

**Accountability Plan  
University of Washington  
August 15, 1997**

*revised September 4, 1997*

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This document represents the University of Washington's continuing pledge to be accountable for the education that it provides to Washington citizens, for the stewardship of state resources, and for the groundwork necessary to face the challenges of the next decade as well as the problems of the present. Performance measures are one important piece of that pledge.

Some of the highlights of the plan include:

- \* For each of the five measures, 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 that focuses on what the UW will actually do in the coming year. Wherever appropriate, the amount of new budgetary resources committed to these plans is included in parentheses.
- \* A look toward the future that anticipates areas of improvement, both in practices at the UW, as well as in the area of accountability.

For reasons that we have shared with the HEC Board and legislators in the past, we are not entirely confident that we will be able to reach the targets. However, we are absolutely confident that we will make good on our institutional priorities and implementation plans, and that, as a result, the educational experience of our students will be improved and enhanced.

The UW has an unwavering ambition to be among the very best urban public research universities in the country in undergraduate education, graduate education, professional education, distance education and in research. Nothing less will do. Accountability can be a tool to achieve that kind of excellence. In addition to the performance measures required by the state, every new allocation of state money at the UW comes with it a set of performance expectations and plan for evaluation. This is another important part of our pledge to be accountable.

The UW pledges to be a full partner with the HEC Board in evaluating present state accountability initiatives and in proposing alternatives for the future where appropriate. Anticipating the future direction of higher education and the needs of our citizens is at the heart of that work. We embrace the challenge.

## Accountability Context

### The Pledge

...the University will continue to train and teach, to discover and apply new knowledge, and to serve. And those of us who work and study here will have the courage to address the problems before us. In return we will expect from you -- from legislators, civic leaders, business people, alumni, parents, and all the men and women of Washington -- the support we need to remain an outstanding center of learning and service, the support we need to be a great state university.

- Richard L. McCormick, 1996

### The Goals

- *Top education for undergraduates*
  - Access for Washington citizens
  - Well-run curriculum, ensuring course access and timely progress
  - Development of lifelong appreciation for learning
  - Complementary programs at Seattle, Bothell and Tacoma responding to students' needs
- *Cutting edge education for graduate students*
  - Top ranked graduate programs
  - New interdisciplinary opportunities
- *Career development education for professionals*
  - Professional masters and evening degree programs
- *Focused excellence in education and research*
  - Comparative advantage education for all students
  - Discovery and contribution in selected fields
  - Closer integration of research and education

### The Commitments

- Accountability to the Legislature
  - Performance measures: graduation rates, retention rate, Graduation Efficiency Index, faculty productivity, students engaged in research and service
  - HEC Board accountability report: performance measures, plus diversity goals, additional student progress measures
- Accountability within the institution
  - To ensure the best use of resources through problem-based management (analysis, targeted resources, measurement of progress)

### The Challenges

- To improve the state's and the UW's approach to accountability through:
  - continuing review of strategic goals and missions
  - improved communication with the citizens of the state of Washington
  - development of new and better measures focusing on a closer link between management choices and state measures

## Linkages to the Statewide Higher Education Coordinating Board Master Plan

### Increased Access to Higher Education

The state of Washington faces the challenge of educating the next generation of students, a group that will be larger and more diverse than any previous group. The UW is an integral part of meeting that challenge, taking responsibility for more than 50% of the state's enrollment in public universities. For this reason, the UW featured access as one of its three most important budget priorities in the 1997-99 biennial budget proposal to the state. Although enrollment was not funded at the level proposed by the Master Plan, and committed to by the UW, the UW will meet -- and, more likely, exceed -- its state-funded enrollment targets during this biennium in undergraduate, graduate and professional day and evening degree programs at Seattle, Bothell, and Tacoma. Through these programs, the UW remains responsive to the educational aspirations of top high school students, community college transfer students, first-time graduate and professional students, and returning students.

### Educational Technology and Partnerships

The UW has joined with all other educational institutions in the state to forge technological partnerships and educational alliances. At the statewide level, the UW contribution to these efforts has been wide-ranging, and has included: leadership in the development of the K-20 network; continuing development and implementation of accessible (distance) education and degree programs; programmatic alliances with community colleges in underserved areas of the state; and expanding numbers of faculty and students who are sharing their expertise with the public schools.

