Connecticut State Colleges & Universities
Board of Regents for Higher Education

WESTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY

PROFILE

Western Connecticut State University

(Content from the Western Connecticut State University Public Affairs and Community Relations office, the University Web site, and/or University publications; material may be abridged.)

OVERVIEW

Western Connecticut State University was founded in 1903 as Danbury Normal School. Today, it offers undergraduate and graduate degrees on two campuses in Danbury. The Midtown campus is home to the Macricostas School of Arts and Sciences, the School of Professional Studies, and most of the administrative offices. The Westside campus comprises the Ancell School of Business, the School of Visual and Performing Arts and the new Visual and Performing Arts Center, a student center, the university's main athletic facilities, and the Westside Nature Preserve. Western also has a satellite program in Waterbury on the campus of Naugatuck Valley Community College, offering undergraduate degrees in business and nursing. Western Connecticut State University's current budget is $119 million.

BOARD OF REGENTS

The 21-member Board of Regents (15 voting members) sets statewide tuition and student fee policies; establishes financial aid policies; reviews, licenses, and accredits academic programs; and, in collaboration with institutional stakeholders, conducts searches for and selects presidents. In addition to governance responsibilities, the board also holds broad responsibilities for development and coordination of statewide higher education policy, overseeing the four universities, 12 community colleges, and Charter Oak State College, which together enroll nearly 92,000 students. The Regents' vision for Connecticut: A continually increasing share of Connecticut's population will have a high quality post-secondary education that enables them to achieve their life and career goals and makes

Connecticut a place of engaged, globally competitive communities. The Board of Regents office is located in the state's capital city of Hartford.

MISSION

Western serves the people of Connecticut by offering a strong liberal arts education and professional preparation at both the undergraduate and graduate level. Its intent is to prepare students for lives that are satisfying both personally and professionally and for productive participation and service in the global community. It also seeks to develop a strong and mutually beneficial partnership with the people and institutions of the state.

For the past decade, the university has reflected its core values as a commitment to quality and continuous improvement, to respect the dignity and rights of each member of the university community, to maintain and protect the integrity of teaching and learning, to empower all students to meet high academic standards, and to promote the value of a culturally rich and diverse learning environment.

A committee that has involved hundreds of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members is in the process of constructing a new mission statement to reflect current strengths and aspirations.

THE SCHOOLS

The Ancell School of Business, named after entrepreneur Nathan S. Ancell, who founded Ethan Allen Company, offers undergraduate business programs in accounting, finance, management, management information systems, and marketing, as well as an MBA and Master's of Health Administration. In addition, the school is home to the division of Justice and Law Administration, which offers the degree of Bachelor of Science in Justice and Law Administration. Graduate students may earn a Master of Science in Justice Administration.

The school is in the process of obtaining AACSB accreditation. Faculty approved both the Strategic Management Plan and the Assurance of Learning Plan in the fall of 2012. The site visit is scheduled for 2017. This initiative represents a long-standing institutional aspiration and has strong faculty and administrative support.

The Macricostas School of Arts and Sciences recently was named for Constantine "Deno" Macricostas and his family. Macricostas, a Greek immigrant, founded the technology company Photronics, Inc., and he has been a major financial supporter of the university for more than a dozen years. His most recent gift, the largest in the university's history, will endow a lecture series, faculty-student research, and scholarships.

The Macricostas school provides the liberal arts foundation for every WCSU student, and offers a full range of undergraduate and graduate degrees in the liberal arts – from

Biology and Chemistry, whose graduates often enter medical and Ph.D. programs, to Communication, which connects students to internships in nearby New York City.

The School of Professional Studies directly serves the workforce needs of a large segment of the state's economy, with successful programs in Nursing, Education, Health Promotion Studies, and Social Work.

One hundred percent of WCSU Nursing graduates routinely pass the NCLEX licensing exam for registered nurses, by far the highest pass rate among colleges and universities in the state. Among music teachers in Connecticut, more than half earned their teaching degree at Western. A 2015 independent study ranked a bachelor's from the Social Work Department seventh nationally and first in Connecticut in terms of return on a student's investment. And, the Department of Health Promotion and Exercise Sciences, which offers every senior in the program a required semester-long internship, is one of the fastest-growing on campus. The school offers the university's two doctoral programs in Nursing Education and Instructional Leadership.

The School of Visual and Performing Arts is notable for a spectacular building that opened in Fall 2014 with theater, music and visual arts wings — home to departments whose faculty and students often are honored with national recognition. The new center was ranked No. 9 on a national list of "The 25 Most Amazing Campus Arts Centers."

