

Accountability Plan

University of Washington

August 15, 2001

The University of Washington continues its accountability for education and student progress, and for the stewardship of state resources.

What follows is a brief description of UW accountability initiatives centered around the five performance measures first adopted in the 1997-99 biennial budget bill. For each of the five measures, the plan includes:

- A description of the measure, goal, target, and baseline.
- A statement of institutional priorities in the areas of graduation rates, graduation efficiency, retention, faculty productivity, and the integration of research, service, and education.
- An implementation plan.
- Anticipated areas of improvement.

While this report focuses on five performance measures, formerly legislatively mandated, it is important to note that the UW acts upon them in the context of broader commitments shared by the University, the HEC Board and citizens of the state. These include: Access. The UW continues to take responsibility for more than the 50 percent of the state's enrollment in public universities. UW considers access as one of its most important budget and program priorities and will continue to do so as its capital facilities permit.

Educational technology and partnerships. The UW has led the way— statewide, and nationally— in both of these arenas. Leadership in the development of the K-20 network, continuing development and implementation of accessible (distance) education, leadership of a new consortium of Research I universities (RI.edu) to provide distance education and serve the needs of students by using the resources of multiple providers, programmatical alliances with community colleges and others in underserved areas of the state, and bold programs of connection to K-12 public schools, all serve as evidence of that commitment.

Assessment. Long-standing initiatives in assessment including end-of-year program reviews for all undergraduate degree-granting programs, course evaluations, and the like, continue. A new set of alumni surveys— addressed to UW graduates 1, 5, and 10 years after graduation— was piloted and proved to be exceptionally instructive.

Diversity. No single subject continues to consume more of the UW's attention, following 1-200. Although the UW has had numerous programs of academic support for minority students, the number and scope of outreach and retention programs will increase substantially in the coming biennium.

Academic and administrative efficiency. Efficiencies come from continuous assessment and dedication to improvement. Routine reviews of academic departments, deans, vice presidents, and vice provosts all provide direction for change and improvement. Special initiatives are also an important source of efficiencies. In the last two years, the Executive Vice President's office continues to lead the way in finding administrative efficiencies and improved services to students.

Performance Goal: Graduation Rate

Goal:	65%
Target 2001-2002:	63.52%
Target 2002-2003:	63.98%
95-96 Baseline:	61.7% of 1990 entering freshman graduating by the end of academic year 94-95.
Actual 1999-00:	63.5%

Institutional Priorities:

- Long-standing and continuing commitment to the timely progress of students:
 - revised graduation requirements
 - reduced number of majors requiring more than 180 credits
 - improved articulation with high schools and community colleges
 - registration priority for graduating seniors
 - increased advising
- Dedication to ensuring efficient student progress toward degree:
 - remove remaining institutional impediments
 - improve students' choices about how best to use their opportunities at the UW

Implementation Plan:

The Course Access Initiative continues to prove its effectiveness. In the courses targeted for access money in the College of Arts and Sciences, for instance, the number of denials dropped from 8,769 in Autumn 1995 to 5,511 in Autumn 1998. The most dramatic improvements were observed in bottleneck courses in the natural sciences from 2,049 denials to 728, and high-demand courses in social sciences (from 3,529 denials to 1,827). As the numbers of students at the UW continues to increase, it is all the more important to continue these efforts.

Changes to the Course Drop policy became effective winter quarter 1998, and seem to be having their desired effect. The number of courses dropped after the second week of the quarter has declined from over 3,000 each term to 2,000 or fewer, and the trend seems to be improving. The expected increase in hardship withdrawal petitions did not materialize. The companion piece to the course drop policy— increased academic support for students— has also been a success. Further improvements are expected.

Looking Toward the Future:

- Continued emphasis on removing institutional impediments toward graduation.
- Continued emphasis on helping students make wise choices.

Performance Goal: Graduation Efficiency Index

Goal:	95% - for degrees to students beginning as freshman 90% - for degrees to students beginning as transfers
Target 2001-2002:	92.35% - for degrees to students beginning as freshman 85.68% - for degrees to students beginning as transfers
Target 2002-2003:	93.17% - for degrees to students beginning as freshman 87.02% - for degrees to students beginning as transfers
1995-96 Baseline:	Freshman - 89.1 Transfer-80.4
Actual 1999-00:	Freshmen - 90.5 Transfer-83.1

Institutional Priorities:

Improving selected [GELs](#), particularly focusing on transfer students intending to study science and engineering.

Implementation Plan:

The Degree Audit Requirement System (DARS) is now fully operational; the coming academic year will be its test run. The UW initiated shared advising positions with Shoreline and Bellevue community colleges. The assessment report from Shoreline is promising. The UW will expand the number of these shared advising positions, should the evaluations continue to show positive consequences for transfer students. The UW Advising Center has stepped up its outreach to students and faculty (who serve as advisers) at community colleges. One of the outcomes of these collaborative projects is the development of the Associate of Science transfer degree, expected to smooth transition (and increase efficiency) for transfer students.

