

Assessment of UWB's Frosh Initiative 2006-07

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During Spring 2006 the UW Bothell Academic Council approved an Assessment Plan of its Entering Frosh class. That plan outlined six purposes, and defined a series of specific questions to be addressed through institutional research. These purposes are reproduced below (see Appendix for questions):

- Improve Recruitment and Admission
- Improve Program Planning
- Improve Student Retention and Advising
- Assess and Improve the Quality of the Student Experience at UWB
- Assess and Improve Student Learning
- Assess and Outcomes and Impacts of UWB Attendance

With one year's experience under our belt, UWB institutional research has created a surprisingly large number of sources of information to assess its first year of experience with a frosh class. The following report distills relevant information to create to address questions asked within the assessment plan and to create a picture who our students are, how they made their decisions to come to UW Seattle [UWS], what their hopes and expectations for the future are, first year experiences and behaviors, and their summative evaluations. Where possible, information derived from student survey data is buttressed using other sources.

The sources consulted for this report include:

- Survey of entering frosh (n=105, 77% of entering class, August 2006)
- Survey of entering frosh families (n=103, August 2006)
- Survey of admitted students declining to join the frosh class ((n=44, 22% of declining students Aug 2006)
- Survey of UWB lower and upper division students (n=98 or 72% of frosh class, Winter 2007)
- Survey of UWS 2005 entering class (n=445 or 15% of the 2905 entering frosh residing in 6 catchments counties, Fall 2005)
- UWB Application and Student Data 2006-07
- Cooperative Institutional Research Program's Frosh Survey (UCLA-2006)

This report begins with a brief composite of findings and then bullets key findings from these multiple sources. The report concludes with a fuller narrative.

Overview

The picture that emerges from our institutional research program into UWB's 2006-07 frosh initiative is that of a young institution which has succeeded in recruiting a strong frosh class, but which has not yet become a school of first choice for majority of its students. Absence of a residential campus life and a dearth of academic programs are key factors. UWB appeals best to frosh who seek local educational opportunities in order to pursue work or otherwise finance their schooling. UWB succeeds in attracting applicants who place value upon quality teaching and college reputation. The relative absence of applications to community colleges, and almost non-existent rejection of UWB admissions offers in favor of those institutions indicate that UWB has succeeded in distinguishing itself. Like non-residential students elsewhere, UWB frosh prioritize campus and social experiences over practical concerns in terms of admissions. UWB frosh are younger than current students and, once here, indicate greater concern for social opportunities than do upper division students. UWB frosh are concerned over potential degree choices. This is consistent with the disproportionate number of students who intend to pursue Business or CSS degrees, as least, as compared with those applicants who decline to come to UWB or students who attend UWS. Frosh express satisfaction regarding the learning climate at UWB. Still, dissatisfaction over the limited program and course offerings (and to a lesser degree with campus life) leads many to consider changing schools next year. As many as 60% entertain the possibility of transfer to another institution to finish their degree.

1. Demographics on the 136 entering frosh in Autumn 2006:

- Gender: *Male* 51%
Female 49%

- Race: *Caucasian* 45%
Asian 34%
Hispanic 6%
African American 5%
Haw/Pac 1%
Not Indicated 9%

- Age 18-25 100%

- Work Not working 28% (est)
1 to 10 hrs per week 14%
11 to 20 hrs per week 27%
21 to 30 hrs per week 25%
31 to 40 hrs per week 5%
More than 40 hrs 1%

- Sole Supporter of Household 11% (est)

- * Students with Dependent Children 3% (est)

- Residence *King County* 63%
Snohomish 34%
Island County 2%

- Enrollment *Full Time* 100%

- Academics: *Average SAT* 1024
Average HS GPA 3.28

- Frosh comprised 8% of student headcount and 9.6% of FTE

- The frosh class alters UWB's demographic profile, adding more young and male students.

