals. Without counseling and advising, many of these students may potentially leave college before completion. While Western offers faculty advisement as well as career and personal counseling, students often will not seek out these services on their own.

Another problem faced by many students and perhaps especially by minority students is the lack of peer-group relationships and support structures. Students who do not have friends in class or on campus often are subject to feelings of isolation and loneliness. Similarly, if the student has few friends, he/she is less likely to become involved, not only in the classroom, but also socially. If the situation is prolonged, unhappiness may cause such a student to leave.

Minority students, more specifically, may feel uncomfortable with the relatively small number of other minority students around them, as well as the relatively small number of minority professors, counselors, and other staff members with whom they could potentially build a relationship, or whom they may view as role models.

Finally, such factors as costs of college, distance away from home and travel arrangements, and lack of campus housing can contribute to lower student (including minority students) retention rates.

EXPANSION OF MINORITY STUDENT ACCESS

## ADMISSION INITIATIVES FOR FRESHMAN, TRANSFER AND GRADUATE STUDENTS

During the past year, Western has begun the implementation of its Institutional Marketing and Promotion Plan. Through this plan, Western hopes to enhance its enrollment figures, as well as its retention of students. Although the plan is aimed at all students within the University's student market area, subsections of the plan do focus on and emphasize minority enrollment and retention.

The marketing and promotion plan should have a positive impact on the size of Western's student market area. In order to pursue potential new market areas, the Office of Admissions has been expanded from three administrators (1 director, 2 assistants), to four administrators (1 director, 1 associate, and 2 assistants). The addition of the fourth person will enable Western to reach many more Connecticut high schools and college fairs more thoroughly. In addition, one of the newly hired assistants is a black female. This is an instance in which the achievement of an affirmative action goal may directly affect minority student enrollment.

As part of the marketing and promotion plan, Western has procured The Enrollment Planning Service, through The College Board, of Princeton, New Jersey. This service will provide Western with an in-depth, step by step approach to enhancement of student access. The six basic steps of the service, which Western will be following, are (refer to Appendix B):

1. Measuring the diversification of applicants
2. Estimating the demographic deficit
3. Classifying current markets
4. Finding new markets
5. Setting benchmarks for intensified recruiting and new market development
6. Designing recruiting material

Upon completion of these steps, Western should be in a position to recognize its potential new markets and to increase recruitment efforts in these areas. An additional, optional service has also been purchased which specifies the location of special populations. This optional service will be very useful in identifying minority market areas throughout Connecticut. Such identification will help Western recruit minority students more effectively in areas where recruitment is not at its full potential.

Previously, some problems associated with educationally disadvantaged students was discussed. Western's Basic Studies program is one attempt to enroll students who do not meet the objective and competitive admission requirements. This one-year program can accommodate 100 students each year who need additional help in some basic skills in order to prepare for college academic subjects. In 1984, almost 50% of all students enrolled in the Basic Studies program identified themselves as minority students.

An important factor in attracting applicants is the University's visibility not only to the students, but also to the community and the region. Western maintains relationships with many regional and state groups and organizations, many of which serve a minority constituency. The President of Western has hosted several meetings with the leaders of various community minority groups to discuss common issues and mutual needs. Similarly, the Affirmative Action Officer sits on the board of the Community Action Committee of Danbury, an organization which has a large minority constituency. The University is also co-host to the Annual Minority Business Youth Educational Service Embarkment, which is a program designed to introduce minority students to the corporate world. Refer to Appendix C.

Western has also consistently placed promotional advertisements for students in minority publications such as The Inquirer, and will continue



to do so. The University's recruiters attend college fairs and high schools with large minority populations for both visibility and recruitment. In addition, the admissions office regularly works with minorities from other sources within the community, such as local and civic organizations.

One special admission initiative for transfer students is the transfer agreements which exist between Western and community colleges within Connecticut. In order to facilitate the admission of transfer students, agreements have been set up regarding Western's acceptance of community college credits. Western continues to enter into such agreements on a program by program basis. This will allow students to be more certain about which community college courses to take in preparation for a specific course of study at Western. In fact, a minority professor has recently begun meeting with various community colleges to discuss facilitating transfer students' entrance into Western's Ansell School of Business.

