



WESTERN
COLORADO UNIVERSITY

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



Western Colorado University

Discovering the path to success

Western Colorado University delivers career preparation, engineering, computer science and a liberal arts and sciences curriculum to more than 3,000 intellectually adventurous students in the heart of the Rocky Mountains. Our small size, unique setting and low cost ensure students receive personalized mentorship, gain practical experience and graduate without taking on excessive debt. We are proud to serve our state and country by preparing our students to make meaningful contributions in Colorado and beyond. We are proud to serve our community, state, and country.

Founded in 1901 as the Colorado State Normal School, Western was the first college on the Western Slope and was dedicated to the education and preparation of teachers. In 120 years of service, Western has grown to now offer more than 100 areas of undergraduate study,

and soon-to-be nine master's degrees. The Paul M. Rady School of Computer Science & Engineering partnership with the University of Colorado-Boulder allows students to earn a degree from the TOP-20 nationally ranked public engineering school while enjoying the affordability and setting of Western.

Prior to the pandemic, Western saw the second highest growth in students in Colorado for academic year 2019-20. Fall 2019 headcount was 3,492. Our graduation rate in the last two years is at its highest in school history.

Diversity is a core value at Western Colorado University as it is central to education. Our diversity headcount—the number of students from diverse backgrounds and ethnicity—for fall was 877, the largest in our history. We know people of different backgrounds bring various experiences and perspectives that enrich the classroom and community.

We strive to foster a respectful, welcoming learning and social environment, and take a firm and unyielding stance in support of diversity, inclusivity, scientific inquiry and creative expression—which improves the educational experience.

All of Western's students are considered for financial aid, with 80% receiving it in some form. On July 1, 2019, Western officially launched its first ever comprehensive campaign with a goal of raising \$60-80 million over the next seven years, entitling it the Elevate Western Campaign. Thus far we have raised \$6.45m in gifts and commitments, and over \$600k for Student First Scholarships—constituting more than 3,500 separate gifts, a 6% increase over prior year. In addition to the numbers above, we saw a 100% increase in six figure gifts, and two \$1m+ commitments were secured.

Western Colorado University promotes intellectual maturity and personal growth in its students and prepares them to assume constructive roles in local, national and global communities. Western's distinctive character emerges from its unity among academic and professional disciplines, high standards of scholarship, and a unique environment in the mountains of western Colorado. With a focus on this mission, Western has developed five strategic goals to enhance our service to our students, staff and faculty, the community and our world.

1

ENROLLMENT

Western's fall 2019 headcount of 3,492 was the largest in recent history as was Western's diversity headcount of 877. Graduate programs at Western continue to thrive, recording a near 17% increase in enrollment in 2019-20. Concurrent Enrollment of high school students in Western courses continues to represent a growing portion of Western's overall enrollment, almost tripling since 2017-18.

2

STUDENT ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Western's graduation rate in 2019-20 climbed for the second year in a row. The launch of our comprehensive peer mentoring program (EPICs), which is based on national best practices, was a huge success. Prior to the impact of COVID-19, our fall 2019 cohort first-to-second year retention rate was tracking at approximately 75%.

3

STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Western's NCAA Division II athletic program continues to perform exceptionally well on the field/court of play and academically with the average NCAA student GPA exceeding the school average. Western also hosts a robust array of mountain and club sports. Western continues to see strong occupancy/participation in our residence life program and continues to operate despite the COVID 19 pandemic. The quality education, personal growth, friendships and community belonging that Western students enjoy is unrivaled in higher education today.

4

FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY

Spring 2020 presented many financial challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Still, Western was able to maintain firm ground fiscally. A Strategic Resources Allocation study was initiated in 2019-20 to ensure an alignment of resources with Western's strategic plan and mission.

5

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

There are literally hundreds of Westerners volunteering with dozens of foundations, associations, nonprofits and other groups for the betterment of the Gunnison Valley, the State of Colorado as well as national and global causes. Western also hosts an array of events to engage and enrich our alumni and the community.



