

Synopsis of recommendations

The ability of students, particularly those from WA state, to explore the academic breadth of UWS should remain a core value of the University.

Nonetheless, many high demand majors are capacity constrained, which limits that exploration and can produce a less than optimal student experience. The recommendations included herein seek to enhance the ability of UWS students to explore, given the exigencies of the current University environment. Equally important to the goal of allowing exploration, though, is providing a transparent understanding of the limits of available exploration to students and their supporting networks in order to empower them to make appropriate decisions about their education.

1. Consideration of an applicant's area of academic interest is a vital component of holistic review and selection.
2. A consistent process to determine freshmen enrollment targets is necessary to effectively implement enrollment management. This process should take a multiyear perspective and should consider University, campus, and College/School constraints.
3. Maximum flexibility in the selection process within the guidelines of holistic review and selection is necessary to achieve an entering class whose characteristics reflect the resources, needs, and priorities of the students, University, and the state.
4. An untapped opportunity exists in leveraging the strengths of the three campuses and discussion of this should become a priority.

Detailed recommendations

The Enrollment Goals Working Group (EGWG) was asked to “work on recommendations for overarching, system-level enrollment management policies and strategies for policy implementation.” The group takes as a given that “enrollment management,” i.e., the deliberate process to accomplish institutional student enrollment goals, is necessary for the University of Washington. While policies and procedures exist and have oversight from various campus groups, a comprehensive enrollment management strategy has yet to be articulated. The first step in such a strategy is to understand the current policies and procedures, to recommend areas that need further examination, and to suggest next steps in implementing any critical changes. Consequently, EGWG was charged to address the following issues:

- A. Evaluate the existing processes for determining new undergraduate enrollment goals. Work in this area involves the following:
 1. A review of our current processes for setting overall new undergraduate student enrollment goals, and how those processes align with the goals of academic units (e.g., colleges, schools, departments, programs, etc.).
 2. Recommend if the current processes should be maintained, or if an alternative process should be developed and implemented.
 3. If an alternative process is recommended, outline this new process and an implementation strategy.
- B. Perform an evaluation of the current holistic review process. Work in this area involves the following:
 1. Provide a description of our current holistic review processes and identify the strengths and weaknesses of these processes.
 2. Given the new-enrollment processes defined in the above review (part A), what changes (if any) should be made to the current review process? In particular, is there a need for academic-unit-specific holistic review and what processes would be required to support this type of review? In this context, how might applicants who do not indicate a specific major of interest be reviewed and served?
 3. Provide recommendations regarding changes (if any) to the current holistic review process. If changes are recommended, provide a strategy and timeline for needed vetting, approvals, and possible implementation.
- C. Explore existing or potential dependences of enrollment goals and enrollment policies at UWS, UWB, and UWT. Work in this area involves the following:
 1. If new holistic review processes are implemented at UWS, what are the anticipated impacts (both positive and negative) at UWB and UWT?

2. Are there opportunities to leverage enrollment management policies at our three campuses to the benefit of the UW as a whole?
3. If negative impacts are identified, propose ways in which those impacts can be mitigated (if possible).

The following report will address each of these three areas. Note two things. First, the emphasis is on enrollment management of UWS undergraduates. Second, EGWG met weekly over 18 weeks and accumulated a substantial amount of data. Specifics are not included in this report, but co-Chairs Ballinger and Kramer are available to expand on any of the areas discussed herein.

A. Evaluate the existing processes for determining new undergraduate enrollment goals.

The University of Washington Seattle campus is capacity constrained in that more qualified individuals apply than the University has the ability to enroll and educate. Determining enrolled student capacity is, therefore, a critical task of the University administration in consultation with the Faculty Senate, especially the Senate Committee on Planning and Budgeting.

The Office of Admissions requires targets for the desired total number of enrolled freshmen in each incoming class (and transfer students) in order to select students for admission. At a minimum, these targets differentiate among applicants with residency in Washington State (WA state), other US states (domestic nonresidents), and outside the US (international). Planning for a new incoming freshman class requires consideration of previously admitted cohorts (UWS ongoing students) and future cohorts. This planning ideally extends over multiple years, i.e., anticipated future targets are considered when a current year's targets are determined.

“Capacity” includes consideration of many areas of the University and campus environment. These areas should be re-examined every year to establish the targets for that year. At a minimum, capacity in the following areas should be considered. Note that most of these areas are administered at the Provost level, except instructional personnel and specialized classroom resources, which are the responsibility of the Deans.