At the UW, development of cutting-edge, web-based course materials is proceeding at a rapid pace; faculty are re-engineering their courses to take advantage of new technologies with the help of the recently-established Center for Teaching, Learning and Technology; and students are becoming information-literate through the UW's nationally award-winning program, UWired.

### Assessment

Long-standing initiatives in assessment at the UW include: end-of-year program reviews for all undergraduate degree granting programs; senior, graduate, and alumni surveys; course evaluations; and the like. Newer initiatives in assessment include a teaching portfolios project designed to provide models for assessment of teaching in diverse subject areas, and an award for "best" assessment activities in a department or college. In the coming year, the Office of Educational Assessment -- with its accumulated experience and expertise in the area of assessment -- will be engaged in a full-scale effort to find new ways to assess student-learning outcomes so that these may become a central feature of future accountability plans.

To augment these assessment efforts, the UW has developed one of the finest relational databases of its kind in higher education. This database permits chairs, deans, and the central administration

to manage the curriculum more effectively, track student progress, and evaluate outcomes of a wide range of initiatives.

The most important commitment of the UW in the area of assessment is this: no new educational program is approved, or funded -- from a new set of course offerings in a department to the most cutting-edge interdisciplinary program -- without a well-articulated plan of assessment.

### Diversity

The UW's abiding commitment to the diversity of its student body is evident in the continuing progress demonstrated in admission, retention and graduation of minority students. President McCormick has made this his pledge from the start: a diverse university is a stronger university. Faculty recruitment and retention continues to be a challenge. The most important development of the past year in this area was a report on minority-faculty recruitment and retention issued by the Board of Deans in May, following review and approval by the Faculty Senate's Special Committee on Minority Faculty Affairs. The report recommends a number of measures that would strengthen the UW's ability to attract and retain minority faculty, including recognition of units with exemplary performance in this area; a centralized special-needs recruitment fund; development of a post-doctoral fellowship program and a distinguished professors and lecturers program; assignment of oversight responsibility to a central administrator; special early-career supports that recognize the distinctive demands faced by many minority faculty; and changes in organizational culture. Over the summer the UW has been laying plans to implement the report's recommendations.

The University is also involved in new efforts to increase curricular diversity. Last year, the Faculty Senate passed a resolution calling on colleges and departments to review their curricula and enrich their offerings with regard to diversity. This summer, in response to that resolution, the Provost received reports and plans from a large number of colleges and departments. All have reviewed their curricula and many have plans for new courses and other programmatic changes; some, such as Fisheries and Forestry, also reach out to community colleges and K-12 schools. In general, the responses make it overwhelmingly clear that UW faculty care deeply about diversity and its role in the kind of education the UW provides to students.

### Academic Program Reviews

While they have always been one of our most serious traditions of review and reflection, academic program reviews have taken on new significance at the UW. Rather than dwelling on past achievements, academic programs are required to look to the future, offer strategic plans for transformation, make a case for their most important contributions to their respective fields, the University, the state, and the nation, and explain how they will contribute to the UW's (and the state's) access, diversity, accountability and partnership goals, especially under conditions of limited resources. Whereas academic programs have been reviewed in isolation from one another in the past, increasingly programs with substantive linkages (e.g., Chemistry, Biochemistry, Chemical Engineering) will be reviewed concurrently. Academic program reviews are one of the

UW's most important tools for its in-depth internal accountability initiative, and serve as an important complement to the state-mandated accountability plan.

#### Academic and Administrative Efficiency

Faculty are engaged in on-going review of academic requirements and programs. All new courses are subject to faculty council and administrative review: in the last few years, there has been heightened attention to the consequences of new courses for students, degree programs, related courses, and the curriculum as a whole. In the last five years the number and scope of changes has been notable: a major revision of graduation requirements to add flexibility while emphasizing the acquisition of skills in writing, quantitative reasoning, and the like; priority registration for graduating seniors; requirements for the declaration of a major by 105 credits, etc. Each of these represents an attempt to improve the conditions for timely progress of students. Most recently, the faculty has adopted a new course drop policy which will take effect Winter Quarter 1998, limiting the number of unrestricted course withdrawals to one per year. The motivation -- and the effect -- of this policy will be to ensure that spaces in high-demand courses are fully utilized.