GOAL 1: Enrollment

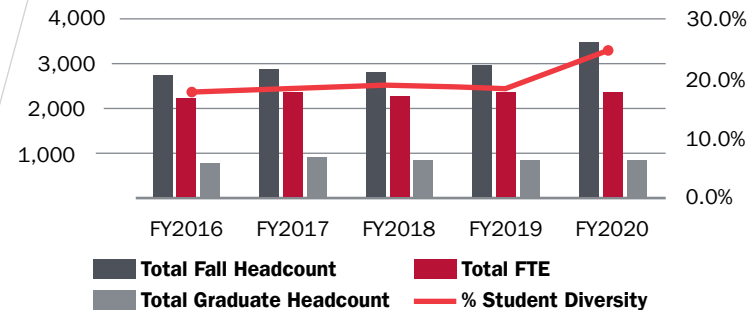
Western's overall headcount reached nearly 3,500 in 2019-20.

Graduate program enrollment grew by 17%

Graduate degree programs continue to thrive—M.A. in Education, M.S. in Ecology, Outdoor Industry MBA and others, plus the doubling of the Graduate Program in Creative Writing.

Our Concurrent Enrollment grew from 291 in 2017-18 to 957 in 2019-20 and helped drive our underrepresented student headcount from 18.6% to more than 25%.

STUDENT ENROLLMENT



GOAL 2: Student Academic Success

Overall

- Western's graduation rate reached the highest level in school history for the second year in a row.
- Retention rates (first to second year) remaining consistent at about 70%.
- The Experienced Peers Initiating Connections (EPIC) mentoring program launched, which we expect to improve retention rates.
- Western's student loan default rate is well below national average and below our Colorado peers.
- Average student debt load remained competitive with peer institutions.

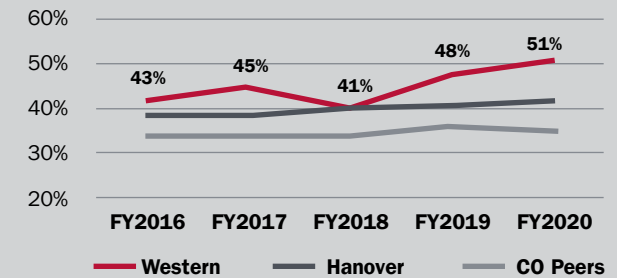
Academic program health

- Western currently offers +100 areas of study, from professional degrees to liberal arts, including Biology, Exercise Sports Science, Recreation & Outdoor Education and Sociology.
- Western offers eight master's programs, with a ninth recently approved.
- Programs experiencing most growth (more than 20%) are computer science, politics & government, and economics.
- Graduate program enrollment increased by 17%.

Program development highlights

- Paul M. Rady School of Computer Science and Engineering had 43 incoming students in fall 2019.
- The Outdoor Industry MBA program doubled enrollment in its second year.
- The School of Business launched several new programs, attended RedBull Rampage and held Women in Business event.

GRADUATION RATES



GOAL 3: Student Experience



Campus life

- NCAA Division II program thriving—13 All-Americans, 65 All-RMAC performers and 99 Academic Achievement Awards.
- Cross-country teams finished in top seven of NCAA championships.
- Women's basketball team qualified for NCAA tournament for the first time.
- Men's basketball team had most wins in more than two decades.
- Football team had second best season since 2004.
- Wrestling team took second in RMAC and at the Super Region VI championship.
- Robust club sports, and more than 100 participants in Mountain Sports programs.
- Fall 2019 retention for student-athletes was 78%, and 2019-20 graduation rate was 63%.
- Westerns Residence Life weathered the pandemic meeting all its obligations despite refunds.
- An exciting partnership between Career Services and Alumni Relations has forged a partnership via the Mountaineer Mentors program. The two teams are connecting Western's robust alumni network and Western students as a way to provide mentoring, coaching, and a menu of professional pathways to our students.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Internationalization (DEII)