2. ADMISSION DECISIONS

- 25% of applicants name UWB as their first choice school
- Applicants who come to UWB prioritize quality teaching, location, and availability of specific programs
- Applicants who choose other schools give higher priority opportunity to live on campus, availability of specific program, and social climate
- In rank order, UWB competes for enrollments first with UWS (69% UWB applicants also applied here), the WWU (35%), WSU (19%), and local community colleges (11%). Fewer than 10% of students apply to private colleges.
- Among students who decline UWB admission, UWS is top choice school for nearly 70% and among top 3 for nearly 91.5%
- Top 3 factors among frosh in their decision to attend UWB
 - advice of parent, relative, or friend (76%)
 - visit to UWB campus (47%)
 - advice of counselors (40%)
 - contact with UWB Students (27%)
- Families of UWB students (upon whose advice students say they rely) give greater weight than students to school counselor advice, faculty or student contact, and campus visits.
- Cost appears to be a secondary factor in acceptance decision, though dearth of private school applications indicates financial concerns
- Students who decline UWB express greater concern over reputation in school choice. Campus visits also more important to decision.
- UWS frosh survey responses among off-campus residents more closely match UWB frosh profile. Compared to residential students, off-campus UWS frosh are more sensitive to financial concerns and appear more dependent upon parents. On-campus students appear to have greater resources and give greater priority to social concerns.

3. HOPES AND ASPIRATIONS

Motivations

- Incoming students do not significantly differentiate between career, advanced schooling and personal motives for learning.
- 52% of UWB frosh name a Master's degree as their goal.
25% envision another post-baccalaureate experience
Ph.D--14% MD--6% JD--5%
- 38% of incoming students prioritized learning related to their major as compared with learning for life preparation, successful living, or social interactions.

Programs of Study

- There is an evident self-selection process among students who come to UWB in terms of identified interest in particular majors.
 - Relative to declining frosh and those who attend UWS, UWB frosh are far more likely to express an interest in a Business Degree.

UWB enrollees	50.0%
UWB decliners	38.7%
UWS frosh ('05)	16.2%
 - The situation is similar for the next most frequently selected major, Computing & Software Systems

UWB enrollees	18.4% CSS
UWB decliners	11.4% Computer Science
UWS frosh ('05)	2.3% Computing
 - 21.4% of students identify an interest in IAS options, whereas UWS arts and science students account for close to 40% of incoming students interest.
 - No students indicated interest in Nursing, although health sciences at UWS accounts for 13.9% of the intended majors among UWS frosh. The current UWB Nursing program is designed for students who have completed a Nursing AA.

Success

- Before beginning their course work students identified the following items as particularly important to their success (in order of priority given): 1. Advising; 2. Parking; 3. Class schedule; 4. Faculty Interactions; 5. Access to computers; 6. Social life.
- Compared to upper-division UWB students, frosh regard social concerns (places and times to meet friends, events, clubs etc) as important to their success.

4. FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE BEHAVIORS AND ATTITUDES

Attitudinal Change:

Changes in what students say about what they need to succeed may be suggestive of how students' beliefs are altered by their experiences.

- Students increased their estimates of the importance of academic items in relationship to their success. Notably, these include tutoring on writing, math & science; academic advising and opportunities to interact significantly (their priorities more closely match those expressed by their families before classes began).
- Pragmatic concerns also received higher scores. These included the importance of evening and day classes. Notably, students also expressed higher concern over the availability of health care, health insurance and psychological counseling.

Work and Study Behavior

- Incoming frosh anticipate working for pay considerably more than they later report their actual hours (17.9 before classes begin compared to 14.8 hours per week afterwards). These numbers are higher than those reported by incoming UWS students (5.41 hours for on-campus frosh and 8.24 for those off-campus). In a separate contrast, UWB's upper-division students report working nearly 24 hours per week, more hours than UWB frosh.
- Actual hours of study were also lower than originally estimated (17.29 hours per week anticipated compared to 14.14 actual)
- Students define time management and self-discipline among their greatest challenges. UWB faculty express similar observations.
- Students report frequent use of skills center. Skills centers provide independent confirmation of usage.

5. **EVALUATING THEIR EXPERIENCES**

Satisfactions and dissatisfactions

- Incoming UWB frosh express greatest excitement about expected social interactions (26.7%), being part of UW (22.8%); intimate campus (15.8%); small class sizes (15.8%) and location (12.9%). After two quarters they define their greatest satisfactions in terms of the learning environment, small classes, intimate campus and individual attention.
- Dissatisfactions tend to focus on work load, class schedules, course availability and/or social concerns.
- Compared to upper classman, frosh gave lower evaluations to their academic development in writing, speaking, critical thinking, speaking, critically analyzing information, and problem solving. Appreciation of the arts, however, was scored notably higher. These ratings generally rise with each undergraduate level from frosh through senior year.
- UWB frosh are less likely than upperclassmen to say that were they given opportunity to do it again, they would choose UWB.
- Likewise they rate their overall experience at UWB significantly lower than their upper-division peers.