- Classroom
 - General use
 - Specialized (Dean-level)
- Instructional capacity (Dean-level)
 - Instructors
 - Teaching assistants
- Housing
- Time to degree
- Financial aid
- Advising
- Administrative systems (IT, student)
- Student services
- Transportation

This list is loosely organized from least malleable to more malleable, e.g. it takes longer to build new classrooms buildings than to hire and train new support staff. All areas on this list, however, require substantial financial and other resources to grow.

We recommend that the consideration of University and campus capacity should begin immediately, i.e., with the entering freshmen and transfer classes of 2019-20.

Apportionment

Connected to the overall freshman admission targets is how the total is apportioned among the various UWS disciplines. Although EGWG was not explicitly requested to evaluate this aspect of enrollment in the charge letter, the working group considered the issue of shaping the incoming class in such a way that fewer UWS student would be denied entry into their intended majors. This problem of admission to major has become a topic of concern on the Seattle campus in recent years. A Faculty Senate-sponsored Undergraduate Enrollment Management task force was charged in 2016 to evaluate freshman and transfer admission into UWS and admission of UWS students into majors. This faculty task force was constituted in response to the following student-experience realities:

- Most UWS majors require application before acceptance to study the discipline. This application generally occurs at the end of the sophomore year.
- Many more students want to focus in these majors that require application than these majors have current capacity to educate, thus creating “capacity constrained” majors in some areas. As a result, many academically strong students are unable to gain entry into their desired major.
- Acceptance into a major ideally occurs by the summer between sophomore and junior year.
- Academically strong students, who do not gain entry to a capacity constrained major, must find another major, resulting in increased frustration and time to degree.
- Many students apply multiple times to the same major and to multiple capacity constrained majors, often without success.
- A majority of incoming freshman worry about access to majors.
- Concern about access to major prevents some students from fully engaging the academic breadth of the university as they strive to gain entry into a specific degree.

Further, shaping of the incoming freshman class to balance student interest among the many vibrant disciplines available offers the opportunity for:

- Qualified students to gain entry into capacity constrained majors with less chance of rejection and the attendant costs
- UW Seattle to attract and recruit qualified students who wish to pursue majors with the capacity to educate them
- Applicants to understand the future likelihood of acceptance into majors and, therefore, to make informed choices about enrollment at UWS as freshmen
- Departments to plan and develop a curriculum that addresses the interest and needs of students, thereby ensuring reliable access to high-demand courses

Consequently, EGWG recommends the following key principles that should inform admission decisions:

- Incoming freshman classes should be shaped to consider applicants' areas of academic interest.
- UWS should strive to maintain 25% of the graduating UWS class to be composed of transfer students who entered from colleges in the Washington Community & Technical College system.
- The current mix of students among residency types (i.e., WA state domestic nonresident, international) should be maintained in order to serve Washington residents and to ensure the University's financial stability. This mix should be adjusted as needed, in consultation with the Office of Planning & Budgeting, to address the financial realities of the University.
- High demand programs, e.g. Business, Engineering, Computer Science, and Natural Sciences, should graduate as many students as they have capacity to educate. Consequently, the Office of Admissions should seek to enroll sufficient numbers of freshman (and transfer students) to facilitate this goal.
- Current enrollment capacity in STEM disciplines for WA resident students should be maintained.
- UWS should maintain provision for admission of applicants who do not choose to articulate an area of academic interest at the time of application.
- The application should include provision to allow applicants to indicate a desire to gain admission to UWS even if they are not admitted directly to any program.
- Policies should provide the opportunity to affiliate with an academic program for as many incoming students as possible (with the understanding that they can change their affiliation).
- UWS should ensure that students who are unaffiliated upon entry to the University are supported in their exploration of potential academic paths.
- Additional work should continue to model the effects of apportionment and should be complete by May 1, 2019 in order to be implemented, in part or whole, for the entering freshman class of 2020
- In this analysis, particular emphasis should be given to effects on freshman demographics, representation and area of academic interest.
- In order to accommodate any substantive changes in this process, Enrollment Management and its units require additional infrastructure and resources.

All enrollment management decisions should be evaluated annually to assess their impact on University priorities, such as time to degree, equity and access, and demographic representation. Further, the impact of enrollment management decisions on external perceptions should also be assessed on an annual basis.