By the end of this academic year, the UW will also have a fully operating computer-assisted advising system (Degree Audit Requirement System). This will permit students and their advisers to check on progress toward degree, and to explore the consequences of different choices of courses and majors. This system will also become an important tool in increasing the effectiveness of UW-community college articulation and aid transfer students in achieving timely progress toward degree.

Like other institutions, the UW, through the Executive Vice President's Office, is engaged in an ongoing but accelerated review of sources of administrative efficiency. New efficiency initiatives will be announced throughout the year.

Students choose the UW for the quality of the education it offers and the value of a UW degree. In the accountability plan that follows, the UW has renewed its commitment to enhancing quality and ensuring timely progress toward degree while simultaneously preparing to accommodate ever-growing numbers of students.

## Performance Goal: Graduation Rate

Legislative Goal: 65%

Target: 61.93%

95-96 Baseline: 61.7% of 1990 entering freshman graduating by the end of academic year 94-95.

### Institutional priorities:

- Long-standing and continuing commitment to the timely progress of students:
  - revised graduation requirements
  - reduced # 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:

- Continuation of the Course Access Initiative, designed to meet student demand in bottleneck courses by targeting resources to open additional spaces in those courses. The purpose is to remove impediments to student progress. (\$725,000)
- New drop policy: the faculty have instituted a policy restricting the number of times that a student can elect to drop a course after the 10th day of the quarter per year to become effective Winter Quarter, 1998. This policy is paired with a number of initiatives for additional instructional support and advising. The purpose is to ensure that spaces in high-demand courses are fully utilized. (\$700,000)

### Looking toward the future:

- Continued emphasis on removing institutional impediments toward graduation.
- Continued emphasis on helping students make wise choices.
- Continued dialogue with the HEC Board and legislature about the importance of disaggregated measures -- including the graduation rate.
- New thinking about student progress in the education system as a whole, as well as at the University of Washington.

*UW is committed to achieving the best 5 year graduation rate among peer urban public research universities.*

Performance Goal: Graduation Efficiency Index

Legislative Goal:                   95% - for degrees to students beginning as freshman  
  90% - for degrees to students beginning as transfers

Target:                               89.51% - for degrees to students beginning as freshman  
  81.07% - for degrees to students beginning as transfers

1995-96 Baseline:               Freshman       89.1  
  Transfer        80.4

Institutional priorities:

Improving selected GEIs, particularly focusing on transfer students intending to study science.

Implementation plan:

- Continued articulation discussions with community colleges intended to smooth the transition of students.
- Advisers intensify efforts to work with advisers at community colleges and community college students who anticipate transferring to the UW. (\$125,000)
- On line computer-assisted advising to become fully operational by the end of AY 1997-98, in order to: (\$304,000)
  - allow UW students to track their progress toward degree
  - indicate to students and their advisers required courses remaining completion of a degree
  - assist in smooth articulation of students from community and technical colleges (the system will be available to community college advisers)
  - allow students and advisers to explore alternative scenarios for courses of study
- Continue departmental reviews of degree requirements to ensure efficient use of students' time.

Looking toward the future:

- Continued focus on transfer students and articulation with community colleges.
- Continued dialogue with the HEC Board and legislature about the importance of disaggregated measures -- including the Graduation Efficiency Index.
- 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

Legislative Goal: 95% (Research Universities)  
90% (Comprehensive Universities and Colleges)

Target: 87.28%

95-96 Baseline: 86.7% of fall 1995 undergraduates (freshman-senior)  
returned in fall 1996.

#### Institutional priorities:

- Improve retention of juniors.
- Maintain excellent retention rate for freshmen and sophomores.
- Examine the problem in the current retention rate for juniors (presently 84.8%).
- Address one of the principal causes of the lower junior retention rate: access to majors.

#### Implementation plan:

- Enforcement of the UW rule requiring students to declare a major by 105 credits will be increased.
- Increase targeted advising for students who are still unclear about their path of study by the close of the sophomore year. (\$125,000)
- Improve access to majors.
  - review competitive entrance requirements of selected majors
  - increase access to high demand majors (\$800,000)

#### 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.
- Continued dialogue with the HEC Board and legislature about the importance of disaggregated measures -- including retention.

*UW is committed to achieving the best retention rate among peer urban public research-intensive universities.*

## 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 or all of the enrollment spaces in courses are taken by students: faculty are teaching what students need and want. The measure itself is called “Percentage of Offered Enrollment Spaces Utilized.”

