

TO: Stephen Magnuson, John Casey, and Thomas Bradford
FROM: Jacklyn Kohls, Editor
DATE: November 13, 2020
SUBJECT: Suggestions for the Improvement of "WOOT Winter 2017 Program Report"

I have carefully reviewed the "WOOT Winter 2017 Program Report" draft you've sent me and I have found the overall content of the document to be highly informative. In particular, the "Executive Summary" section was approximately ten percent of the report, which adheres to an appropriate length, and provides a detailed overview of the report. The "Program Vision" section was also very detailed, easy to follow, and is organized in a way that is more visually appealing to the intended audience. There is also sufficient evidence, such as quotes from a variety of students and information graphics, to support the program's accomplishments and demonstrate WOOT's overall contribution to the community.

I want to provide you with a few suggestions that might improve the report's readability and address common concerns that the intended audience may have upon reading it.

Content

It is important to provide adequate information to all readers who are looking to analyze the success of the program and potentially invest in its future without overwhelming them. This information should clearly demonstrate the program's accomplishments and its positive impact on the community. It's best to eliminate unnecessary graphics, examples and quotes to ensure that the content in each section focuses solely on the analysis of relevant data and the presentation of the program's operational success. The overall content of this report, while informative, tends to be a little overwhelming in certain areas. I will highlight the areas that caught my attention in particular.

Quotes

Rather than presenting information in coherent sentences or paragraphs, this report focuses on presenting quotes from both students and citations from studies that discuss the positive impacts of a program such as WOOT. While these quotes help demonstrate the program's effectiveness, they fail to provide substantial information that is relevant to WOOT's actual program operation. As a suggestion, the "National Research" section should instead incorporate a few quotations into paragraphs which contain more information that's specific to the research that the organizers of WOOT have done. There should also be fewer quotes from students in the sections that follow and they should instead be included in the original written analysis so that they no longer appear without context. The length of the quotes also negatively affects the overall readability of this section and many of the quotes provided in this report are longer than they need to be. I would suggest either removing the longer quotes or simply quoting a sentence or two from them to keep the section more concise. Essentially, the entire report

should rely less on quotes and citations and rely more on original, informative content such as the data it presents.

Tables and Graphics

Tables and graphics can be particularly helpful in portraying real, substantial evidence of the program's success to the intended audience. However, if tables and graphics are overused, they can have a negative impact on the report's visual appearance and credibility as they can disrupt the flow of the written content. For example, the first table presented in the report under the "Outdoor Orientation Benchmarking Survey" on page 6 is supportive of the partial analysis provided, though it is not centered and the "Engagement" row is too large in comparison to the other rows of the table. The second table on page 10, however, is unnecessary, off-centered, and does not help supplement the information presented in the prior table. The only major difference is that each table represents a different year, which is unnecessary because data from previous years can be summarized under the most recent data table.

The graphics in this report, which include graphs, charts and images, sometimes disrupt the flow of the written content by either being too large or unnecessarily placed. For instance, I believe the "Western Outdoor Orientation Trips Student Demographics" on page 13 could instead begin with the text, which could be extended in length, followed by the larger graphic of the pie chart. The smaller pie chart underneath could also be removed, as it is a bit redundant. The third pie chart in the section on page 14 is informative, though I think that placing its supporting text above it rather than beneath it would make more sense as the supporting text could explain more about the potential study it proposes.

I also suggest that the large photo of the student following the quotes in "Students' Perspectives" section on page 12 be either downsized or removed, as it does not add anything to the report and instead takes away from the analysis portion.

Style

This report is intended to present information in a way that appeals visually to funders who are looking for more visual and precise data. However, this report may appear slightly unprofessional to readers since the information is presented in such a way that is difficult to follow when stylistic inconsistencies are present. The best approach to fixing this potential issue is to find a middle ground where the report will look both visually appealing and professional to potential readers. Here are a few suggestions that may help with this.

Format

Beginning with page 5, there is a lot of white space that follows the text due to some formatting issues. For starters, the bullet points are separated by space sizes that are inconsistent; the bullet points should only be separated by a single space. Next, the white space that appears after can be filled by either adding more text with in-depth analysis or by bringing the title of the

next section upward. The same edit can be made in the transition between pages 9 and 10 as the table can move up from page 10 to fit in the blank space on page 9.

In addition, if you choose to keep the pie chart on page 14, the white space can be filled in by providing more information about the proposed gender study. This has the potential to be very interesting to the intended audience as proposing such a study may influence a funder's decision to invest in WOOT's future.

Consistency

I do see room for improvement on the overall consistency of style in this report. Information is presented differently in each section, which is very inconsistent in terms of style and makes it harder for the reader to follow. For example, the information under the "National Research" section on page 5 is bullet-pointed and that style changes as the report progresses toward a more traditional style near the end in the "Program Vision" section on page 20. There are also a lot of indentation issues that have to do with consistency, such as in the "Diversity" section on page 16 where the entire first paragraph is indented while the rest of the paragraph is not. Another indentation issue can be seen on page 14 where the paragraph has sentences indented at different margins. These indentation issues are obvious to the reader when the rest of the document text is not indented and can give it an unprofessional appearance.

