

## OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT—METHODS AND RESULTS:

### DATA FROM SUMMER 2018, AND ANALYSIS THROUGHOUT 2018-19

#### A. Highlights of Recent History and Current Efforts in Assessing Effectiveness and Outcomes

For three of the previous four years, WISR has conducted extensive surveys of students and recent alumni, as well as of faculty and Board.

**The most recently completed survey, from 2018, has findings which are consistent with those, two previous years' studies, and because it is the most recently gathered and analyzed body of data, it will be the focus of this report.** The 2018 data is central to recent developments at WISR—curriculum improvements, the development of the current Strategic Plan, and other policies, practices and institutional self-study. In the meantime, we continue to engage in data gathering, self-study (evaluating institutional effectiveness in achieving our mission and our students achieving the expected learning outcomes) and self-improvement.

**We continue to engage in self-study, and we are beginning to gather data for our 2019 self-study.** As has been the case in previous years, we are surveying students, recent alumni, employers/coworkers/clients of students and alumni, faculty and Board, and we are asking students to submit evaluations of faculty.

**In addition, this year (summer 2019), we are adding:**

- 1) an interview study, conducted by members of WISR's Academic Advisory Committee—to get the perspective of outsiders on the learning, satisfaction, feedback from, and accomplishments of current WISR students and the most recent alumni. Further,
- 2) this year, faculty are conducting reviews of *each* student's progress (which they will do semi-annually going forward), as well as assessing a) the overall progress by students in achieving the expected learning outcomes, and b) the value of the various forms of evidence used to measure student progress.
- 3) Faculty and student evaluation of the use of technology at WISR.

**The purposes of this data gathering, and the resulting analyses have been to:**

- 1) **Assess our Outcomes--Gather information, *from several angles and different sources*, about WISR's effectiveness and impact.** Specifically, with regard to:
  - a) **VALUE: WISR's value to students, alumni and the community (including, but not limited to, work sites),**

- b) **QUALITIES:** the qualities found among WISR’s instructional and learning practices that create value,
- c) **MISSION EVIDENCE:** evidence of the extent to which (and ways in which) WISR is achieving its mission,
- d) **SATISFACTION:** the extent of student and alumni satisfaction with their learning experiences at WISR, and
- e) **ACHIEVEMENT:** i) student reports on WISR’s contributions to their work and/or community involvements, and ii) employer/coworker/client assessments of student and alumni effectiveness.
- f) **ASSESSING STUDENT PROGRESS THROUGH THE DEGREE PROGRAMS:** analyses of the percentage of students graduating “on time”, and the percentage graduating but over the maximum expected time for that degree, as well as the percentage of students dropping out—and analysis of the factors that impact student retention and progress.

**Using these data:** *This information is used to gauge the extent to which we are accomplishing our mission and the learning outcomes we aim to have our students accomplish.* Groups using this information include: the Faculty as a whole, WISR’s Board, the Faculty Executive Committee and the Administrative Executive Committee. In particular, this information was used to shape our current Strategic Plan, and to inform the Faculty Curriculum Committee that, in the past year, made substantive revisions and improvements to WISR’s curriculum, in particular as we moved to an online format.

- 2) **Improving our Effectiveness--Gathering information from all segments of the WISR learning community (students, faculty, Board and alumni) about the qualities that make WISR effective and about areas of needed improvement.** This information is shared with the various groups at WISR that have responsibility for evaluating and improving our policies and practices, and curriculum. They include: the faculty as a whole, the Board, the Faculty Executive Committee, the Administrative Executive Committee, and those faculty committees that convene for three months (per degree program) once every two years, to review and revise the curriculum in each of the degree program. The surveys mentioned in #1 are used for this purpose, as are the student evaluations of faculty teaching, and the End of Program evaluation essays submitted by each graduating student.

Note: Board and Faculty Data have already been analyzed, discussed and used in developing the Strategic Plan in 2018, and in curriculum review and revisions in 2018

Further, student evaluations of faculty from 2017 and 2018 were analyzed and discussed by WISR's Executive Committee, feedback given to faculty, and used by individual faculty and the curriculum committee in reviewing and further developing WISR's curriculum.

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## B. Data Collected for 2018 Outcomes Assessment

In summer 2018, we sent surveys to all students enrolled in the past year, and to alumni from the past 9 to 10 years.

As was the case in 2016, and as we will do annually from here on, including this summer of 2019, the annual survey of students and recent alumni addresses:

- Satisfaction
- Student ratings AND specific comments on WISR's contributions to learning, jobs/career, and/or community involvement.
- Actual evidence of student achievement (jobs help, community contributions, published writings, workshops and/or programs organized/developed, recognition from external groups (professional and community associations))

### 1. Survey of Students

Twenty-one (21) doctoral students received the survey. Thirteen (13) answered the survey.

Eight (8) of these 13 doctoral students who answered the survey are grandparented in the PhD degree program, of which six (6) graduated in the following year. Five (5) out of the total 13 doctoral students who answered the survey are in the EdD degree program. Two (2) doctoral students withdrew with no plans to re-enroll.

Eight (8) MFT students received the survey, and seven (7) MFT students answering the survey, with one of these students graduating in the following year.

One (1) out of these seven students is graduating in 2018. One (1) MFT student is in a non-degree program, taking courses to fulfill State licensure requirements.

Five (5) M.S. in Education and Community Leadership students received the survey, and four (4) answered the survey. Of the four responding, two (2) withdrew with no plans to re-enroll, and one is doing non-degree studies at the Master's level while completing a Bachelor's degree elsewhere.

One (1) B.S. in Community Leadership and Justice student received the survey, but did not answer the survey.

**Overall, 35 students received the survey, and 24 answered the survey for a 69% response rate!**

## 2. Survey of Recent Alumni

Twelve (12) PhD alumni received the survey. Ten (10) PhD alumni answered the survey. The PhD in Higher Education and Social Change is grandparented. Current doctoral students are in the Ed.D. in Higher Education and Social Change degree program.

Eleven (11) MFT alumni received the survey, including two (2) transferees who did not obtain their degrees at WISR, but completed their MFT coursework at WISR. Six (6) MFT alumni answered the survey. One (1) MFT alumna who completed the survey was a transferee from another institution who completed five courses at WISR (with the majority of her coursework completed at her previous institution).