Attrition

- 63% of responding frosh indicate they either will or are likely to return next year. 32%, however, indicate they may (21.4%), likely won't (4.1%) or definitely will not return (6.1%).
- 40% of reporting frosh indicate they will definitely or probably graduate from UWB. However, 60.2% say they are uncertain (30.6%), unlikely (20.4%) or definitely will not (9.2) expecting to graduate from UWB.
- As of June program attrition amounted to 13.2% of the 136 students starting enrollment.
- Relative to UWS, this attrition rate is high. Their frosh attrition rates have trended downward in recent years and are now the 7% range.
- The Center for Undergraduate Studies and Program Annual Report indicate a number of students who would have transferred are now unlikely to do so.

Conclusion

UWB's first year of experience with lower-division students marks a definite shift in our mission, organization and students. Institutional research into our current and potential students suggests there are important differences between our frosh and upper-division students. These differences are likely to prove instrumental in more precisely establishing the possibilities before us.

Data available for this report are most informative when viewed in comparison with different target groups or the same group at different moments in time. For example, we learn more about entering students by comparing their characteristics to those of applicants who declined our admission in order to attend other schools. Even this provides an incomplete picture, especially for recruiting purposes, because it does not tell us about the characteristics of students who chose not to apply to UW. Fortunately, we can further compare our applicants and incoming students to residential and non-residential students at UWS.

Demographics. The first section of the report keynoted demographics of the frosh class. Frosh, like our upper division students, are recruited locally, primarily from among largely place-bound individuals. Two things distinguish the class. First, the proportion of men (51%) is significantly higher than that for the rest of UWB's student body, and indeed is higher than those among frosh across higher education generally. Second, the ages of our entering students are those of traditional college frosh who have just completed high school. As such, this class adds to UWB's already well-defined trend toward younger students. It breaks with the past by creating a cohort that encounters virtually no age diversity.

Admissions. It is apparent that UWB is still a new institution and is not yet school of choice in the traditional sense. Only 25% of our frosh class named UWB as their first choice college. UWB frosh are constrained to choose a school by its location so that they can either live at home or continue working. Judging by the other schools to which students apply, our UWB frosh typically lack the resources to attend private institutions. Our major competitors are first, the Seattle campus of the UW, followed distantly by WWU, WSU and then local community colleges. Applicants who prioritize extra-curricular experiences generally accept offers from residential schools when available. Our applicants' decisions where to apply or attend are more greatly influenced by parents, friends and relatives than are those of students who apply to UWS, especially those who plan to reside on campus. While our frosh are influenced by the quality of our teaching and small campus, students who decline UWB's acceptance offer appear more often to be impressed by the reputation of the institution they accept or by the campus visits elsewhere. Students who accept UWB admission offers indicate that the programs offered are important to them.

Hopes and Aspirations. An important component of student hopes and aspirations involves their formal study opportunities. UWB currently offers only 4

undergraduate degrees programs, and though there are additional options within programs that appear on students' transcript, this is perhaps the best explanation why nearly 50% of our students indicate they seek a business degree, whereas Seattle's frosh constitute only 16.2% of students surveyed in 2005. Nearly 40% of UWS frosh say they want a degree major in a college of arts and science related area, whereas UWB frosh identify themselves as potential IAS only 20% of the time. Students who were accepted to UWB, but who chose to go elsewhere, are more likely to prefer a major not offered at UWB. Families and students alike consistently indicate that the availability of desired degree programs is important to the college acceptance decision. Despite this concern about degrees, our students do not articulate a strong career motive for continuing education as opposed to other purposes such as graduate school, lifelong learning, or social success. However, given that our students are relatively more likely to be first generation college students relative to frosh at UWS, it is worth noting that nearly three quarters expect to seek advanced degrees sometime after earning their baccalaureate.

First year behaviors and attitudes. Frosh responses suggest these students undertake several significant adjustments during their first year at UWB. After two quarters frosh survey responses show increased emphasis upon academic tutoring and advising as essential components of their success. Students also raised priority they placed on pragmatic concerns related to their success such parking, access to computers, and also to health and psychological services. Such reprioritization likely reflects the realities entering students confront as they reorient themselves to the responsibilities and challenges they encounter in college. These challenges seem likely to be related to the high expectations students had with regard to amount of time they expected to spend studying and work while on campus. Before starting college UWB frosh expected to work nearly 18 hours per week and study just over 17. After two quarters they report significantly fewer hours at both tasks, and also decreased (though only marginally, the total number of credit hours they took from their first quarter to their second quarter). Contrasting this with upper classman at UWB we see that the latter report higher averages for both work and study. Asked to identify the challenges of their first year, overwhelmingly responses focused on workload, time management, or self-discipline. Faculty independently agreed, finding our frosh less prepared for college than they had expected.

