



Strategic Planning Advisory Committee Report

Survey Analysis Executive Summary

December 5, 2017

Presented by:



Purpose and Methodology

- **Purpose:** To collect data from WSU constituents on their impressions of the College's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats
- **Duration:** November 13th through 27th
- **Distribution:** E-mail to 7,564 stakeholders --- all senior administrators, staff, faculty (full- and part-time), board of trustees, and sample of current students and alumni
- **Completions:** 689 total Westfield constituents
- **Response Rates:** 70% college administrators, 45% trustees, 47% full-time faculty, 30% of staff. Adjunct faculty, alumni, and students 4% to 7%.

Respondents were asked to rate the reputation of eight WSU components from “1 = poor” to “10 = excellent”.

WSU Components: Academic Programs, Administration, Community Service/Engagement, Facilities, Research, Intercollegiate Athletics, Student Services, University Foundation & Fundraising

- Two highest rated components: (1) ***Academic Programs***, (2) ***Student Services***
- Lowest rated component: ***Research***
- When disaggregated by group, **faculty and staff** ratings of almost every component **were lower** than that of other constituent groups (senior administrators, board of trustees, alumni, and students).

Prioritization of Initiatives

Of **seven potential university initiatives** (opportunities) offered on the survey, those of highest priority to respondents were:

- *Improve communications and open discussion across the WSU community*
- *Emphasize programs that make WSU unique*
- *Strengthen WSU's infrastructure to support academic and administrative operations and functions*

Greatest Threat Factors

When asked to rate the extent to which nine factors could prevent WSU from achieving its educational mission, respondents most frequently selected the following:

- *Budget constraints for salaries, financial assistance, recruitment efforts*
- *Lack of responsiveness to changing student expectations and needs*
- *Trends that are impacting all of higher education*

Among students, *lack of responsiveness to changing student expectations and needs* was perceived as the greatest threat.

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with a number of statements about WSU within broad institutional categories. Those items with 75%+ respondent agreement included:

Institutional Environment/Culture

- *WSU is a good place to learn.*

Academics

- *WSU students are encouraged to be involved in internships.*

Student Engagement

- *WSU offers appropriate academic support for students.*
- *WSU cares about student success.*

Facilities

- *WSU library is appropriate to meet the needs of the institution.*

None of the statements in the **Communication** and **Technology** categories reflected an “agreement rating” of at least 75%.

Statements which garnered fewer than 40% agreement from respondents included:

Institutional Environment/Culture

- *Vendors find it easy to do business with WSU.**
- *WSU is responsive to alumni needs.**
- *WSU is responsive to faculty/staff needs.**

Communication

- *Communication between administrative units and students is good.*
- *WSU communication is top-down, and bottom-up.**
- *Communication between the WSU administration and faculty/staff is good.**

None of the statements in the following categories reflected an “agreement rating” of less than 40% of respondents: *Academics, Student Engagement, Facilities, Technology.*

Communication Concerns

Overall, fewer respondents expressed agreement with the statements related to **Communication** at the university than any other category, and this was particularly true for the following statements:

- *WSU communication is top-down, and bottom-up*
- *Communication between the WSU administration and faculty/staff is good.*

Also of note, senior administrators agreed that *communication between the WSU administration and faculty/staff is good* at more than twice the rate of faculty or staff (59% vs. 29% and 26%, respectively).

Additional Survey Results

For further examination and review:

- The full quantitative results of the SWOT survey are displayed in the consultant's informational report available on the Westfield State Strategic Planning web page.
- Responses for each set of questions and items are displayed for the aggregate respondent total, as well as broken out by specific respondent groups, where appropriate.

The consultant team wishes to thank all of the Westfield State University constituents that took the time to complete this important survey. We appreciate your effort and candor.