Two (2) alumni in M.S. in Education and Community Leadership received the survey and answered it. One of two alumni who answered the survey received a M.S. in Social Sciences (grandparented) degree.

Two (2) alumni in B.S. in Psychology received the survey and answered it. The B.S. in Psychology is grandparented. Current B.S. students are in the B.S. in Community Leadership and Justice degree program.

**Overall, 27 alumni received the survey and 20 answered the survey for a 74% response rate!**

## C. Satisfaction

### C1. Student Satisfaction

From the tables below, we see that we assessed student satisfaction in relation to a) WISR's support of the student's personal learning goals, b) their professional and career goals, and c) support of student goals to contribute to their communities and the society.

**Only one student expressed dissatisfaction. Further, on all three questions, all but 3 to 5 students said their level of satisfaction, in each of the three areas, was quite high (6 on scale to 7) or very high (7 on scale to 7). And, at least 17 of the 24 responding said they were highly satisfied in each area (a "7").**

**Table 1(a): Student satisfaction in terms of WISR’s support of their personal learning goals and objectives.**

Category of Students	Doctoral Students	M.S. in Psychology (leading to MFT/LPCC) Students	M.S. in Education and Community Leadership Students	BS in Community Leadership and Justice Students	Non-Degree Students
1 = Very Low					
2 = Quite Low					
3 = Somewhat Low		1			
4 = Medium					
5= Somewhat High		1			1
6 = Quite High	2	1	1		
7 = Very High	13	4	2		

**Table 1(b): Student satisfaction in terms of WISR’s support of their professional and career goals and objectives.**

Category of Students	Doctoral Students	M.S. in Psychology (leading to MFT/LPCC) Students	M.S. in Education and Community Leadership Students	BS in Community Leadership and Justice Students	Non-Degree Students
1 = Very Low		1			
2 = Quite Low					
3 = Somewhat Low					
4 = Medium					
5= Somewhat High	2	1			1
6 = Quite High	1	1	1		
7 = Very High	12	4	2		

**Table 1(c): Student satisfaction in terms of WISR’s support of their goals and objectives for voluntary contributions to their communities and/or the larger society (if applicable).**

\*\*One doctoral student rated 5.5 on Question No. 1(c). This 5.5 rating is reflected in the chart as 5.

One MFT student did not answer Question No. 1(c).

Category of Students	Doctoral Students	M.S. in Psychology (leading to MFT/LPCC) Students	M.S. in Education and Community Leadership Students	BS in Community Leadership and Justice Students	Non-Degree Students
1 = Very Low					
2 = Quite Low					
3 = Somewhat Low					
4 = Medium					
5= Somewhat High	1**	1			1
6 = Quite High	4		1		
7 = Very High	10	5	2		

**Table 1(d): Student satisfaction in relation to their initial expectations when enrolling at WISR.**

Category of Students	Doctoral Students	M.S. in Psychology (leading to MFT/LPCC) Students	M.S. in Education and Community Leadership Students	BS in Community Leadership and Justice Students	Non-Degree Students
1 = Very Low		1			
2 = Quite Low					
3 = Somewhat Low					

4 = Medium	1	1	1		1
5= Somewhat High	2				
6 = Quite High	7	2			
7 = Very High	5	3	2		

**Table 1(e): Student rating of how high their expectations were when enrolling.**

Category of Students	Doctoral Students	M.S. in Psychology (leading to MFT/LPCC) Students	M.S. in Education and Community Leadership Students	BS in Community Leadership and Justice Students	Non-Degree Students
1 = Very Low					
2 = Quite Low					
3 = Somewhat Low					
4 = Medium	1	1			
5= Somewhat High	3		2		
6 = Quite High	3	3			1
7 = Very High	8	3	1		

## C2. Alumni Satisfaction

From the tables below, we see that we assessed alumni satisfaction in relation to a) WISR's support of the student's personal learning goals, b) their professional and career goals, and c) support of student goals to contribute to their communities and the society.

**None of the alumni expressed dissatisfaction. Further, on all three questions, all but 2 to 3 alumni said their level of satisfaction, in each of the three areas, was quite high (6 on scale to 7) or very high (7 on scale to 7). And, at least 13 of the 20 responding said they were highly satisfied in each area (a "7").**

**Table 1(a): Alumni satisfaction in terms of WISR’s support of their personal learning goals and objectives.**

Category of Students	Doctoral Alumni	M.S. in Psychology (leading to MFT/LPCC) Alumni	M.S. in Education and Community Leadership Alumni	BS in Psychology (grandparented) Alumni
1 = Very Low				
2 = Quite Low				
3 = Somewhat Low				
4 = Medium				
5= Somewhat High				
6 = Quite High	1	1	1	
7 = Very High	9	5	1	2

**Table 1(b): Alumni satisfaction in terms of WISR’s support of their professional and career goals and objectives.**

Category of Students	Doctoral Alumni	M.S. in Psychology (leading to MFT/LPCC) Alumni	M.S. in Education and Community Leadership Alumni	BS in Psychology (grandparented) Alumni
1 = Very Low				
2 = Quite Low				
3 = Somewhat Low				
4 = Medium				
5= Somewhat High	1			1
6 = Quite High	2	2	1	
7 = Very High	7	4	1	1

**Table 1(c): Alumni satisfaction in terms of WISR’s support of their goals and objectives for voluntary contributions to their communities and/or the larger society (if applicable).**

Category of Students	Doctoral Alumni	M.S. in Psychology (leading to MFT/LPCC) Alumni	M.S. in Education and Community Leadership Alumni	BS in Psychology (grandparented) Alumni
1 = Very Low				
2 = Quite Low				
3 = Somewhat Low				
4 = Medium		1		
5= Somewhat High	1		1	
6 = Quite High		1		
7 = Very High	9	4	1	2

**Table 1(d): Alumni satisfaction in relation to their initial expectations when enrolling at WISR.**

Category of Students	Doctoral Alumni	M.S. in Psychology (leading to MFT/LPCC) Alumni	M.S. in Education and Community Leadership Alumni	BS in Psychology (grandparented) Alumni
1 = Very Low				
2 = Quite Low				
3 = Somewhat Low				
4 = Medium				
5= Somewhat High	1		1	
6 = Quite High		1		
7 = Very High	9	5	1	2

**Table 1(e): Alumni rating of how high their expectations were when enrolling.**

One (1) MFT alumnus did not answer question 1(e).

