

**Adult & Higher Education (AHE) Closing the Loop Report 2021-2022**  
**Sondra Cuban, Director, AHE**Section 1: Program Assessment Plan Transition Point Assessments

In the Fall quarter 2021, there were 52 students enrolled in AHE out of a total of 57 “active” students in the program (inclusive of Spring quarter 2022). By “active” we mean those students attending three academic quarters in a single year and planning to take future courses. This was an improvement from the previous year when fall enrollments were at 45. A possible reason for this change is that many new students had entered the program at the beginning of the pandemic when AHE was operating as an online program and were staying put in jobs and in the program. Almost everyone who was entering AHE were working in online capacities, especially in the Higher Education field, which aligned to their stay-at-home lives. Although the university was transitioning in the Fall 2021, for the first time, back to in-person classes, students were amenable to taking online courses in AHE, which switched back to a hybrid model in the winter of 2022. It also confirms a pattern where there was a noticeable number of Western employees who were students in AHE (15) since 2020, probably due to WWU being online. The rest of these students were using state waivers (32/57), coming either from the community colleges or universities across Washington, and comprising 82% of the program. The tuition waiver students, together, increased their numbers from the previous year, leaving only 10 revenue-based students in AHE (a decline from 17 last year).

The make-up of the AHE program for the Fall 2021 data shows a noticeable increase in male students from 10 (last year) to 17 this year. The racial and ethnic composition for AHE with 19% students of color improved from the previous year in AHE (13%) and demonstrates AHE’s slow and steady increase in diversity. The age breakdown also shows that younger students are entering AHE since 2016. In 21/22, 30% of students were under 30 years old (17) while the majority were over 30 and composing 70% of the student population. The continuing trend of increasingly younger students in AHE is likely due to the program attracting those state workers in the field of Higher Education. Almost all AHE students are employed, attending the program on a part-time basis.

Program marketing especially, on the website, encourages Washington state workers from southern regions to apply to AHE, and they steadily represent larger groups over the last several years. This geographic diversity has stayed consistent or increased over the last several years. Out of 57 students, in 21/22, 13 came from King County (whereas in 2019, 9 did) and this number has held steady as has other counties. A similar number of students from last year came from Skagit (6) and Pierce County (3) as well as Snohomish County (3), Island County (1) and Franklin County (2). Overall, however, 29 students resided in Whatcom County, a good proportion of these students either representing WWU employees or the community college system surrounding Bellingham, especially Whatcom and BTC. With the pandemic came a higher reliance on online information, with 7 applicants attending one of AHE’s bi-quarterly Zoom Information Sessions, but only 5 of these students hearing about the program through word-of-mouth (which is a change from previous years).

Admission	<p>There was no minimum MAT score for acceptance. In 2019 a decision was made to drop the MAT to eliminate application barriers. The minimum GPA for admission is 3.00 and if students score slightly below this, they may be provisionally admitted to AHE.</p> <p><u>Admission Data</u></p> <table> <tr> <td>Number of Applicants:</td><td>21</td></tr> <tr> <td>Number of Accepted/Admits:</td><td>21</td></tr> <tr> <td>Number of Matriculated:</td><td>12</td></tr> </table> <p><u>GPA Data</u></p> <table> <tr> <td>Average GPA of Applicants:</td><td>3.37</td></tr> <tr> <td>Average GPA of Accept/Admits:</td><td>3.37</td></tr> <tr> <td>Average GPA of Matrices:</td><td>3.36</td></tr> </table> <p>It should be noted there was a significant loss of applicants in 21/22, from 35 in 20/21 to 21 this year, as well as fewer students matriculating (from 30 to 12). This decrease was probably due to people continuing to stay put (in careers and homes) during the waning period of the pandemic. Historically there has been a range of quality among students applying to and admitted to AHE. This year and several years back, though, demonstrate a profile of students that are attracted to, and entering the program with good academic backgrounds who are well-prepared to learn.</p>	Number of Applicants:	21	Number of Accepted/Admits:	21	Number of Matriculated:	12	Average GPA of Applicants:	3.37	Average GPA of Accept/Admits:	3.37	Average GPA of Matrices:	3.36
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Retention	<p>The average GPA of students in AHE in 21/22 was 3.36 at matriculation, slightly above the 3.31 GPA at the application period and pretty much the same as the 3.37 GPA of the previous year. While we would like to see higher GPAs, much of this was likely due to unpredictable pandemic conditions operating in the lives of students. Nonetheless the GPA level shows that students are performing well in their academic course work. The Graduate school tracks quarterly GPA (3.00) and notifies those students and the Director if their grades dip below this requirement.</p>												
Entry to Fulltime Internship or Culminating Project	<p>Students must complete and pass all core courses before entering the culminating project course, AHE 588 Portfolio and Applied Research, which was made more rigorous (in both 2015 and in 2019). AHE has no formal internship. However students take a mandatory “Field Experience” AHE 592 course due to the noticeable pattern of younger students entering AHE with less career experience.</p>												
Completion	<p>AHE 588 is the culminating project for the AHE program and entails portfolio assessment and which fulfills the program’s Learning Outcomes and Learning Objectives. In 21/22, 12 students graduated after completing AHE588 which is very close to the previous year, (with 11 students graduating) and shows stability as well as persistence of AHE students. AHE students, on average, take 12 terms to complete the program due to many students using waivers and the fact that most students in AHE are employed while studying</p>												
Post Completion	<p>Employment data show that most AHE students are employed within the education sector while they are studying or they are working in fields related to their studies, and that they’re making on par with many WWU colleges and the same within Woodring</p>												

