



By the Numbers

Focus on the Facts

Office of Institutional
Research
University of Wisconsin—La Crosse

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Getting In: Exploring the Access Perspective

Access to higher education encompasses not only admissions and matriculation to a higher education institution, but also access to resources, majors and programs within the institution that support students in achieving success in their chosen field. The UW-L EqS evidence team was interested in examining, to the extent feasible, both kinds of access; however, the low initial populations of non-majority students leads to an initial focus on admissions and matriculation.

The UW-L Evidence Team examined a significant amount of data related to access to the University and within the University and identified 6 equity measures to be the focus of the initial Access report, each of which is disaggregated by race / ethnicity:

1. The composition of UW-L new freshmen (Fall 2005) relative to the composition of Wisconsin high school graduates (graduating class 2005);
2. The composition of UW-L applicants (Fall 2005) relative to Wisconsin ACT takers (graduating

class 2005);

3. The composition of UW-L admitted students (Fall 2005) relative to all UW-L applicants;
4. The composition of UW-L admitted students (Fall 2005) relative to UW-L completed applicants (Fall 2005);
5. The composition of incomplete applications to UW-L (Fall 2005) relative to all applications to UW-L (Fall 2005); and
6. The composition of enrolled students at UW-L (Fall 2005) relative to admitted students to UW-L (Fall 2005).

Findings

The number of students of color at UW-L has not been representative of state demographics, nor has it kept up with shifts in demographics across the state. Since the completion of a standardized test is required for admission as a new freshman at UW-L, we compared Wisconsin high school graduates who took the ACT to UW-L new freshmen. Our comparison revealed that the popularity of UW-L

Inside this issue:

Getting In	1
Editor's Note	1
EqS Evidence Team Needs YOU	1

The EqS Evidence Team Needs YOU!

Input and reaction to the data collected and presented as part of the Equity Scorecard is necessary to the success of the project. Please come learn more about the project and dialogue with others about what this data means for UW-L:

OPEN FORUM—August 30, 2 p.m.

ACADEMIC STAFF COUNCIL—Sept. 12, 3 p.m.

FACULTY SENATE—Sept. 14, 3:30 p.m.

STUDENT FORUM—Sept. 14, 7 p.m.

See the EqS website for locations and additional information.

Editor's Note

At the risk of becoming a "one-trick pony", this third issue of *By the Numbers* again focuses on the Equity Scorecard pilot project, specifically the work of the EqS Evidence Team on the Access perspective.

Complete copies of the preliminary section of the report on Access are available on the Equity Scorecard website.

While the Access portion of the Equity Scorecard report is now more or less

complete, the Evidence Team has started work on the next perspective: Retention.

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For more information on the Equity Scorecard at UW-L, please visit:

<http://www.uwlax.edu/campusclimate/htm/EquityScorecard.html>

For more information on the development of the Equity Scorecard process, please visit the Center for Urban Education at USC:

<http://www.usc.edu/CUE>

varies by racial/ethnic group. Over 15 percent of all non-Hispanic White ACT takers in the state of Wisconsin applied for admissions to the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. This figure is significantly lower among Native Americans (11.0%), Asians (8.72%), Hispanics (8.48%), and African Americans (4.42%).

Because there is inequity in the number of applicants relative to the eligible pool, as defined by ACT takers, it is not surprising that there is further inequity in the enrollment of new freshmen relative to the same available pool. This raises a concern as to why eligible, as defined by taking of the ACT, high school graduates of color are not applying to UW-L in equal proportion to White students.

While it is important to recognize the patterns of inequity found in the educational pipeline from high school graduation through submission of application at UW-L, the data also show that once a complete application is received, there is equitable or above equitable likelihood of admissions.

It is important to focus for a moment on the good news found in this data. Upon completion of the application, students of color are likely to be successful in the admissions and matriculation process at UW-L. However, one needs to be mindful of the caveat here, which is that UW-L does not appear to attract a proportionate number of non-White high school students or ACT takers. Further investigations needs to occur.

Summary

- Relative to the high school graduates from Wisconsin, African American, Native American, Asian American and Hispanic UW-L new freshman are underrepresented.
- High school graduates of color who have taken the ACT are not applying in equal proportion to White students.
- A disproportionate number of applications among students of color are incomplete.
- Students of color are likely to be successful in the admissions and matriculation process at UW-L once an application is completed.
- Initial findings indicate alignment to recommendations found in the University's Strategic Plan and Plan 2008.

To read the preliminary draft of the Access Perspective portion of the Equity Scorecard, please download a copy from the Equity Scorecard website. Don't forget to attend a forum or send your feedback about the report to the Evidence Team!

- Enilda Delgado & Beth Hartung, authors for the Access perspective