Category of Students	Doctoral Alumni	M.S. in Psychology (leading to MFT/LPCC) Alumni	M.S. in Education and Community Leadership Alumni	BS in Psychology (grandparented) Alumni
1 = Very Low				
2 = Quite Low				
3 = Somewhat Low				
4 = Medium	3	2	1	
5= Somewhat High		1		
6 = Quite High	2			1
7 = Very High	5	2	1	1

### **C3. WISR's Contributions to Student and Alumni Professional Knowledge and Expertise, and to Their Community Involvements**

Five (5) students rated WISR's contributions to their professional expertise as medium to low, with 6 saying "somewhat high" and 14 saying "quite high" to "very high". Seventeen (17) of the 20 alumni responding rated WISR's contributions to their professional expertise as "very high", and the lowest rating was one "medium" rating from an MFT alumnus, who enrolled to achieve licensure, even though he had a PhD in Psychology and for many years, had been a professor of psychology.

It should be noted that some students enroll with community involvement goals being more important to them than developing professional expertise. All but two (2) students rated WISR's contributions to knowledge and creativity in community involvement as "quite high" to "very high."

**No. 6. Student rating on how much their experience at WISR contributed to their professional expertise and/or current job.**

One (1) doctoral student answered N/A on Question No. 6. This N/A rating is not reflected in the chart.

Category of Students	Doctoral Students	M.S. in Psychology (leading to MFT/LPCC) Students	M.S. in Education and Community Leadership Students	BS in Community Leadership and Justice Students	Non-Degree Students
1 = Very Low	1				
2 = Quite Low					
3 = Somewhat Low	1	1			
4 = Medium	2				
5= Somewhat High	3	2			1
6 = Quite High		1	1		
7 = Very High	7	3	2		

**No. 10(d) Student rating on WISR's value in contributing to their learning, knowledge, skills, motivation, effectiveness and/or creativity for each community involvement.**

One (1) doctoral student answered N/A on Question No. 10(d). This N/A rating is not reflected in the chart.

Two (2) doctoral students did not answer Question No. 10(d).

One MFT student did not answer Question 10(d). One MFT student answered N/A on Question 10(d). This N/A rating is not reflected in the chart.

One M.S. in Education and Community Leadership student did not answer Question No. 10(d).

Category of Students	Doctoral Students	M.S. in Psychology (leading to MFT/LPCC) Students	M.S. in Education and Community Leadership Students	BS in Community Leadership and Justice Students	Non-Degree Students
1 = Very Low	1				
2 = Quite Low					
3 = Somewhat Low					
4 = Medium					
5= Somewhat High					1
6 = Quite High	2	1	1		
7 = Very High	9	4	1		

**No. 6. Alumni rating of how much their experience at WISR contributed to their professional expertise and/or current job skills?**

\*One (1) PhD alumnus rated 6.5 on Question No. 6. This 6.5 rating is reflected in the chart as 6.

Category of Students	Doctoral Alumni	M.S. in Psychology (leading to MFT/LPCC) Alumni	M.S. in Education and Community Leadership Alumni	BS in Psychology (grandparented) Alumni
1 = Very Low				
2 = Quite Low				
3 = Somewhat Low				
4 = Medium		1		
5= Somewhat High	2			
6 = Quite High	2*	1	1	
7 = Very High	6	4	1	2

## D. Student Achievement

### D1. MFT and LPCC Exam Results

Of the six recent MFT alumni who answered the survey, two passed both exams for the MFT license, two passed the Law and Ethics portion of the MFT licensing exam (the first of the two exams), and two have not taken the exams. One MFT alumna is seeking a LPCC license, as opposed to the MFT license.

### D2. Employer/Coworker/Client Satisfaction with Alumni Performance

We received evaluations on 11 of the 20 alumni—on 2 BS, 1 MS, 3 MFT and 5 Doctoral alumni-- from 6 supervisors, 11 coworkers and 2 clients. The ratings were very high.

Specifically:

- 17 said they were “very satisfied” (7 on a scale of 1 to 7) with the alumni performance, and 2 said they were “quite satisfied” (6)

- Not surprisingly, more specific ratings were similar for their assessment of alumni in the 4 areas of a) leadership expertise and skills, b) communication skills, c) human relations and multicultural awareness, and d) skills and knowledge “up to date”—in these areas there were 71 ratings of “7” and 5 ratings of “6”.

**Fifteen (15) rated WISR’s contribution to the alumni’s expertise, skill and performance as “very valuable” (7 on a scale of 1 to 7), two said “quite valuable” (a “6”), one said “somewhat valuable” (a “5”), and one didn’t know.**

**Here are some of the comments made about our alumni:**

- He is an exceptional team member and leader
- I really like the way he communicates with all of his peers. When people escalate conversations, he maintains his manner peacefully and respectfully.
- She is very thorough and conscientious of her impact on clients, as well as protecting herself as a professional.
- I was very impressed by her knowledge base, especially about working with highly sensitive children, and children with ADHD, etc. From what I heard, she could individualize her program (at WISR) as well. She is very empathetic, client-centered and culturally sensitive as well.”
- I am impressed with her (added) expertise in mindfulness and movement.
- (Of special value is her) attention to issues of cultural diversity and inclusion and to social justice, in addition to clinical skills.”
- We have contracted with \_\_\_\_\_ for parent and staff workshops. He is engaging, funny, yet can make a serious point. He communicates clearly and in a timely manner. He is able to convey complex information in a humorous, yet empathetic manner to small workshops as well as large groups.”

### **D3. Employer/Coworker/Client Satisfaction with Student Performance**

**Perhaps not surprising we received evaluations on only 6 of the 24 current --on 1 MS, 3 MFT and 2 Doctoral students-- from 2 supervisors, 10 coworkers and 1 client. The ratings were very high.** Specifically:

- All 13 said they were “very satisfied” (7 on a scale of 1 to 7) with the students’ performance.
- More specific ratings were identical for their assessment of alumni in the 4 areas of a) leadership expertise and skills, b) communication skills, c) human relations and multicultural awareness, and d) skills and knowledge “up to date”—in these areas, all were rated “very high” (7).

