

## **INSTITUTION: WESTERN STATE COLLEGE**

This analysis paraphrases or provides excerpts from an institution's role and mission document on market niche; role and mission; and strengths, weaknesses and opportunities. Page references to the final role and mission document are included. Each analysis section is followed by standard questions prepared by CCHE staff as a context for the Blue Ribbon Role and Mission discussion.

### **Market Niche (Pg. 9-10)**

1. Serving students throughout the state, nation, and particularly in the states located in the Northeast, Midwest and Alaska and California.
2. Traditional high school graduates who were active in extracurricular activities and wish to continue those activities at a residential college.
3. Students who are interested in the performing arts, student government, athletics, and outdoor recreation.
4. Programs responding to regional needs for training in computer science, business K-12 education programs
5. Hosting graduate programs offered by other public colleges and universities.

**Is it unique?** Typical of a small liberal arts college, Western State has traditionally functioned as an institution that recruits beyond the state borders. In Colorado a higher proportion of out-of-state students is unique.

**Has it changed?** No

**How will it provide increased access to Colorado residents or the market that is tied to this institution's role and mission?**

Not applicable. WSC admits all qualified Colorado applicants. WSC's issue is recruitment of undergraduate degree seeking students. Unlike Front Range institutions it does not enroll substantive non-degree seeking students to supplement its enrollment.

This institution focused on the student market niche. As a small, liberal arts college located in the mountains, its market niche implies that it serves the well-rounded high school student and provides them a well-rounded, college experience.

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## **ROLE & MISSION**

Current Statutory R&M

*23-56-101 Western State College of Colorado shall be a general baccalaureate institution with moderately selective admission standards.*

## Proposed Changes to R&M

Western State College does not propose a change in its statutory Role and Mission Statement.

It does propose two related changes:

- A name change to **Western State University**
- As an undergraduate institution, it would be permitted to **offer 1, 2 or 3 graduate programs** in order to better serve their region and to compete with similar out-of-state institutions.

### **Is the current institutional perspective consistent with the statutory role and mission?**

The name change and graduate program authority moves Western away from its current role and mission as an undergraduate liberal arts college.

### **What parts of the role and mission differentiate Western from other Colorado public institutions of higher education?**

No unique market niche identified in current role and mission statement.

### **How is the role and mission built on the institution's strengths?**

The statutory statement does not imply or define institutional strengths. The narrative in the full document implies that WSC offers an experiential type of education, perhaps unique to other Colorado colleges (e.g., Evergreen College). Is this part of WSC's identity?

### **What other R&M statements are contained in the proposal but not captured in the role and mission statement?**

The location in Gunnison draws out-of-state students. The statutory limit to the undergraduate population may have unintended consequences, i.e., the college serves all qualified Colorado applicants but cannot accept more out-of-state applicants due to statutory limit (C.R.S. 23-1-113.5). While not requested, the exemption from the resident admission mandate may be appropriate for small institution, i.e., those enrolling less than 2,000 students.

The graduate program opportunity is not supported with a market study. What evidence does WSC have to support on-going need for graduate degree programs? Has WSC explored other opportunities for partnerships with graduate programs in Colorado and outside Colorado that parallel WSC strong program that would provide opportunities to the region as needed without the state investment for graduate instruction? Can summer academies serve this need?

### **INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHS** (Pg. 3)

1. High quality undergraduate education with small classes and extensive student services.
2. A quality faculty focused on teaching undergraduates.
3. A location that attracts good faculty.

### **INSTITUTIONAL WEAKNESSES** (Excluding salaries and institutional shortfalls) (pp. 3-4)

1. In the past Western was seldom the choice of the best students and the college's image was compromised.
2. In the past Western did not take advantage of its residential environment.
3. The institution has not taken advantage of its location.
4. In the past the college has not been responsive to market demand for certain academic programs.

### **MARKET OPPORTUNITIES** (pp. 4-5)

1. Faculty is involved with rural public school systems such as Saguache, Ouray, Lake City, Ridgeway and other.
2. Western is making a contribution to the whole of Colorado by being involved with rural Colorado.
3. Western provides an opportunity for Colorado student who desire a small residential college experience.
4. Western attracts students who desire a small residential college experience from 49 states and 15 countries.

### **ADMISSION STANDARDS**

Western is a moderately selective institution.

**What number of freshmen applicants meets the current admission index?**

**If the window was decreased to 10% or less how would this impact freshmen enrollment?**

Reduction of window will not impact WSC freshmen enrollment. However, reduction of the window at other Colorado institutions will positively impact WSC's freshmen enrollment.

**What is the number of students who currently apply to Western and meet the index requirement but then enter another Colorado public institution through that schools window?**

Western State College  
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