

**Webster University**  
**Presentation to inform CBHE Preparing Missourians to Succeed**  
**Dr. Elizabeth Stroble**

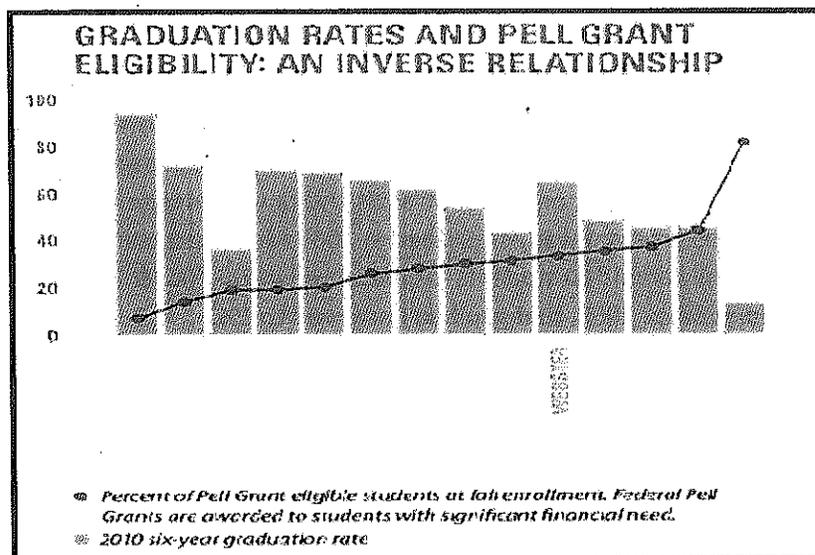
**I. Supporting Student Diversity**

**Pell Grants.** Approximately 34.2% of the undergraduate domestic students are receiving a Pell Grant in 2014/2015 (\$4,984,866).

In 2014, **Access Missouri** funding at Webster made the difference for 775 students who were awarded a total of \$1,088,746.

In 2014, U.S. News & World Report's "America's Best Colleges" Webster was recognized for its economic diversity, "truly seeking a broad, engaged student body" and ranking *first in its category for students receiving Pell Grants in 2011-2012*.

Webster works hard to increase the geographic and ethnic diversity of its student body, in recent years approximately *one-fifth of incoming freshmen identify themselves as minorities*.



Source: St. Louis Graduates Report 2012

**Graduate Student Diversity.** Webster University's graduate degree-seeking student population represents the largest number of individuals of diverse backgrounds among all traditional, nonprofit U.S. higher education institutions, according to annual surveys published in *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education (DIHE)*.

Webster has consistently achieved top rankings since *DIHE* began publishing the survey in 1991, and ranks first among U.S. nonprofit, private institutions in graduating master's-level African-American and Total Minority Students for All Disciplines Combined.

**Community College Outreach and Partnerships** are an important component of Webster's diversity.

The transfer admissions team engages with students in the following ways:

- Engaging with and presenting to student clubs and organizations at the community colleges.
- Presenting to community college advisors, informing them of Webster's generous transfer policies and unique program offerings.
- Webster faculty presenting to community college classes, especially in areas where new transfer guides/agreements have been developed.

In the last year Webster has engaged with the following CC's through provision of departmental transfer guides, presentations, and on-campus events: *St. Louis Community College, St. Charles Community College, Southwestern Illinois College, Lewis & Clark Community College, Jefferson College, East Central College and Mineral Area College.*

Webster has signed the University's first dual admission agreement with Southwestern Illinois College. Once this has been implemented, the University will be pursuing similar agreements with other community college partners.

Webster signed on as a state partner in the *Missouri Reverse Transfer Initiative* and hosted two-year and four-year colleagues for a Reverse Transfer Conference in Sept. 2014.

## **II. Support for Student Success**

### *Academics:*

**Transitions** is a targeted support program serves students who are accepted with conditions to the university and have 30 or fewer hours of college coursework completed. Tailored to fit the needs of the student and to emphasize each student's strengths, the program offers students specialized academic counseling, help with learning strategies, organization skills and time management and peer tutoring.

**Results:** Before the Transitions program was established in 2009, there had been a 6% gap between the retention rates for conditionally admitted students (as measured in '06, '06, & '08) and students admitted without conditions. Since 2009, that gap had narrowed to 1%.

In recent years Transitions has grown to provide the Webster **TAP** (Transition and Academic Prep) program. TAP began in 2011 as a non credit-bearing summer enrichment opportunity for students in the Transitions program. Since that time the program cohort size has doubled, is now residential, and offers one academic credit by completing the Webster 101 course. The program is free for participating students.

### *Financial Counseling:*

Since 2010 Webster has received an annual **Default Prevention Program (DPP)** grant from the Missouri Dept. of Higher Education. Program goals are to improve retention and increase student financial literacy. Relevant information and presentations are given to students and parents at all stages of the admission process and continue with campus-based events throughout the year that combine practical information and support with giveaways, food, and other incentives for students who participate. DPP grant funding also supports training for the Financial Aid Student Team (FAST) mentors and student workers to develop peer-engagement strategies through social media.

**Retention Calling Project.** Through periodic reviews of student accounts, DPP staff proactively identify and reach out to students with debt levels that threaten to interfere with registration. DPP staff work

one on one with students to prevent the growth of insurmountable debt by discussing resources and possible solutions. Retention rates: The **Retention Calling Project** contacted over 2,000 students with debt-related issues in 2013-14. As of January 2014, first time full time student retention rate was 92% and overall retention was 82%.

Webster's new **Financial Resource Center** opened in fall 2014 just outside the Academic Resource Center to provide direct access to the online financial literacy course *Money Matters*, federal loan information, research into scholarship opportunities, and other default prevention resources.

**Scholarships:** Raising funds for scholarships remains an institutional priority. Over the last 4 years the number of Webster endowed scholarships has risen 15%. The number of Webster annual scholarships have risen 21%.

### **III. Graduating with bright futures**

**Default Rates.** Webster has seen an overall decline in 3-year cohort default rates. Webster's most recent 3-yr CDR is 5.6% for 2011 -2014, well below Missouri's most recent published statewide 3-yr CDR of 13.9%.

**Student Indebtedness.** Webster's average student indebtedness has come in below that of other US News and World Report Midwest Universities in 4 of that last 5 years.