Eight (8) rated WISR's contribution to the alumni's expertise, skill and performance as "very valuable" (7 on a scale of 1 to 7), three (3) said "somewhat valuable" (a "5"), and three (3) didn't know.

#### **D4. Alumni Comments about Accomplishments and their Involvements/Work**

**All alumni reported doing work in their chosen field, and being satisfied. Here's what they told us about their current work and community involvements:**

- Juvenile Corrections officer, who also serves on a non-profit board.
- Behavioral therapist, pursuing MFT studies at WISR after completing her Bachelor's at WISR.
- Employed as an MFT intern.
- MS alum, who is doing community work on prison education, and is now a co-owner of a restaurant, in the process of franchising 5 restaurants, and pursuing doctoral studies at WISR in adult education and prison education. (He enrolled at WISR less than a year after being incarcerated for his whole adult life, for 20 years, and completed his Master's at WISR in less than two years.)
- Licensed MFT, self-employed doing clinical work, and employed at a non-profit as a school-based therapist. Also volunteers for local schools, UCLA alumni association, and girl scouts.
- Has passed first MFT licensing exam and is employed as a program manager in the field of counseling at a local community college. He has become well known locally in the field of working with foster youth.
- Employed in private practice as an MFT intern, and has passed the first of two exams for licensure as an MFT. (A year since responding to this survey, she passed the second exam, and is now licensed.)
- Employed as Program Manager EOPS/CARE/CalWorks at College of Alameda , and in this role, he supports undeserved and underrepresented students in California community colleges in that district. He also has passed his first MFT exam and will be taking the second exam.
- Licensed MFT, employed as clinical consultant at Community Health for Asian Americans in Alameda, CA and clinical therapist with elders at an assisted living facility.
- Employed as an MFT intern, and involved in the community leading a non-profit, "Economic Democracy for America."
- (Non-degree, MFT student who took five courses to obtain licensure based on a previous Master's degree). Employed as a Board Certified Behavioral Analyst.

- Licensed MFT in private practice, consultant, author, and serves on the Board of the local chapter of the California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists.
- Employed by Campbell County, Wyoming—developing and sustaining a group day treatment program for high risk children and their families. He also works in the community developing and sustaining a hunter-donated meat program to community food banks and families in need.
- Self-employed doing administrative work, including part-time at the Ecumenical Peace Institute
- Employed as an educational consultant, after working for several years as a faculty member in Chinese universities.
- Instructor at College of Marin—courses on mindfulness-based self-compassion and self-empowerment. Author, consultant and workshop presenter on the use and value of mindfulness training for people with chronic and/or life threatening illnesses.
- Self-employed English language tutor.
- Director of the Omaha Tribal Historical Research Project (OTHRP) and colleague, another WISR alum, Associate Director of OTHRP. Working to preserve, and transmit to younger generations, the culture of the Omaha people. Their collaborative WISR dissertation on Omaha history was acknowledged as containing the key evidence that won a case before the United States Supreme Court, a couple of years ago, on a matter regarding an issue pertaining to the sovereignty of the Omaha people.
- Dean, Faculty of Science and Technical Education & Head, Department of Technical and Vocational Education, Islamic University of Technology (IUT), Dhaka, Bangladesh. Also, presently managing and leading an international research project on “Skills Development in OIC (Organisation of Islamic Countries) Member Countries—on Vocational Education.
- Professor of Law, Suffolk University, Boston. Founder of the New Workplace Institute, dedicated to addressing the challenges of workplace bullying.

## **D5. Some Detailed, Illustrative Stories of Recent Alumni/Student Accomplishments.**

**Here are a few, recent stories [this information and these testimonials have been approved by the WISR students/alumni involved]:**

- A couple years ago, WISR Master’s student, Gabriela Hofmeyer, was awarded a NADC/California Arts Council Grant for Disabled Artists for her proposed Community Outreach Expressive Arts & Trauma Awareness and Recovery Projects. The statewide award is to support Community Outreach Projects and Awareness Programs by Disabled

Artists in California, sponsored by the National Arts and Disability Center, the California Arts Council and the Semel Institute, UCLA.

- About a year ago, as part of her WISR doctoral course work, Karen Young recently completed an evaluation of a project funded by a \$10,000 mini grant by LifeLong Medical Care and the City of Berkeley to implement a health education and awareness project. The goal of this project, called “Water Wise” was to decrease the consumption of sugar sweetened beverages and increase the consumption of water. The Water Wise awareness competition was an internet competition where individuals and groups age 16 to 24, were able to express the benefits of drinking water and the harmful effects of drinking sugar sweetened soft drinks in a 3 minute video. The Water Wise videos were much like infomercials disseminating a diverse but consistent message regarding healthy hydration. Each contestant was competing for cash awards to get the most online views of their health education awareness video. During the course of the project, there were a total of 3,706 unduplicated video views or votes. A total of twenty (20) videos were uploaded on the Water Wise Website, <https://waterwiseics4.wixsite.com/mysite> Beyond this project, alone, Karen’s research suggests that “When a community is not consulted about messaging, the messages may not be received openly or not at all. When the gate keepers or the experts do not consult the appropriate leadership, they may not have the power to convince a community about what is relevant, important or necessary.”
- Recently, WISR doctoral alumnus, William Heinike received significant recognition for his work in, and beyond, the state of Wyoming. In his WISR dissertation (from about 8 years ago), Bill developed a model for multidisciplinary professional teams concerned with the prevention and treatment of child abuse. . . . Bill said this in letter to WISR stating that we could publish the following testimonial: “Giving you a bit of an update with some surprises coming totally unexpectedly. I was the recipient of three awards. One was a Health Care Provider of the Year given by the Campbell County Health Care Foundation. The second was the Legend Award by my employer, Campbell County Memorial Hospital. The third was one of ‘Ten Who Made a Difference’ award by the Gillette News Record. Enclosed are copies. The work/research I did at WISR was a major contribution to helping with children. The treatment manual I did at WISR I presented at a conference—for early interventions with children. I learned six months later—I gave the manual at the conference (and) they were used to start programs in New Zealand and Ohio. My WISR experience is one I continue to rely upon as a strong source of strength and continued worth in the field.”
- Pete Nielsen, WISR MFT alumnus who graduated a couple years ago is CEO of the California Consortium of Addictions Programs and Professionals.