As part of the marketing and promotion plan, the University is stepping up its promotion of graduate programs, and is increasing the number of programs it has to offer. During the 1984-85 year, a Master of Science in Nursing, and a Master of Science in Administration in Health Care Administration, and International Business, have all been implemented.

#### EARLY AWARENESS INITIATIVES

Western is a partner in the "University-School Collaborative," in which principals and superintendents of surrounding towns and cities are members. Meetings are held several times per year. The purpose of the collaborative is to make high school and even junior high school administrators and students aware of Western's existence and availability to them. This collaborative will be used in the future to seek minority students. The

high school administrators may be able to provide Western with an explanation of the specific needs of minority students preparing for college, and will hopefully be of help in recruitment planning.

Two other formal early awareness programs are in place at Western. First, Western faculty members are invited to teach a course in an area high school, or to train the high school teacher to give a college course. This exposes the students to the differences between high school courses and college courses, and gives them an additional chance to prepare for the latter. Second, students who meet certain criteria are allowed to enroll in a credit course at Western while still in high school, again giving the student additional preparation for a successful college career.

#### RECRUITMENT INITIATIVES

One special recruitment effort for minority students is the availability of on campus housing. The University realizes that availability of a dormitory is crucial to many students' decisions in attending Western. Therefore, in an attempt to persuade minority students who have been accepted at Western to enroll, up to 70 beds have been guaranteed for minority students.

IMPROVEMENT OF MINORITY STUDENT RETENTION

### PLAN TO IMPROVE MINORITY STUDENT RETENTION

As part of its Institutional Marketing and Promotion Plan, Western will soon implement a sub-plan focusing on university-wide activities aimed at improving retention. Some activities have already been implemented, such as survey completion analyses, set-up of an academic advising task force, an extended orientation program, and establishment of a retention task force. An interim report on the retention sub-plan, prepared by the Vice President of Academic Affairs for the University President, along with a proposed outline of the complete plan, has been included in this report (refer to Appendix E). As the retention plan develops, more strategies and more details will be known to the University than are available at the present time.

### ORIENTATION PROGRAM

Western has an orientation program for first time freshmen, transfer students, and non-traditional students (over 25 years of age). Various workshops are offered on orientation day to acquaint students with college life. This year workshops have included "Making the Most of Your Study Time," "Activities: The Art of Active Involvement," "Starting Again: The Transfer Experience," and many more (refer to Appendix D).

This year, for the first time, the orientation team has presented a six week orientation called "Connections." Volunteer undergraduates are trained to conduct workshops for freshmen during the first six weeks of school. The University feels that the first six weeks of college have an important impact on a student's decision to leave college prior to graduation, and therefore decided to implement a program which would help to counter any negative feelings during that early period. The workshops cover many topics that concern students about college, as well as their personal and social life. It is meant to be a peer support system, and hopefully will result in

many new friendships, another factor felt to be important in retention. Every effort has been made to incorporate black and hispanic students on the orientation team, and the office of Student Affairs has met with success in doing so for the past several years. Since this is the first year (1985) Western is featuring "Connections," it will be limited in number. However, in future years, the program will be expanded.

#### ASSESSMENT/PLACEMENT

Placement tests in English and math are held prior to the beginning of the freshman year. These tests are taken by all students, but are especially helpful for the educationally disadvantaged student, since it gives him/her the chance to receive special individual help. The placement testing will soon expand into the areas of reading and study skills as well.

As noted in Appendix E, Western's proposed retention plan contains the implementation of an early warning system. If this outline is accepted, the early warning system would be developed from data on students who have exhibited characteristics of dropouts, such as lower high school records, undecided majors, lack of extracurricular involvement and poor class performance. Again, the early warning system is part of the proposed outline for a full retention system. Upon acceptance and implementation of the outline, more details will be available regarding an early warning system.

#### REMEDICATION OPPORTUNITIES

Western offers the Basic Studies Program, which is designed for students who are capable of profiting from college but who have not demonstrated in their secondary school performance that they can succeed in the structure of the regular college program. The program helps the student develop

fundamental skills while he/she acquires knowledge that all college students should have.

Enrollment in the program is limited to about 100 students per year. Each student who is admitted is tested in composition, computation, and algebra before the student attends any classes. Placement in appropriate writing and math skills courses is determined by the results of the tests. The ratio of students to faculty in this program is very positive, thereby facilitating the identification of students with serious academic difficulty. For students not in the Basic Studies program, writing and math labs are available for help in these areas. Also, the University's student support system provides free tutoring for all students.