Looking Toward the Future:

- Continued focus on transfer students and articulation with community colleges.
- Possible development of a statewide GEI to indicate where trouble spots are in the system of higher education as a whole, and what each institution can contribute to help.

Performance Goal: Retention

Goal:	95% (Research Universities) 90% (Comprehensive Universities and Colleges)
Target 2001-2002:	91.27%
Target 2002-2003:	92.43%
95-96 Baseline:	86.7% of fall 1995 undergraduates (freshman-senior) returned in fall 1996.
Actual 1999-00:	87.0%

Institutional Priorities:

- Improve retention of juniors.
- Maintain excellent retention rate for freshmen and sophomores.
- Address one of the principal causes of the lower junior retention rate: access to majors.

Implementation Plan:

Improve access to majors, targeting resources to expand high-demand opportunities for students. Allow for earlier entrance to majors, even as early as the freshman year, in selected cases. Increase advising at all levels. Both the adviser availability hours and the number of student served has increased substantially during the last year. For instance, in one three-week pre-registration period, 671 more students were served, and advisers provided 66 more hours of advising than in the previous year, with essentially the same staff. Increase targeted advising for students who are still unsure about their path of study by the end of the sophomore year. Although this strategy produced disappointing results in its first trial year (very few students responded to the adviser's overture), we will try again with a modified approach.

Looking Toward the Future:

- Continued focus on choice of and transition into major.
- Frequent and routine analysis and evaluation of progress in access to majors, indicating trouble spots for students .
- Serious consideration of accepting transfer students who are juniors into majors at the time of admission.

Performance Goal: Faculty Productivity

Accountability Measure:

The UW expects of its faculty both excellence in teaching and in research, as well as efficient use of instructional resources to meet student demand. To reflect the multi-dimensional nature of faculty productivity, the UW will focus on four important components of faculty productivity:

- (1) **Efficiency:** Do professors offer the courses that students want to take? To measure this, the UW compares course offerings with student demand. High efficiency means that most of the student demand is satisfied: faculty are teaching what students need and want.

Percentage enrollment demand satisfied

Goal:	92%
Target 2001-2002:	88.18%
Target 2002-2003:	89.37%
Baseline:	83.50%
Actual 1999-00:	85.80%

(2) **Student satisfaction:** Do the students think that professors are teaching their subject matter effectively? The UW is proud of the teaching quality of its faculty, but there is always room for improvement. The UW course evaluations use a five-point scale ranging from poor (1) to excellent (5). Students trust faculty to teach them important subject matter. While this baseline number is high already, it is not good enough. Whatever students **may think** of a professor's teaching style, they must be able to expect to learn a significant amount in a given course. If students judge otherwise, it is our responsibility to ensure that improvements are made. The measure of instructional quality is the percentage of faculty whose average course evaluation rating by students for "Amount you learned in the course was" rated 3.0 (good) or above.

Student satisfaction with amount learned

Goal:	98%
Target 2001-2002:	96.43%
Target 2002-2003:	96.92%
Baseline:	94.5%
Actual 1999-00:	93.0%

(3) **Funding for research:** The **distinctiveness** and excellence of the UW in research— and in undergraduate and graduate education— comes from the research and scholarly achievements of the faculty. The UW depends upon the faculty to win competitive research funding through grants and contracts. The UW is among the top three universities in the nation in grant and contract awards. The UW expects its faculty to continue this level of excellence in an even more competitive and constrained funding environment.

In grants and contracts per faculty member.

Goal:	\$203,946
Target 2001-2002:	\$277,000
Target 2002-2003:	\$288,000
Baseline:	\$197,948
Actual 1999-01:	\$256,036

(4) **Quantity.** Each faculty member makes an important contribution to the education, not only of individual students, but of the student body as a whole. To do so, the faculty must offer enough courses of reasonable size. Student Credit Hours per faculty FTE is an inadequate representation of that contribution, but at present, it is, regrettably, the best available measure. The UW will be working hard in the next year to find a measure of faculty workload that is closer to the mark

Student Credit Hours per faculty FTE

Goal:	212.6
Target 2001-02:	208.0
Target 2002-03:	209.50
Baseline:	202.47
Actual 1999-00:	200.54

Institutional Priorities:

- Best stewardship of state instructional resources:
 - To meet the access challenge of increasing numbers of students without worsening the student-faculty ratio.
 - To derive added efficiency through more careful choice of course offerings to match student needs.
- Support for faculty engaged in research, scholarship, and creative contribution, who:
 - provide unique research opportunities for graduate and undergraduate students
 - offer the possibility of transformation through discovery
 - develop expertise to solve community and industry problems
- Increased expectations for teaching performance, combined with support for those who need it.