**E. Improving WISR through Outcomes Assessment:  
Details about Student and Alumni Satisfaction and Achievement-  
-what's of value, what needs improvement, and deeper insights  
and questions**

**E1. How well is WISR achieving its Mission?**

**Student Rating on WISR's success in fulfilling its mission.**

Two doctoral students did not answer Question No. 13.

Category of Students	Doctoral Students	M.S. in Psychology (leading to MFT/LPCC) Students	M.S. in Education and Community Leadership Students	BS in Community Leadership and Justice Students	Non-Degree Students
1 = Very Low					
2 = Quite Low					
3 = Somewhat Low					
4 = Medium					
5= Somewhat High		1			1
6 = Quite High	6	3	1		
7 = Very High	7	3	2		

**[Unfortunately, the questions about how well WISR is achieving its mission was mistakenly left off the questionnaire to alumni last year. ]**

**Students gave the following, as examples of evidence that show that WISR is achieving its mission:**

- The support of the community and willingness to help students above and beyond what is required. WISR has been a huge contribution in my career and I am grateful for it.
- People are very loyal to WISR.

- WISR has produced some very accomplished and distinguished alumni.
- The majority of WISR alumni are very satisfied with their education at WISR.
- There is a cultural of caring and curiosity that is central to WISR.
- WISR has been committed to serving the community through one on one education. They've achieved this goal and it's been an amazing journey to learn about this (my) field.
- The evidence is in my writing and my business. WISR is invaluable in its contributions to learners and to society as a whole. It creates and supports learners to be activists and to care about the world we live in.

**Other strong evidence of how well WISR is achieving its mission is found throughout this document—not only in the highly positive statistics about student satisfaction and employer/coworker satisfaction with students and alumni, but also in the specific and detailed stories of alumni and student accomplishments and success, both professional and community-based work.** [See Section D4 above and E2 below.]

*The quantitative data and the stories provide tangible evidence that our students are successfully achieving learning outcomes that make their lives better, and that also contribute to improving the lives of others!*

## **E2. What's of Special Value? How Did WISR Contribute to Their Success?**

**In discussing what's of special value about their WISR education, students and alumni, alike frequently mentioned the following:**

- The quality of the faculty and the accessibility of, and attention from, the faculty—faculty support and mentorship. (One alum said “The people WISR hires seem to have something special about them. The people they have are always great.”)
- WISR's flexibility and their ability to personalize a lot of their studies.
- WISR's emphasis on action-research helps them to learn practical skills of program development and evaluation, and to expand their perspectives and thinking about problems.
- WISR helps students to critically think and be “out of the box” (e.g., “I have improved on critical thinking. I used to take things at face value. These days, when I read a book or watch a documentary, I can see through some discrepancies, question the validity of the data presented, and play devils advocate to balance the opinions presented.”)
- The emphasis on multiculturalism, inclusivity and social justice
- The encouragement for students to write in their own voice, to be more self-confident, and to be active participants in directing their learning.
- The WISR learning community itself, and the feeling of community (e.g., “WISR is a very supportive community of scholars, engaged activists, and concerned citizens. It's an

invaluable resource for those seeking guidance in fulfilling their goals, whether as enrolled students pursuing degrees, or as volunteers pursuing opportunities for social action.”)

**The following comments illustrate ways in which WISR has made a difference to alumni and students—in what they are able to do and accomplish:**

- (Because of WISR) I have developed instructional manuals and improved documentation. I also have a critical view on how to improve organizations.”
- While working for Enlace Comunitario I implemented a community-based mentorship program. It involved using skills I learned at WISR. . . . also helped (me) rewrite policy on discipline (for the State).
- (Based on my learning at WISR), I have continued to develop my knowledge, (now) working with young children and running two therapy programs.
- (A man who until he enrolled at WISR had been incarcerated for 20 years said . . .) WISR helped me to make connections with people to succeed. (It contributed to my overall education to) my “emotional intelligence.”
- My degree was essential and directly related to transitioning to the field of mental health. In addition at WISR I was able to direct my study to develop a ‘mini-expertise’ in my particular area of interest around children and anxiety that I leveraged in my current career path and positions. Finally, my private practice work was initiated and developed through mentoring and networking connections made at WISR.
- My training from WISR in psychology and social justice and my interactions with faculty and mentors has completely transformed my effectiveness around community involvement. The most notable change is that WISR helped me identify and connect up with my personal equity and unique perspective that helps me know how important my individual contribution can be.
- WISR taught me to think more freely and find out the answers on my own. I’ve learned to take charge of my own professional development.
- (WISR’s) strong support in community engagement and a “think out of the box” philosophy helped me with my community engagement and contribution.
- Without WISR I wouldn’t be at an agency where I have a paid internship.
- WISR is helping me in many areas of my life in my career and life development. . . . WISR helps me to look at social change, and my contribution and think more deeply about inequalities . . . I have expanded more into writing and teaching as a result of WISR. I have gained confidence to reopen my therapy practice.
- Since my enrollment at WISR with the faculty’s guidance I have taken my basic understandings of student-centered learning and “unpacked” it in true democratic strategies and vernacular, where my 4<sup>th</sup> graders [this students is a long-time classroom

public school teacher] are empowered to express and actively participate in their learning. WISR introduced me to the processes of Participatory Action-Research which inspired and motivated me to get community active, and I in turn am passing this on to my students.

### **E3. Needed Improvements**

Students and alumni gave some valuable suggestions for improvements, many of which have already been pursued at WISR, just one year later—often as part of our Strategic Plan and sometimes already in the implementation stage.