Theatre students have earned the highest awards at the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival. Known regionally as a leader in music education, Western has graduated over 150 music educators over the past five years. Works by graduates of the Master of Fine Arts in Visual Arts populate the art galleries throughout New England. Notably, the vast majority of Visual and Performing Arts alumni are earning their livings by teaching, performing, and exhibiting their art. The school offers more than 150 performances, gallery exhibitions, and guest artist appearances each year.

ACCREDITATION

Western is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, which last year renewed the accreditation for 10 years. The NEASC Commission on Institutions of Higher Education commended WCSU's clear articulation of its mission and its open and transparent structure of shared governance. The commission also cited Western's "high-quality academic programs that continue to improve," "strong support from external constituents" in the community and state, and expanded and enhanced facilities. It described the university's administration as "a cohesive, competent group with a strong sense of shared purpose in empowering students to succeed." The university's faculty and staff also were praised: "The team found their passion for what they do, their commitment to their students and to their community a great strength."

Individual programs at the university also carry accreditation by several agencies, including the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs, the National Association of Schools of Music, the American Chemical Society, the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, the Council on Social Work Education, and the Connecticut State Education Department.

STUDENTS

Students are the primary focus at WCSU, as demonstrated by several initiatives. Some, such as the Writing Center at Haas Library, are well-established. Others, like the Learning Commons based in the Ancell School of Business and the Math Emporium, created to help students learn the basics in a setting supported by technology and interaction with professors, are newer. All are designed to help students excel across a broad range of backgrounds and experiences.

The university has produced five student Fulbright Scholars in the past six years. A 2014 study ranked WCSU first in Connecticut and 11th in the nation for its ability to help students increase their upward economic mobility. Another survey ranked the university second in Connecticut and in the top 25 percent nationally for return on investment — the cost of a WCSU education balanced against students' earnings upon graduation. Western's Social Work program was ranked first in Connecticut and seventh nationally in a 2014 survey of programs that offer the highest return on investment for graduates. Recognizing Western's commitment to student engagement, the university earned a place for the second year in a row on the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll.

A signature university program for students is Building a Bridge to Improve Student Success. The Bridge program, as it is commonly known, is a collaboration between WCSU professors and teachers at local middle and high schools to prepare students for college. Since its inception a decade ago, the majority of students graduated from the program and attending Western are able to skip remedial classes in mathematics and writing and move directly into credit-bearing courses. This provides students the opportunity to earn their university degree more quickly, saving both money and time. The first-year retention rate for Bridge students for the past two cohorts has ranged from 13 to 16 percentage points higher than for students from non-Bridge schools.

Students reside in six residence halls, three on each campus. Together, the halls can house about 1,700 students. Activities are guided by the Division of Student Affairs, which also supports many clubs and student activities, including a Thursday night coffee house, extended Homecoming activities, and a year-end WestFest. At last count, more than 75 student clubs were active on campus.

The WCSU Colonials compete in the Division III Little East Conference for all sports except football which is a part of the Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference. All sports facilities are located on the Westside campus with the O'Neill Athletic and Convocation Center and the Westside Athletic Center, home to a turf field. Both facilities recently have been renovated. In recent years the football, basketball, soccer, and volleyball teams all have enjoyed winning seasons. Several club sports teams also are active, and a large space on the Midtown campus was refurbished this spring as a student recreation facility; it has a weight room and various exercise equipment.

FACTS AND FIGURES

Student Headcounts, Fall 2014

4,422 Full-time
1,530 Part-time
5,952 Total
4,365 Full-time Undergraduate
57 Full-time Graduate

Student Headcount Enrollment, Fall 2014

Undergraduate Enrollment by School
1,441 Ancell School of Business
2,306 Macricostas School of Arts and Sciences
1,012 School of Professional Studies
447 School of Visual and Performing Arts
236 Non-degree

Graduate Enrollment
510 Graduate Students; Master's and Doctoral Degree Programs

Undergraduate Admissions, Fall 2014

5,119 New Applications for Full-time Enrollment (including 1,294 transfers)
2,939 Accepted by the Admissions office (including 748 transfers)
1,207 Enrolled as New Full-Time Students (including 433 transfers)

Profile of First-Time Full-Time Students Entering, Fall 2014

Women comprise 50.9% of the entering class (394 of 774), and members of historically-underrepresented groups comprise 28.6% of the entering class (221 of 774).