We recommend that adjustments to selection methods should occur as soon as possible, with incremental changes occurring where full-scale change is not immediately feasible. Enrollment goal decisions and communications for each entering fall class must be made by February 1.

B. Perform an evaluation of the current holistic review process.

Holistic review as practiced by UWS, i.e., one that considers academic preparation and other aspects of an applicant's particular situation, works well to reflect the values and goals of the University as articulated in Regent Policy No. 4 Policy on Admission. The Office of Admissions, with oversight by the Subcommittee on Admissions and Graduation of the Faculty Council on Academic Standards, uses a set of guidelines to translate Regent Policy into a review and selection process. (Note that a full description of the details of this process is beyond the scope of this report.) Although this process works well, occasional modifications to the details of the process are necessary to reflect changes in best practices in education. Specifically, EGWG recommends reviewing:

1. The descriptions associated with the assessment of the quality of the high school curriculum, including:
 - a more inclusive set of example coursework for describing the various rankings of "College Prep Curriculum"
 - the disproportionate emphasis on AP or IB coursework
 - the designation of "advanced level" courses
2. The method by which the admission recommendation is determined.

Current practice is to review the areas of academic preparation and personal qualities and achievements (PQA) independently and to assign an admission recommendation based on either the academic or PQA score. As contextualizing the academic record with the PQA could produce a more equitable assessment, review of this method is recommended.

3. The content of the essay/writing prompts and how those prompts are used in the creation of an admission recommendation.

Current practice is to read for content relevant to PQA assessment only. Reading the essays for academic content, explanation of academic interest, and writing facility would likely produce a more holistic understanding of the applicant's preparation and ability to succeed a major of interest.

4. How the personal qualities and achievements (PQA) and academic scores are used to select "cutoffs" for admission.

Current practice is to use the same numeric value for both PQA and academic scores to determine admission recommendation, e.g. an applicant with a 13 PQA or an applicant with a 13 academic are admitted (or not) in the same selection pass.

5. The construction of larger holistic review assessment cells/levels for applicant selection purposes.

Current practice involves the creation of many selection cells/levels based on minor differences in academic and/or PQA.

6. Methods to link area of academic interest (as expressed in intended major choices on the application) to preparation should be pursued.

In sum, we recommend that the Office of Admissions and the Subcommittee on Admissions and Graduation of the Faculty Council on Academic Standards should continue to enhance the Admissions policies to respond to changes in the applicant pool and the needs of the University and its academic programs and that work begin on all of these immediately.

C. Explore existing or potential dependences of enrollment goals and enrollment policies at UWS, UWB, and UWT.

Opportunities exist for the Bothell, Seattle, and Tacoma campuses of UW to have substantive engagement around enrollment goals and policies. Although EGWG had representation from all three campus, the focus was on UWS and the working group did not have sufficient time to explore connections and opportunities. We recommend, therefore, that work in this area continues.

Finally, EGWG endorses the recommendations of UEM:

Approved 14 December 2017:

1. All proposals for freshman direct admission to College / School / Division / Major must include provision for:
 - a. transfer student admission and
 - b. admission of UWS students who were not directly admitted.
2. A currently enrolled, Generally Admitted UWS undergraduate student who wishes to change their College / School / Division / Major does not need to reapply to UWS. Acceptance to the other College / School / Division / Major is sufficient to make the change. Program-Specific students must reapply to UWS if they wish to pursue a program that requires enrollment as a Generally Admitted student.
3. Colleges / Schools / Divisions / Majors will provide assistance for students who choose or are required to leave a program.

Approved 30 January 2018:

4. In adherence to Faculty Senate guidelines (Class C Bulletin No. 553), selection of applicants for freshman direct admission to College / School / Division / Major must use the University's holistic review criteria.

<http://www.washington.edu/faculty/files/2014/05/553.pdf>

5. Proposals for freshman direct admission to College / School / Division / Major must include consideration of the impacts of the change on and consultation with the other campuses of UW and communication with Washington State high schools and Community and Technical Colleges.
6. The application for admission to the University of Washington Seattle should include provision for applicants to indicate at least two ranked areas of academic interest. Colleges, Schools, Divisions, or Majors may choose to consider only those applicants who rank their interest in the program first or may choose to consider all applicants who indicate an interest.