- Better access to journals [Note: WISR's use of LIRN, ScribD, and professional association access and open access resources since this alum was at WISR].
- More streamlined syllabi [Note: taken into account in the new online platform and consistent formatting across courses]
- Could benefit from a large grant, and other fund-raising from outsiders.
- More online courses [Note: all will be online by September 2019].
- Need to put more money and labor into advertising, marketing and outreach [Note: this has been a significant initiative and set of actions in the past 10 months.]
- Could perhaps partner with some agencies or groups
- Could enroll more students in need, with financial issues, if we could get money to help them.
- Could benefit from more students, and more structure for those who need it—I can see that we're now doing a lot to work on this.
- Need to improve graduation rate [Note: in the past year, this has been a point of emphasis with faculty, staff and Board—to cut down on the number of people who progress too slowly, and do so without being insensitive to their life challenges which require that they also move at their own pace.]
- Need to help students to become more comfortable with technology and be more digitally fluent.
- Easier use of technology to access seminars later (if missing a seminar). [Note: This has since been addressed.]
- Clearer process for students just enrolling [Note: this was addressed soon after this student first enrolled—with an introductory/orientation course that has helped a lot.]
- Reminders from faculty about graduation progress [Note: effective, 2019 faculty conduct a semi-annual review of each students progress, in addition to the regular meetings with faculty where faculty are now learning to monitor overall progress more closely.]

- More collaborative opportunities [Note: working on creating more options for this, for students.]
- Could benefit from a physical space that allows for many break-out groups.

#### **E4. Further Insights and Concluding Remarks about Achievement and Satisfaction, and New Initiatives and Further Data Gathering and Discussion/Analysis**

##### **Deeper Insights through examining the “anomalies”—the “exceptions to the rule”**

At WISR we instruct students that it is always important to look at data that constitute what seem to be “exceptions to the rule”—doing this can provide deeper insights and/or fruitful questions for further inquiry.

Here are three examples from this survey.

*The only student or alum to express dissatisfaction with WISR* rated WISR as only “1” (very dissatisfied) with regard to WISR’s support of their professional and career goals. Yet, they rated WISR as a “7” (very high) in contributing to their current job skills. Further, they rated WISR a “7” (very satisfied) with regard to community contributions and a “5” (somewhat satisfied) with regard to their personal learning and goals. They rated WISR a “5” in fulfilling our mission (somewhat effective). They valued WISR’s emphasis in writing in one’s own voice and on action-research. They emphasized that they benefitted from learning how to have “unconditional positive regard” for others and from learning how to reframe things psychologically. However, they felt that the contact with faculty was not as consistent as it should be, and this was a major reason for their dissatisfaction. This student was the only graduate in their particular degree program in the past 20 years (or more) to take longer than the maximum expected time to finish. It seems that this student was dissatisfied with, and likely not well-served (in their particular case) by the two faculty with whom they worked most regularly. Other faculty would quite likely have served them better, or at least facilitation and intervention by other faculty might have helped. Although WISR has a policy and stated practices to students that they can change advisors, sometimes inertia can be very powerful, or other, not easily identified intangible factors. One potential lesson from this particular story is that it is fortunate that we have implemented a new policy of having several faculty on the Executive Committee review each student’s progress every six months, and if a student is not making timely progress, other faculty in addition to the student’s main faculty advisor(s) will meet with the student to see what can be done to help improve progress.

*About six months after this survey, a student who gave WISR all “7’s” on high satisfaction dropped out. On the survey, the student expressed detailed appreciation of the one-on-one support by faculty, on the “collective discourse” and on the learner-centered approach. The*

*student said that WISR helped to develop their confidence and critical thinking, and gave them inspiration through greater visibility in their field of emphasis. Specifically, the student said: “WISR and its faculty are deeply committed to attract and support students at the interface between a desire for self-directed learning and research, and the desire to support and broaden one’s knowledge base.”* The student’s primary stated reason for dropping out (although they might possibly re-enroll) is that they found it difficult to not have all of their interactions not face to face. They live outside the Bay Area, and despite a three-day visit for WISR’s annual conference, they did all of their interactions by video conference. This is a reminder that despite the many advantages of distance learning, we need to continue to enable students who are accustomed to, and very much desirous of, face to face interaction—to find ways to make the distance learning experience better. And, it’s possible that this option just doesn’t work for some.

*Finally, another student who dropped out a few months after completing this survey, also rated WISR a “7” (very high) in all areas of satisfaction. The student expressed appreciation of the relevance of WISR studies to their life and work, the flexibility, “the small and inclusive environment and the enlightened professors.” They added that as a school teacher, WISR has helped them to “reintegrate family literacy and family events at school” and helped them with efforts to develop an environmental science curriculum. They went on to say that the strongest evidence of WISR’s success in fulfilling its mission is “to allow students to study what is relevant to their personal life, job or community, and to feel empowered to participate in their community.”* This student likely dropped out due to the combination of financial challenges and time-consuming family responsibilities. This story is a reminder that even when the learning process proceeds extremely well, the larger context of the student’s life commitments and responsibilities often may not cooperate.

### **New, Added Initiatives (2018-2019) to Further Improve the Assessment of Outcomes:**

As part of WISR’s current Strategic Plan, we are gathering additional data in 2019, and the process of analyzing and discussing the data will be guided and facilitated by the Faculty Executive Committee and the Administrative Executive Committee. The data themselves, as well as analyses and insights from the data—formulated by the two Executive Committees—are being shared with all faculty and with the Board, and also by actively inviting interested students and alumni to participate in these discussions.

#### **New, additional data gathering includes:**

- Student and Faculty evaluations on improving the use of technology at WISR.
- Semi-Annual Evaluations of Students by faculty (individually and by two faculty in case of those students who may not be making optimal progress)

OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT—METHODS AND RESULTS:  
DATA FROM SUMMER 2018, AND ANALYSIS THROUGHOUT 2018-19

- Advisory Committee interviews of recent alumni and current/recent students who have completed more than one course—to obtain the feedback and insights of expert outsiders—on how well students are achieving the learning outcomes, and on WISR’s strengths and areas of needed improvement.
- Faculty Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes, based on evidence and measures of student progress. This is a semi-annual assessment that we are asking faculty to make on the extent to which students are progressing. Faculty are asked to evaluate the usefulness of the various forms of evidence of learning that is found in student portfolios, to assess student learning progress in relation to outcomes.

### **Processes to Analyze, Discuss and Use the Data:**

These data are written up by the CEO, with help from the Chief Administrative Officer, and Chief Academic Officer, and other members of the Faculty Executive Committee—and shared and discussed in many of the monthly faculty and Faculty Executive Committee meetings. These findings are also shared with the Board and discussed. There are regular discussions with Board members outside of meetings—for example, the Vice Chair of the Board who serves on the Board Academics Committee confers monthly with the CEO about such matters.