Implementation Plan:

- Feedback to individual units about the effectiveness of their use of instructional resources.
- Additional support for the research infrastructure.
- Work with chairs to identify faculty who may need assistance in classroom teaching.

Looking Toward the Future:

- Sharper institutional focus on mission; faculty cannot continue to spread themselves ever-thinner.
- Intensive efforts to develop an improved measure of faculty productivity that captures the benefit to students of being educated by world-class research faculty.
- Continuing dialogue with the HE C Board, legislature, and governor about the future of higher education, and the faculty's contribution toward that future.

Performance Goal: Institution-Specific Measure

Performance Goal:

Integration of Undergraduate Education, Research, and Public Service.

The UW is a world-class research university which benefits undergraduate students, as well as graduate students, faculty, and the state. All of our undergraduates have the opportunity to learn from faculty who not only teach, but also create knowledge. Many students can meet their educational goals exclusively by taking classes and earning a degree in the major of their choice. However, some students want more: they want to enrich their educational experience through working with faculty in research. The UW will redouble its efforts to make these additional educational experiences possible in three ways:

(1) For the most highly-motivated students, the UW will offer increased opportunities for intensive work (10+ hours/week) with a faculty member in research, for which students are paid or given credit. Our very best students will

compete for these special opportunities. In 1995-96, there were 300 students who enjoyed these exceptional experiences. The goal is to double that number to 600, which, although it is a small proportion of the student body, involves more than one-quarter of the teaching faculty at any given time. (It is interesting to note that even though this may be the most significant learning experience of a student's career, it is teaching for which faculty receive no formal credit.) In our experience, these students often remain committed to the research project until they graduate.

(2) Other students— still top academic achievers— will want to sample rather than fully commit to the research experience through a more intensive, individualized, instruction experience with a faculty member than is possible in a regular course. In individualized instruction, a student and a faculty member will agree on what constitutes a meaningful project and the associated number of credits, followed by routine and close supervision throughout the quarter. This is highly labor-intensive teaching for faculty, but can be a transformational experience for students. For that reason, the UW is committed to increasing opportunities for individualized instruction at the upper division level. At present, 4% of upper division credits are devoted to individualized instruction. It is our ambition to increase that to 5%. (Again, it should be noted that faculty do not teach fewer courses when they take on responsibility for individualized instruction, nor do they often receive formal credit for doing so.)

(3) Finally, as a part of their regular course instruction, faculty are increasingly offering chances to students to play a part in research, whether it be through a design project in engineering, architecture, or art; to conduct an experiment in one of the sciences; or to participate in survey or interview research in the social sciences. The senior survey tells us that 20.7% of respondents report having a research experience with faculty during their course of study. While we find this number remarkable, we would like to make it even better; our goal is to see one-quarter of our students (25%) enjoy this opportunity sometime during their education at the UW. There is another way in which students can extend the reach of their educational experience, and that is by taking what they have learned into public service internships in the community. Many students express a desire to do so, and increasing numbers of faculty are providing service learning opportunities, joining academic course material with internship experiences. It should be noted that this is not simply the placement of students in internships (which is valuable in its own right, and which the UW does enable). It is more than that: it is the explicit connection of knowledge and theory with practice, guided by faculty and community leaders, for which students either receive credit or are paid, and which represents a significant commitment of time and energy (10+ hours/week). At present, there are 500 students involved. Our goal is to quadruple that number to 2000.

These are ambitious goals. They represent the UW's commitment to bring the best of its work to the undergraduates (while maintaining excellence in graduate education, as well). Faculty who work with undergraduate students in research often note that undergraduates are among their most important team members: fearless, imaginative, and dedicated community leaders say the same thing. Unleashing the power of our top students to do their best work is a goal worth pursuing, indeed.

	<u>Goal</u>	<u>Target</u>		<u>Baseline</u>	<u>Actual</u> <u>1999-00</u>
		<u>2001-02</u>	<u>2002-03</u>		
# of undergrads intensively involved in faculty research	600	465	507	300	2,838
% of upper division credits taken as individualized instruction	5.0%	4.46%	4.63%	3.8%	4.6%
# of undergrads involved in public service internships	2,000	1,325	1,535	500	3,137
% of undergrads having a research experience with faculty	25.0%	33.1%	23.7%	20.7%	24.1%

Institutional Priorities:

- Give students as many experiences as possible that encourage love of learning, effective team work, and writing skills.
- Emphasize the points of intersection between research and education beyond the classroom.
- Make good on the UW's responsibility to educate for citizenship.
- Help students to find paid work that enhances, rather than detracts from their studies.