Evaluation. Student evaluations of their first-year experiences were mixed. Overall the sentiment was positive. However, student concerns appear to have affected satisfaction levels. One indicator of these concerns is that roughly 25% of frosh said they did not think they would re-enter UWB if they were able to remake their decision. By comparison the corresponding figure among UWB's upper-division students is closer to 8%. Likewise, nearly 60% of frosh indicate a relatively high degree of uncertainty whether they anticipate graduating from UWB, and a significant number do not expect to return next year. Student explanations for this uncertainty point first towards a belief that there are an insufficient number of courses and programs of study offered at UWB, and second, towards their desire for a richer campus or social life. On the other

hand, students generally expressed high regard for the learning environment, small classes and intimate environment. Evaluations by frosh regarding their progress in specific domains, such as critical thinking or problem solving, are positive, though lower than those of upper-division UWB students. However, data by student class year, suggests that students typically increase their rating of these areas higher as they progress through their college career.

Addendum: *The 2006-07 Frosh Assessment Plan and its relationship to the current report.*

In the Spring of 2006, the Academic Council approved an assessment plan for entering frosh. That plan had six purposes, and designed a number of questions to address them. Those purposes and questions appear below. A single asterisk appears in front of any question that has been addressed (even if partially) in this report. A double asterisk appears in front of any question which has not been addressed, but for which we have or can obtain answers. Some questions regarding learning and outcomes will be addressed in a subsequent report that examines these matters more fully, not just for Frosh, but for all UWB students using NSSE and other data.

Purpose 1: Improve Recruitment and Admission

*What are the best recruiting tactics for UWB? (Why do students come to UWB? How do they first hear about UWB? What person/ information is most influential in decisions about which university to attend?)

**What high schools are we succeeding in?

*What recruitment strategies produce the best results?

*Why do some students decide NOT to apply after requesting applications? Why do some students who are admitted decide NOT to enroll?

*What groups of prospects are most likely to apply/ accept/enroll?

*How diverse is our entering class?

**How does our enrolled class compare academically to other institutions in state and nationally?

**How does our acceptance rate compare to other institutions?

*To whom do we lose admitted students?

Purpose 2: Improve Program Planning

*What are student expectations for higher education at UWB, including academic, social/personal development, and constraints on students? Do student expectations match faculty understandings in areas such as effort required for success?

*What expectations and hopes do students have for student life, campus activities?

**What technology skills and access do students have as they enter UWB?

*What are parents' expectations for their children's higher education, including academic and social/personal development?

*What are parents' expectations for their children's higher education, including academic and social/personal development?

*Why do students attend UWB, how did they hear of and decide to attend UWB, priorities for higher education, and background information (e.g., current employment, etc.)?

**Identify extracurricular interests of new students

**How well have we communicated about UWB offerings, opportunities?

**Compare UWB students to students in other institutions in terms of background characteristics and expectations.

Purpose 3: Improve Student Retention and Advising

*Are beginning frosh satisfied with UWB? What can be learned about morale among frosh in their first quarter?

*What proportion of our frosh return for Winter and Spring Quarters?

Are students being admitted to majors of choice?

**How do students perceive the support they receive?

*Compare first year retention rates with other institutions.

Purpose 4: Assess and Improve the Quality of the Student Experience at UWB

*Assess students' opinions of whether UWB is meeting their expectations; explore students' opinions of how UWB could improve

**Determine extent of participation in campus life events

Determine whether students perceive that UWB is living up to its claims (e.g., strong faculty student relationships, engaged learning, etc)

**Determine whether campus life events live up to their goals

**Compare overall satisfaction with other institutions

**Compare UWB student experiences to those of students at similar institutions

Do students make progress in all courses toward the four core learning goals--critical inquiry, quantitative literacy, communication, and community engagement

Purpose 5: Assess and Improve Student Learning

*Assess students' perceptions of learning.

Do frosh develop the level of proficiency we expect in the four learning goals?

How does student learning at UWB compare to similar students at other institutions?

Purpose 6: Assess and Outcomes and Impacts of UWB Attendance

What changes in students' lives occur as a result of their UWB attendance

Can employment opportunities (promotions, new jobs) be documented

(NOTE: Can we operationalize our goals related to "transformational education?")

What percent of our students continue on to graduate school

How do 5- and 6-year graduation rates compare to national norms?

How does student loan debt compare to national norms?