The information discussed and the insights developed are used in the following ways:

- 1) As information for faculty, to help individual faculty fine-tune their instructional methods (in faculty meetings such matters are discussed, and contribute to faculty development)
- 2) Shared with the faculty as a whole, and with curriculum committees particular, as part of curriculum design and review. For example, in 2018, such information was shared with the curriculum committee, and used to re-design the course structure for the online courses—providing students with more clearly delineated modules and assignments, as well as a personalized action-research lab project—to provide students with more clearly defined benchmarks for completing assignments throughout a course (more structure) while still preserving personalized learning. Also, readings and types of readings that had been shown to be most valuable over the years were included in more pointedly articulated lists of required and recommended readings.
- 3) Beginning in 2019, three months are being set aside on four different occasions throughout a two-year period, to re-evaluate and refine the courses and requirements in each of the four degree programs. So this is another context for sharing these analyses and insights).
- 4) The information also is used in Board, faculty, Faculty Executive Committee and Administrative Executive Committee meetings, and in Board and Strategic Plan Committee meetings—to re-evaluate and update the Strategic Plan, based on what we learn about institutional effectiveness and areas of needed improvement. [Recently, for example, changes in admissions policies and instituting six month reviews of student progress are designed to

improve our effectiveness to enable most of our students to make consistent and timely progress toward degree completion, or alternatively choose a more relaxed pace, non-degree option until and/or unless they decide they wish to take on the more demanding pace of a degree program.]

## **SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS**

We continue to identify ways to improve our distinctive approach to learning, with a strong and successful emphasis on personalizing learning and on preparing our students to make valuable impacts on others—through professional and/or community leadership. In particular, we want to diligently strive to continue to succeed in the critical, distinctive areas of our learning outcomes, which have been shaped by our mission and goals: uses of action-research, multicultural awareness, concerns with social justice and/or environmental sustainability, and through competent, and often, writing and creative action/practice in each student’s area(s) of specialization.

We continue to gather evidence to make sure not only that there is a high degree of student satisfaction with WISR, and engagement in learning at WISR, but also that evaluates students’ (and alumni) successes being accomplished and in making contributions as noted above.

Our target student population chooses WISR because they often feel that their needs cannot be met by other institutions—our tuition is very affordable (and yet, still some do not finish because despite their hopes that they could manage the \$7,500/year they are not able to do so). WISR’s schedule and online learning provides great flexibility, so that they can continue their current work and live up to their family responsibilities (and still, the unexpected does happen, divorce, domestic violence, the unanticipated birth of a new child, a loved one encounters health difficulties and must be cared for). Very importantly, WISR honors, respects, and pointedly nurtures and supports each student’s personal learning interests and goals.

Our outcomes data suggest that we do a very solid job of responding to the challenging needs of our target student population, and at the same time, we are putting forth great thought and effort on how we can do better still, especially with those students who struggle to complete their degree programs in a timely fashion.

## **F. Assessing Student Progress Through the Programs**

In accordance with DEAC requirements, we have gathered data on the completion rates for our students, and **due to our very small size, we gathered and analyzed data for students starting in all of our programs from 2009 to 2015**. We did not look at more recent start dates, since our degree programs have maximum target periods of duration of 4 years for MS in Education and Community Leadership and 6 years for all the other three degree programs. The quantitative data by degree program are presented by degree program (below). **Furthermore, because of our small size and personalized approach to working**

with students, we have detailed and accurate qualitative information on why each of the non-completing students failed to do so.

- We begin with a description of the reasons why *each* of the 20 students (out of 47) withdrew prior to completing their studies.
- Then, we discuss the implications of these findings:
  - a) in the context of what we know about the nature of WISR’s student population, WISR’s programs and tuition,
  - b) extensive, well-documented findings about student satisfaction and achievements, and
  - c) the implications for making improvements in student progress, outcomes and retention at WISR.

### **The summary, qualitative data for each student**

**\*\*Means the student was NOT making good progress at the time of withdrawal, and would likely have taken longer than the maximum benchmark time to complete the program.**

**\*\*\*Means the student was not making good academic progress, AND in addition, their reasons for withdrawing were at least partly related to academic issues.**

**Six (6) of the 20 students who withdrew, 4 of the 6 for life circumstance reasons/crises, were not making good academic progress, and with WISR’s new practice and policy of doing 6 month reviews of each student’s progress, would likely have been identified as students in need of special attention and a six-month plan to demonstrate ability to make progress. Fourteen (14) of the 20 were either making good progress, or in very early stages of their studies and showing promise for making good progress. We believe it is meaningful to count 6 of the 20 of students as failing to meet benchmark standards, and appropriate and meaningful to exclude the other 14 from our statistical analyses.**

[These data are verified by communications in emails from these students, but no details are being shared to protect the anonymity of the students.]

Two students who were enrolled for two months, had multiple life complications, and then felt they were too old to pursue a Bachelor’s degree.

A very satisfied student, enrolled for 6 months, and had to take on a number of “personal issues.”

Satisfied student runs into financial difficulties after only two months.

One student puts her career change on hold to focus on assuming major administrative role at WISR.

\*\*\*One student withdrew after 26 months, due to continuing difficulty writing papers for WISR assignments.

One student withdrew after 26 months, due to change in goals and priorities at work.

A satisfied MFT student decides not to pursue this career track.

The following 12 doctoral students withdrew:

One student was enrolled for 10 months, and like a number of others who withdrew, and then did not re-enroll, finances are the main factor, despite her initial hopes that that would improve.

\*\*\*One student was just too busy with their work schedule—which was probably about 60 hours per week. Finally, she withdrew. Despite faculty conversations with her about how to scale back her work schedule, and despite completing some coursework, she was never able to devote a lot of time to her WISR studies. *Our new policy and regular practice of reviewing each student's progress every 6 months is a promising new approach we have adopted, based on the difficulties a few students, like this one have.* Some students are not easily able to develop and stick with a study plan that will allow them to make consistent progress. The Faculty Executive Committee now reviews each student's progress semi-annually, and those students who are identified as having difficulties making consistent progress meet with at least two faculty—to come up with a structured plan for the next six months. Students are given support from faculty to help increase the likelihood that they can follow the plan and begin to get on track, making good progress. If not, the student is required to take a 6 month leave, during which time they can stay in touch, and if they wish, apply for re-admission if faculty believe there is some chance of success.