Goal: 85% efficiency  
Target: 72.31% efficiency  
Baseline: 71.36% efficiency

(2) **Quality of instruction:** 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 5 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.

Goal: 98% student satisfaction with amount learned  
Target: 94.75% student satisfaction with amount learned  
Baseline: 94.50% student satisfaction with amount learned

(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.

Goal: \$203,946 in grants and contracts per faculty member  
Target: \$201,927 in grants and contracts per faculty member  
Baseline: \$197,948 in grants and contracts per faculty member

(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.

Goal:	212.60
Target:	203.2
Baseline:	202.47

#### 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. (\$50,000)
- Non-state resources targeted for the support of the research infrastructure. (\$600,000)
- 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 HEC Board, legislature, and governor about the future of higher education, and the faculty's contribution toward that future.

## 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. At present, there are 300 students who enjoy 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, 3.8% 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 often do they 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, or 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.

	Goal	Target	Baseline
# of Undergrads Intensively Involved in Faculty Research	600	321	300
% of Upper Division Credits taken as Individualized Instruction	5.0%	3.9%	3.8%
# of Undergrads Involved in Public Service Internships	2,000	605	500
% of Undergrads having a Research Experience with Faculty	25.0%	21.0%	20.7%

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.

### Implementation Plan:

- Significantly expand the Undergraduate Research Program:
  - offer help in matching a student's interests with a faculty member's research program
  - offer competitive funding for students engaged in on-going research projects. (\$150,000 from the Mary Gates Endowment for Students).
- Significantly expand service learning and academically-grounded internship experiences
  - offer competitive funding for students engaged in on-going public service projects (\$150,000 from the Mary Gates Endowment for Students).
- Seattle Pipeline Project: getting students into the community, particularly in the schools. (\$500,000: \$300,000 from a 3 year grant from the Coca Cola Foundation and \$200,000 as part of a University reallocation in the University Initiatives Fund process.)

### Looking toward the Future:

- Continue to seize every opportunity to integrate undergraduate education, research and public service in order to bring the full power of a research university to undergraduate, as well as graduate students.
- Address one of the most interesting challenges of all in higher education: to learn to effectively measure student outcomes, and then to gauge how well students are learning and achieving their educational objectives.

Summary of UW Performance Measures - Targets and Goals

Measure	Baseline 1995-96	Goal	<i>Annual Targets</i>							
			1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
<b>RATE OF INCREASE (HECB)</b>			7%	8%	12%	14%	14%	14%	15%	16%
<b>GEI</b>										
a. Freshman	89.1	95.00	89.51	89.99	90.69	91.52	92.35	93.17	94.06	95.00
b. Transfer	80.4	90.00	81.07	81.84	82.99	84.34	85.68	87.02	88.46	90.00
<b>Undergrad Student Retention</b>	86.7	95.00	87.28	87.95	88.94	90.10	91.27	92.43	93.67	95.00
<b>5 Yr Graduation Rate</b>	61.7	65.00	61.93	62.20	62.59	63.05	63.52	63.98	64.47	65.00
<b>Faculty Productivity Index</b>										
a. Efficiency	71.36	85.00	72.31	73.41	75.04	76.95	78.86	80.77	82.82	85.00
b. Quality of instruction	94.50	98.00	94.75	95.03	95.45	95.94	96.43	96.92	97.44	98.00
c. Funding for research	197,948	203,946	201,927	203,946 <sup>1</sup>						
d. SCH per Faculty	202.47	212.60	203.2	204.0	205.2	206.6	208.0	209.5	211.0	212.6
<b>Institution Specific Measure</b>										
a. # of Undergrads Intensively Involved in Faculty Research	300	600	321	345	381	423	465	507	552	600
b. % of Upper Division Credits taken as Individualized Instruction	3.8%	5.0%	3.9%	3.98%	4.12%	4.29%	4.46%	4.63%	4.81%	5.00%
c. # of Undergrads Involved in Public Service Internships	500	2,000	605	725	905	1,115	1,325	1,535	1,760	2,000
d. % of Undergrads having a research experience with Faculty	20.7%	25.0%	21.0%	21.3%	21.9%	22.5%	23.1%	23.7%	24.3%	25.0%

<sup>1</sup> Targets do not extend beyond 1999 because the ability to win grants in part depends on federal decisions regarding research funding. New targets can be formulated in 1999 for the subsequent biennium.