Geographic Origin of Undergraduates, Fall 2013 (expressed as a percentage of 5,492 students)

17.5%	Danbury	7.2%	New Milford
5.3%	Bethel	4.6%	Brookfield
5.2%	New Fairfield	4.0%	Newtown
50.2%	Other Connecticut	4.8%	New York State
1.2%	Other States and Countries		

SAT Scores, Fall 2014

The mean SAT composite score for all first-time, full-time students is 994 (Mathematics 495 and Verbal 499). The mean SAT Writing score is 489.

Degrees Conferred (July 1, 2013- June 30, 2014)

7 Doctorate (Ed. D.)

143 Masters

6 Post-Masters Certificate

1,065 Bachelors

18 Associates

Academics

Total undergraduate programs of study: 39

Employment, Fall 2014

Total Workforce 1,133 (622 full-time and 511 part-time; excluding student workers)

Instructional Faculty, Fall 2014

216 are Full-time
379 are Part-time (141 full-time equivalent)
89% of full-time faculty have doctorates and other approved terminal degrees

Full-Time Instructional Faculty by School, Fall 2014

43 Ancell School of Business
104 Macricostas School of Arts and Sciences
45 School of Professional Studies
24 School of Visual and Performing Arts

Student to Faculty Ratio, Fall 2014

13.7 to 1 (Total Student FTE divided by Total Faculty FTE)

ALUMNI

Western communicates with nearly 40,000 alumni across the country, though most live in Connecticut. The WCSU Alumni Association creates unique programming and interacts with the university administration and WCSU Foundation to support initiatives. Among notable alumni are Juliana Marques, an attorney with Baker & McKenzie, ranked by U.S. News & World Report as 2014 "Law Firm of the Year for Tax in the United States." Marques emigrated from Brazil to Danbury when she was 18 and earned a Bachelor of Business Administration in Financial Accounting at WCSU. Dr. Forest Robertson earned his bachelor's degree in Chemistry from Western and his Ph.D. in Chemistry from Dartmouth College before returning to WCSU as an assistant professor. Robertson has gained recognition in his field for ground-breaking research that promises to provide more efficient laboratory tools to support the synthesis and identification of biologically active compounds of potential usefulness in treating a wide range of diseases. Evan Bernstein, who graduated with a bachelor's degree in Social Work, is the New York Regional Director of the Anti-Defamation League, responsible for overseeing all New York and New Jersey state initiatives. He is regularly quoted in news sources that include CNN.com, Huffington Post, and The Daily News.

FOUNDATION

The WCSU Foundation, a 501(c)3 organization, is administered by the Department of Institutional Advancement and a board of directors which oversees fundraising in support of the university. The president of the university serves on the board.

ABOUT DANBURY AND THE REGION

Western's campuses are in Danbury, a city of about 80,000 with a diversified economy and population. Danbury gained prominence for its hatting industry during Connecticut's manufacturing heyday. The industry produced good-paying blue-collar jobs and a strong middle class that persists today. Business leaders who foresaw the end of hatting attracted new industry to the region, providing a balanced economy that does not rely on any single corporation. Danbury is home to several corporate headquarters and, with the largest shopping mall in New England, annually contributes the most sales tax in the state. A large Latino population from Brazil, Ecuador, and other South American countries is assimilating and contributing to the region's culture. Danbury is the hub of several surrounding communities, whose residents are employed in Danbury, lower Fairfield County, and New York. Danbury is just 60 miles from New York City and its cultural treasures. The travel is facilitated by Interstate 84 and Metro-North rail lines, which also bring a large weekend population from New York, attracted by Candlewood Lake, the largest in Connecticut, and the region's abundance of nature and culture.

NOMINATIONS AND APPLICATIONS

To assure best consideration, nominations and applications should be received by March 19, 2015. The application package must include a letter of interest (not more than three pages) addressing the qualifications described; a current résumé (or curriculum vitae); and the names of five professional references with each person's position, office or home address, e-mail address, and telephone numbers. The application materials should be submitted as a single, combined document. All applications will remain confidential pending the selection of finalists. The new president will assume office on or about July 1, 2015.

The search is being assisted by James H. McCormick, Senior Consultant, AGB Search, jhm@agbsearch.com, 651-238-5188. Nominations and applications should be sent electronically (MS Word or PDF Format) to wcsupres@agbsearch.com. Additional position and university information may be found at www.ct.edu/regents/search-wcsu and www.wcsu.edu.

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AGB SEARCH