- Campus Climate Survey performed, assessing and benchmarking Western's DEII efforts.
- Guiding DEII statement of purpose adopted.
- President Salsbury's spring 2020 letter to Colorado's congressional delegation in strong support of DACA recipients and "DREAMers," and summer 2020 message on racism as a persistent societal problem. Direction to DEII committee to expand on this important social justice dialogue.
- **Western's institutional commitment to DEII is reflected in all of its people and activities:**
 - Hosting Consulate General of Mexico, the Honorable Berenice Rendón Talavera.
 - Efforts by VP for Enrollment & Student Success Abel A. Chávez, Ph.D. inclusion fronts (note Yo Soy Western video).
 - Creation of the School of Graduate Studies Dean's Award for Inclusive Excellence.
 - President's support of the Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative—serving rural and minority students.
 - Creation of the President's International Scholarship.
 - The majority of Western's cabinet is first-generation college students.

Third party recognition

- Forbes again ranks Western as one of America's Top Colleges and improved 15 places to 112th in the West, fall 2019.
- College Raptor ranks Western as Hidden Gem of Rocky Mountain Colleges in 2021.
- College Recon ranks Western as a top VA-approved university.
- U.S. News & World Report 2021 edition ranks Western No. 35 in Top Public schools in Regional Universities West as well as No. 75 in Regional Universities West. Western landed ahead of all but one peer institution in those categories.







GOAL 4: Fiscal Sustainability

Spring 2020 presented many financial challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Still, Western was able to maintain firm ground fiscally.

- A reimbursement of room, board and fees to students of \$1.5 million.
- Western expended \$240,000 on pandemic adaptations.
- \$627,000 in emergency relief funds were provided to students from federal funds.
- Canceled summer camps resulted in \$1 million in revenue loss to the campus.

Strategic Resource Allocations study

- The purpose of the study was to align Western's limited resources with our strategic plan and mission. All University programs were assessed.
- Launched to align limited resources with Western's strategic plan and mission. Programs scored by teams, analyzed and categorized by tiers.

Cost

- Western's net cost (published tuition and fee rates minus financial aid) remains flat due to large levels of private scholarship assistance.
- Private scholarships will continue to be critical in our ability to recruit and retain students.
- Western remains one of the lower-cost four-year institutions when compared to other Colorado schools.

State budget outlook

- New funding model represents a shift in recognizing the important role that smaller, and rural, institutions play in the higher education landscape.
- Pandemic impacts have forced a \$8.7 million funding cut for 2020-21. However, \$8 million will be covered by federal funds.

Fundraising

- Western officially launched the Elevate Western Campaign in July 2019 with a goal of raising \$60-80 million over seven years. In the first year:
 - \$6.45 million raised in gifts and commitments.
 - 3,596 gifts made (6% increase over 2019).
 - 14 new scholarship funds created.
 - More than \$600,000 raised for Student First Scholarships.
 - Doubled six-figure gifts from five to 10.
 - Two \$1 million-plus commitments secured.



GOAL 5:

Community Relations

Westerners are volunteering with many foundations, associations, community groups and nonprofit organizations making both the Gunnison Valley and world a better place.

- Faculty and staff sit on more than 100 boards and committees, as Western affiliates or personally.
- These groups range from the care for our youth by promoting healthy choices to those which encourage people to recreate in nature responsibly. Some contribute to History Colorado, which celebrates our state's past.

Events

- Western hosts events both on-campus and off to engage alumni and the community and meet their desire for connection, enrichment and life-long learning. This is demonstrated through lectures, concerts, and social events, such as Homecoming and Alumni Ski Weekend in the Gunnison Valley and Mountaineer Gala and Farm-to-Table events in Denver.
- Sports teams provide clinics and camps for children.

Community service

- Employees and students have contributed more than 1,000 hours of volunteer time.
- LEAD Office coordinates "Day of Service" in spring and fall.
- Wrestling team during the pandemic helped community members with yard and ranch clean up during the pandemic.

DAY OF SERVICE

MLK Day, Spring 2020

196 volunteers | 800 volunteer hours

Fall 2020 (pandemic)

126 volunteers | 500 volunteer hours