I also want to note that there is some inconsistency in the types of information provided in each section. Some sections contain only quotes and citations while others contain information graphics and the remaining sections contain concrete analysis. These are three entirely different ways to present information and although it is unique to incorporate these different styles, it may be best to focus on one uniform style to give the report more clarity overall.

Conclusion

The "WOOT Winter 2017 Program Report" draft is off to a great start. Strong ideas with supporting data are presented to effectively convey the success of the program so far. I strongly recommend addressing the content and stylistic issues I discussed as it will improve the overall readability and presentation of the report. I hope that you will find my suggestions to be helpful in your revision and I encourage you to contact me with any questions or concerns you might have. I'm looking forward to working with you more in the future.

Suggested Style Guide

Spelling, hyphenation, capitalization

support

enhance

ease

Admissions Index (AI abbreviation)

Type style and punctuation

Data categories should be capitalized and in quotes when listed within body paragraphs

Commas should follow introductory phrases and terms

Terms

Summerstart= example of another orientation program

Transitions= example of another orientation program

Western Washington University (WWU and Western)= intended university for student integration

Citations

Research citations should be in parenthesis at the end of the sentence

Other matters of consistency

Spacing between headers

Centered indentation as opposed to left indentation in some section headers

Suggested Annotated Outline

Introduction

- *Executive Summary*
 - A brief overview of all ideas and data that will be presented
- *Table of Contents*
 - Arranged to reflect the organization of sections in the report
- *WOOT Program Overview*
 - Should be informative of the program's mission and current activities

National Research

- *Orientation Programs*
 - This subsection should discuss WOOT's role in the community
- *Student Social and Academic Integration*
 - This should highlight the way the program ensures student success
- *Positive Outcomes*
 - This should demonstrate the long-term positive effects that outdoor programs have on students' lives

Program Vision

- *Academic Integration*
 - Relate back to National Research and connect it to WOOT's specific academic integrations.
- *Participant Recruitment*
 - Demonstrate how the program coordinators gain the interest of its participants

- *Increasing Capacity*
 - Explain how the program plans to gain more attention and recruit more participants in the future.
- *Program Diversification*
 - Convey the impressive diversity of the program's participants
- *New Campus Partnerships*
 - This subsection should aim to impress potential investors, demonstrating expansion and an ability to team up with other organizations

The Outdoor Benchmarking Survey

- *TOOBS Data graphic* (Single graphic of the most relevant data)
 - Summary of annual findings
 - Student success stories (with few supporting quotes from students)
 - Quotes should be kept to a minimum

Student Demographics and Retention

- *Summary*
 - Present 3 small pie chart graphics to connect with summary
 - This should be a brief and direct overview of important factors that play into
- *Population and Diversity*
 - Present information graphics to reflect findings
- *Retention*
 - Include existing information graphics
- *College Preparation*
 - This subsection should demonstrate how the program enables students' success and prepares them for college

Final Summary

- Briefly reflect on findings and ideas presented throughout the report. This should be the driving point as to why investors should invest and students should participate.

Example Section Revision

The Outdoor Orientation Benchmarking Survey

In 2014, we began participating in the annual “The Outdoor Orientation Benchmarking Survey”, also known as “TOOBS”. This survey measures both qualitative and quantitative data to provide information that will help us predict future students’ success and integration into their institutions. While attaining a high score in all measured variables, we scored highest in the nation in the following Trust Variables: “Overall Trust”, “Trust of Leaders”, “Trust of Peers”, “Disclosure Trust between Peers”, and “Disclosure Trust between Leaders”, as indicated by the asterisks below. In addition, we scored highest in “Overall Engagement” of the Social Variables measured.

2014 TOOBS Results		All Participating Programs			WWU		
		N	Mean	SD	n	Mean	SD
Trust Variables (a)	Overall Trust	671	5.66	1.05	36	6.05*	0.81
	Overall Trust of Leaders	702	5.8	1.05	37	6.19*	0.8
	Overall Trust of Peers	678	5.5	1.21	36	5.93*	0.91
	Reliable Trust between Peers	678	5.47	1.21	36	5.83	0.95
	Reliable Trust of Leaders	705	5.97	1	37	6.18	0.87
	Disclosure Trust between Peers	687	5.55	1.36	36	6.03*	1.04
	Disclosure Trust of Leaders	706	5.64	1.29	37	6.19*	0.92
Social Variables (b)	Overall Social Provisions	633	7.72	1.29	30	8.12	0.85
	Social Interaction	693	7.74	1.7	34	8.38	0.95
	Nurturance	673	7.15	1.62	32	7.41	1.38
	Belongingness	710	8.26	1.25	34	8.39	1.09
	Engagement	698	7.49	1.14	34	7.85*	0.93
	Critical Thinking(c)	610	60.86	23.65	31	65.19	17.03
a Means are calculated on a 7-point Likert scale b Means are measured on a 10-point Likert scale c Means are measured on a 100-point scale.							

We yielded similar results from the 2015 “TOOBS”, proving that we continue to demonstrate the value of integrating a fully supported outdoor orientation program here at WWU. Several students have shared their experiences to confirm the positive effect that the program has had on the community thus far.