Western also offers testing and placement for students for whom English is a second language.

It is expected that upon implementation of the proposed retention plan outline, the University will become more involved with developmental remediation opportunities. The current proposed outline suggests "greater focus on extra remedial resources and learning services" as one of its primary strategies. As mentioned earlier, specific details regarding aspects of retention are limited, at least until the imminent acceptance of a full retention plan.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Institutional Marketing and Promotion Plan directly addresses the problems related to student access, and it is expected that this plan will implement a sub-plan focusing on retention.

The Vice President for Academic Affairs at Western will be the primary person responsible for monitoring access and retention of students, including minority students. Through the offices of Institutional Research and Planning, the Office of Student Affairs, Admissions (including graduate admissions) and the Basic Studies Director and committee, the Vice President will receive direct reports concerning access and retention efforts. As these offices report to the Vice President, he has the authority to ensure that the strategies set up within this plan are implemented as access and retention efforts under the University's broader Institutional Marketing and Promotion Plan.



ACCESS AND RETENTION GOALS

## ACCESS AND RETENTION GOALS

The following information has been provided by the Board of Governors of Higher Education, Office of Educational Opportunity and Special Projects:

## WCSU Undergraduate

## Black Students

Potential Student Market	9.0%
1984 WCSU Black Student %	2.1%
1984 Disparity	6.9%
5 year access goal	3.45%
Annual Goal	.69%

## Hispanic Students

Potential Student Market	4.0%
1984 WCSU Hispanic Student %	1.3%
1984 Disparity	2.7%
5 year access goal	1.35%
Annual goal	.27%

## WCSU Graduate

## Black Students

Potential Student Market	3.1%
1984 WCSU Black Student %	1.2%
1984 Disparity	1.9%
5 year goal	.95%
Annual goal	.19%

## Hispanic Students

Potential Student Market	1.1%
1984 WCSU Hispanic Student %	.3%
1984 Disparity	.8%
5 year goal	.4%
Annual goal	.08%

Currently, retention goals are maintenance of the graduation rates:

Black	2.8%
Hispanic	2.0%

A systemwide student record system will be operable in the future to provide better attrition data.

The figures provided by the Board of Governors for Higher Education (BOGHE) assume that Western's potential student market will be public high school seniors throughout the entire State of Connecticut. While the University does enroll students from about 125 of the 169 towns and cities of the state (or 74%), the bulk of our current student market is much more regional; 84% from the greater Danbury region, and especially the ten town area of Bethel, Brookfield, Bridgewater, Danbury, New Milford, Newtown, Redding, Ridgefield, Sherman, and Woodbury. This ten-town area has been identified by Dober and Associates, Western's academic planners.

Western's goal is to broaden the primary student market, to include more students from cities and towns other than those in the greater Danbury region. While recruitment efforts will be aimed at this goal even more so in the future, the University is faced with the difficult task of reducing a large regional market while increasing the remainder of the state market. This goal is not immediately achievable, and may only be obtained over some

period of time. Due to these circumstances, the goals set by the BOGHE may not be compatible with Western's unique demographic circumstances. The time frame required by the BOGHE may also be out of sync with what is reasonably feasible.

The University is limited as to the number of minority students who can be recruited from the regional market. For example, minority population in the Danbury region is as follows:

Danbury Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA) (Bethel, Brookfield, Danbury, New Fairfield, New Milford, Newtown, Redding):

Black population 2.8%

Hispanic population 2.0%

Ridgefield:

Black population .3%

Hispanic population .2%

Woodbury:

Black population .08%

Hispanic population unreported

Sherman and Bridgewater - data unreported

These figures are provided by the U. S. Census Bureau, for the 1980 census.

Western's goal to expand its student market and recruit more minority students is consistent with the goals of the BOGHE. Western seeks to continually enroll more minority students, and will try to avoid being bound to the limited minority population of the Greater Danbury region. However, the University is concerned with its ability to meet five year goals based on a statewide student market. Western will make every effort to

serve the educational needs of minority students throughout Connecticut, and hopes to increase the number of minority students and Western graduates through the strategies set forth in this plan, and through those that will be arrived at in the University's Marketing and Promotion Plan.