

## **LEADERS' FORUM FACILITATOR NOTES OCTOBER 2010**

### **1. Given these four priorities, what OPPORTUNITIES do you see, for Western and for your units?**

#### **Global Citizenship, Global Knowledge-based, Global Reputation**

- We are a good global citizen – we are expanding the global knowledge base.
- Western's reputation is increasing globally. The students take their learning back to their home countries, which increases the opportunity for Western's good name to be spread internationally. It makes it critical for international students to have a positive experience at Western and the responsibility for that can reside at the departmental level.
- Opportunity for Western to be more visible on the global stage; a positive reputation can spiral and bring more benefits (tuition revenue, conference revenue, tourism, research funding and collaborations—funding bodies reward international collaboration—and, so, an increase in scholarly activity, more opportunities for Post Docs-- and the spiral continues)
- An opportunity to learn about the world and what international contacts need at each point of service when connecting with Western
- With increase in enrolment numbers an opportunity is for increased revenue and expansion of the university
- Growth and new focuses will result in increased presence and reputation of Western on international stage
- Will lead to a student body and faculty that is more representative of multiculturalism and diversity, becoming greater in line with goal of university
- Opportunity to further increase the use of technology in learning, i.e. use technology to accommodate international or long distance study students
- Being exposed to international faculty and students helps staff and students if ever move to area with greater diversity

#### **Positive Impact on Employment, Culture, the Way Western Functions**

- With the updated plan, we have an opportunity to change the way we do things – to become less silo-based
- Will look at different ways of delivering course material, e.g. ebooks
- Good opportunities to integrate services for students and staff across campus for better alignment, economies of scale (e.g. mental health services)
- Staff have opportunities for be Ambassadors for Western, so that everyone is recruiting students; we can focus a Liaison team, for example, in Michigan high schools, or when fundraisers are visiting abroad, then can do student recruitment at the same time
- The goal of increasing international students provides an opportunity to build on our abilities to provide the best student experience; other universities are recruiting globally; we can make our "best experience" a draw
- Opportunities for staff learning: working with a larger international population will bring new experiences, culturally and in terms of support services required that will be of interest and benefit to staff
- There is a potential for more jobs for new employees and new job opportunities for those already working at Western.

- Western has the opportunity to redirect energies and resources in strategic areas into plans to move forward – we're not working to be "less further" behind
- We can plan to grow without making a desperate grab
- This update today gives us a fresh (and female) perspective that is inspirational; the vision will open opportunities once thought closed

### **Enrichment of the Learning Experience, Exchanges, Faculty Recruitment**

- International students bring new expertise
- Internationalization of the curriculum presents an opportunity to broaden our courses
- There are significant advantages to internationalization in terms of broadening our perspective, examining our teaching about internationalization, and developing new teaching approaches
- We like the 2 by 2 programs (1/2 degree from a foreign university, 1/2 from here); we learn more about ourselves by being global
- On-line learning would be great to expand Western internationally and also would be a good opportunity for learners who may not want to or be able to come to Western in person.
- An opportunity to grow Continuing Studies and online learning
- Increasing international students will likely help in increasing the exchange opportunities we have to offer.
- Assist in recruiting international faculty
- Recreational programs with an international flavour will be possible
- More international students are an easy win for the university as the pool of potential students closer to home is shrinking.
- 70% of students in Engineering are international at the graduate level; most become Canadian by the time they receive their PhDs—we do well in retention.
- Earth Sciences as a discipline is a more major focus abroad than it is in Canada, so even recruitment outside Ontario would help our diversity. It's worth remembering that when students come from Malaysia, their government provides funding for their students.
- Departments like Nursing already engage students in projects overseas (e.g. in Rwanda), so there is an opportunity to expand this involvement to more programs and to share experiences on how to facilitate out-of-the-classroom learning with departments interested in expanding study abroad

### **Financial Benefits**

- With more students, the debt for the student rec centre will be paid off faster.
- Though more international students require significant resources it seems that the types of students and the programs targeted will actually bring revenue to the UWO.
- Retail services always appreciates more potential customers (i.e. More students)

**2. Given these four priorities, what CHALLENGES do you see, for Western, for your units?**

**Supports for International Students**

- Another challenge is to decide what is an international student? Western has many students who have only lived in Canada for a year or two before coming to Western; are these first generation Canadians considered international? They still offer lots in terms of adding to Western's diversity and bring international insights and experiences.
- With international students, we need to ensure they are supported in terms of potential language, cultural, and lack of family support issues.
- London as a community can be very challenging for international student/faculty and their families – maybe focus on some countries where we know there is support in the London community
- What supports will be needed to assist the international population to deal with cultural and language integration to ensure their success (or could harm reputation of Western), and how will these be funded?
- Graduate students are increasingly wanting more support services such as career services, professional development etc. Do we have the physical capacity and the services to meet the needs of more students (undergrad, grad, international)? We have to ensure all students have a good experience when they're here. International students become our ambassadors and recruitment officers!
- Students from different cultures and with different value systems may have difficulty assimilating into this environment; how will we handle the potential increase in mental health issues
- Our table could not think of a Canadian school that scores well in measurements of both world class research AND best student experience – to make this happen will be really challenging in terms of resources. (e.g. UoT & McGill – well known internationally for research but score low on student engagement; StFX – scores very high on student engagement and attracts many international students but doesn't score well on international research.)
- Suggested that a possible way to make it happen is to build on already recognized international programs (e.g. Ivey). It was also recognized that until recently Ivey has focused on the student experience rather than the research. Again raises the question of how we do both.