## Section 2: Use of Data for Improvements of Programs and/or Operations

**Admission:** The AHE Coordinator continues to collect and analyze “lifecycle” data on prospective students (from hearing about the program to the Information Sessions to applying and becoming admitted to AHE). An analysis of 21 applicants showed that 7 attended the Information sessions. Of those who attended the Info sessions, 5 heard about the program through word-of-mouth (from colleagues) which is low but because of the pandemic there was a dependence on online information. The “revenue” based students almost always rely first on the website for basic information about the program. The AHE Coordinator has continued this year to schedule two quarterly Information Sessions for the faculty, coordinator and GA, to meet and greet prospective students, helping also with information for career faire presentations. We have begun to eliminate the number of non-matriculated students in the program by vetting them from the beginning application stages, with the new internal policy (implemented Fall 2015), which is another way to ensure a capable and committed applicant and admission profile. In a number of cases where applicants’ GPAs are significantly below the Graduate School required level, but where the applicants show promise, we rely on the “provisional admit” status with the requirement that they receive passing grades.

**Retention:** The director was on sabbatical from January 2021- January 2022 with the interim director, Jackie Sennett able to maintain stability along with the then chair, John Korsmo. During this year there were no new activities except a retreat that occurred on the topic of career development that was hybrid. Guest speakers who were alumni of AHE talked about careers in an online venue which was followed by a social gathering at Samish Lodge (May 2022). A number of students came to the social, especially those who were graduating, along with their families. This retreat was planned by the director and the GA as well as a small group of AHE students who were in the director’s program planning course. There were only two newsletters that were published between January and June of that year due to the on-leave status of the director. Once back, the director focused on advising students during winter and spring quarters and talking to as many students as possible since she was gone for a year. It was at this time that the idea for the Saturday residentials came to be, and meetings were planned to discuss its efficacy and implementation with the graduate school. It was also at this time that Dr. Stan Goto, the only other tenured faculty in AHE, gave notice that he would retire from WWU (August 2022).

**Completion:** Students are required to articulate in both oral and written forms and in electronic and face-to-face formats the objectives of AHE in the capstone course, AHE 588, through graded discussions, presentations, and academic papers. All of the learning objectives for AHE are encapsulated in this culminating course, which demonstrates students’ comprehensive knowledge of the field of Adult & Higher Education. Students cannot graduate from the AHE program until they fulfill the requirements in this capstone course. Projects are evaluated by at least one faculty and sometimes two, if needed. Only TT faculty teach this course and the director changed the course additionally in the Fall of 2020 to make assignments more accessible, with options, and changes in timelines. Feedback from that course showed that these alternatives made it a successful experience for graduating students.

**Post-completion:** Most students are employed both during and after their tenure in AHE and take courses on a part-time basis. The Coordinator keeps updated contact information for alumni along with Career Services data, when it is available, to learn about the employment rates of AHE graduates. In addition, a quarterly program newsletter is sent to alumni and current students (prepared by the Graduate Assistant and director) that includes profiles of soon-to-be graduating students (which discuss their experiences and aspirations), posting of upcoming conferences as well as other important information.