**Concerns for Faculty Retention, Domestic Students, Educational Quality**

- What percentage of PhD students who graduate are male/female? What draw do we have to get an increase in female professors?
- How do we retain the professors we bring here? What is the turnover rate for faculty?
- With an increase in international students, what does that do for opportunities for our domestic students?
- One of the challenges will be to figure out where we put our emphasis in terms of recruitment. Are we going to accept more international students at the expense of turning away domestic students? Do we have a responsibility to ensure we are not turning away qualified domestic students?
- Our grad students seem less engaged in curriculum and re-design than at other Universities—why? Is there an opportunity here?

- Online learning is a great tool but we need to understand where it works and what is not applicable
- For professional schools accredited externally, how do we ensure accreditation standards are not compromised by some of the international activities (e.g., the 2 years here, two years abroad initiatives, etc.)
- For the health professions, it is not always possible to bring in students from all over the world (they need \$5 million minimum in malpractice insurance and many countries won't provide this). This raises the issue of equity – do we just draw from prosperous countries? What does international really mean?
- As enrolment increases will the quality of academics and services become diluted? For example, over the past 5 years Ivey has increased entry enrolment from 300 to 600. Many students are concerned that their education, degree, and prestige of Ivey have/will become diluted.
- How will the image of Western as mid-size school be managed? Do we want to be viewed as a very large institution such as York or UofT with 50k+ students? Currently part of the appeal of Western is that it has a smaller feel to it.

### **Resource and Budget Concerns**

- Academic units love to dream big, yet are challenged by resources (funding, faculty, space, infrastructure)
- What will growth look like – will it be differential?
- How do we continue growing with our operational budgets continually shrinking?
- When we bring in more students, there is an increase in the volume of everything else
- How will the required supporting infrastructure be funded?
- For student services there will be an increase in demand on these services. As enrolment increases will these services expand and hire more staff? Where will they expand? Will more staff be hired? Will the expansion of services reflect the growth of international students? If certain services and departments expand will they grow or will they need to be overhauled in their entirety? How will areas such as Graphics handle increased demands from faculty and students on printing academic resources?
- Will the global economy affect international populations interested in education in Canada, especially at the less subsidized undergraduate level? (i.e., should we count on these international students to supplement the budget given volatility of markets?)
- Will the increased funding equal the increased need / burden on staff?
- Concern with taking on new priorities when existing workloads already stretched
- Housing for all first year students—can we promise it?
- Recreational facilities are already at capacity
- Space restraints in both the Book Store and the Libraries
- With increased research, there is an increased need for expanded libraries.
- We would need better parking and road infrastructure surrounding Western (this is already a problem at Western). When Ivey moves to its new building, we need a way for the Springett parkers to be able to drive directly to Sarnia as well as Western Rd so that there isn't such a backlog of cars on Western Rd.

### **Other Concerns**

- How does Western overcome issues such as strike votes in its attempt to attract a larger international population? People are still recovering from the York strike and the international population was the most affected. Hopefully, Western will not rely on revenue from an international student population.
- Are we still a local university, given our entrance average; does our entrance average, and does our 'local' nature attract employers to London?
- When increasing enrolment is the goal to increase all faculties simultaneously or would it be better to focus on a couple faculties first and focus efforts there?
- External funding/fundraising – how do we market Western on the global stage
- Broadening the brand so that Western is recognized as more than just a Bus. School
- What processes will occur to try to market to international students?

## **IDEAS**

- We need an inventory of what Western already does on the international front.
- We could use summer "off time" to offer shorter residential programs on campus for international students, blended with online learning
- Use technology to leverage the best student experience
- Recruit from private schools that have a large international cohort
- Track our graduates who are living overseas and recruit the children
- We should look at engaging the various ethnic communities in London as well as international student clubs to help international students integrate into campus and the city and make them feel more welcome.
- Make transferring between universities easier, with more course equivalents
- Students studying abroad need to know that the courses count as credit, so manage the exchange agreements to that end, and go for targeted programs; ensure we know that students are being looked after when they are away
- Look at McGill and see what they have done to see how to increase international students
- Consider that some programs may lend themselves to increased growth more than others do
- Focus energies on identifying potential problems and plan ahead of time
- We need a cohesive approach. All the pieces (student experience, internationalization, research) need to work together.
- We need to ensure our marketing in the international community recognizes cultural differences. I.e. marketing in some countries should be directed at the parents while in other countries should be directed at the potential student – depends on culture.
- Survey how large American institutions handle large enrolments, e.g. housing, safety
- Implement one campus wide system to manage resources, e.g. ERP
- Coordinate Campus Police services with other departments, e.g. Housing, Academic Counselling
- We can create new residence space creatively, offering a different space for visiting faculty, upper year students, international students
- Could we consider a coordinated billeting program in the community for international graduate students?