\*\*One student had a number of major life changes in a very short period of a few months, and it was just too much to handle while pursuing a doctorate.

\*\*After nine months, one student withdrew in the midst of a family crisis (in a close-knit extended family) precipitated by a parent's passing away along with heightened financial difficulties.

\*\*After being enrolled off and on for a total of about three years over the course of six years, this student withdrew. This student enrolled in her late 70s, and although she did not have major health problems when enrolling, she soon experienced a series of major health problems, which resulted in several leaves of absence, and slow academic progress.

Another student withdrew from the doctoral program after only 7 months for financial reasons.

A licensed therapist, who wanted to use WISR doctoral studies to support further creative work in the field withdrew after only three months, because he realized that they didn't have a clear enough sense of direction nor the funds.

Another student was enrolled for just seven months in the doctoral program and was making exceptionally outstanding progress with his WISR studies, when very suddenly, they and their spouse divorced, and resulted in family crisis and a financial crisis which forced him to permanently withdraw.

One doctoral student had earned the Master's toward the State MFT license from WISR, and had very much enjoyed her studies and learning at WISR. Initially, they thought they would receive financial support from a family member to continue at WISR, pursuing their doctorate. However, after only two months, they learned that they would not be able to assist, so they withdrew.

One student withdrew after 8 months, due to a parent's terminal illness. However, unlike the vast majority of WISR students who withdrew because of finances and various family and life crises, it is unlikely that this student would have made good progress in their studies. Consequently, we are not counting this student as "exempt" or "excluded" from the benchmark percentages, but rather as a student who failed to complete, because it is unlikely that she would have made good progress in the subsequent months. We did not encourage them to re-enroll, nor did they ask to do so.

One satisfied student withdrew after only three months because of a major change in their life plan—personal, health, family, professional demands, including those of their spouse). IS was only enrolled for 3 months.

Yet another doctoral student withdrew, after 10 months, for financial reasons impacted by several, concurrently occurring factors.

Another very satisfied student withdrew after a year, for financial reasons, precipitated in part by a health emergency.

**The following several students took longer than the maximum expected time for their degrees.**

**\*One doctoral alum did outstanding work, and immediately had her dissertation published as a book, but took 8 years.**

**\*\*Another doctoral student is currently doing excellent work and making good progress, but will likely take 8 years.**

**\*\*\*One Master's student has done outstanding work, but took almost 5 years to finish his studies, during which time he and his wife had two children. [see table below].**

**Despite their successful achievements and outcomes, we are still counting them as not meeting the benchmark standards for statistical purposes, here (in the table below):**

\*\*\*\*Also, We are excluding from the enrollment numbers here, the MFT student who began his studies in June 2014, and who is making good progress, currently finishing one last course and beginning his Master's thesis, and projected to finish his studies by February 2020— about 5 months less than the six year maximum timetable for completion.

### COMPUTATION OF WISR COMPLETION RATES FOR EACH DEGREE PROGRAM

Category of Students:	Doctoral Students	M.S. in Psychology (leading to MFT/LPCC) Students	M.S. in Education and Community Leadership Students	BS in Community Leadership and Justice Students	Non-Degree Students— taking one or several courses
# Enrolling	22	9	5	5	5
# Withdrawing	12	3	2	3	0
# Excluded—making progress but withdraw due to life crises or change in goals, not academically related	7	2	2	3	0
Effective # Enrolling: # enrolling minus # excluded	15	7	3	2	0
# withdrawing at least partly for academic reasons or doing so while not making good progress	5	1	0	0	0
# taking too long	2*	0	1**	0	0
% completion rate	8/15 = 53%	6/7 = 86%	2/3 = 67%	2/2 = 100%	5/5 = 100%

## **SOME INSIGHTS FROM WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED ABOUT OUR STUDENTS AND OUR DROPOUTS**

WISR's target populations consists of mature adults, most of whom have modest financial means. They are attracted to WISR by the combination of our mission and values (learner-centered education, multiculturalism, action-inquiry and social justice), along with WISR's flexibility and highly affordable tuition (\$7,500/year).

**Consequently, the vast majority of our students are very much “at risk” for not completing their degrees.** They typically enroll at WISR with little margin for error. WISR does not now, nor do we plan to participate in Federal Aid programs, so we will continue to attract students who have “little margin for error, financially.” Our students, like many in today's society, are just one misfortune away from financial disaster and emotional crisis—the loss of a job, an illness or significant health problem (for themselves or a loved one), a divorce, or a mental health crisis experienced by a family member—any one of these can precipitate a crisis for our students.

**Furthermore, the vast majority of students who withdraw, express great satisfaction with WISR, and only occasionally withdraw because they are having academic difficulties.** On the survey of recent students last summer, two students who withdrew from WISR said these things:

- First, this student who gave WISR all “7's” on high satisfaction dropped out, and they expressed detailed appreciation of the one-on-one support by faculty, on the “collective discourse” and on the learner-centered approach. The student said that WISR helped to develop their confidence and critical thinking, and gave them inspiration through greater visibility in their field of emphasis. Specifically, the student said: “WISR and its faculty are deeply committed to attract and support students at the interface between a desire for self-directed learning and research, and the desire to support and broaden one's knowledge base.”
- Another student who withdrew in the past year rated WISR a “7” (very high) in all areas of satisfaction. The student expressed appreciation of the relevance of WISR studies to their life and work, the flexibility, “the small and inclusive environment and the enlightened professors.” They added that as a school teacher, WISR has helped them to “reintegrate family literacy and family events at school” and helped them with efforts to develop an environmental science curriculum.

**A number of students withdraw because their life goals, career plans or life priorities change.** WISR's emphasis on self-directed learning and critical inquiry encourages students to examine and re-examine their goals, even if this sometimes means that they come to the conclusion that achieving an academic degree at WISR is not as important as they first thought it might be.

**Related to this, WISR’s degree programs attract many students who are motivated more by needs to seek self-actualization than to successfully qualify for a particular career.** Very often, these students are motivated to develop workshops and new programs, to write articles as part of their professional work, to set up a “side business” (e.g., as a life coach), or in some cases, to explore various options and ways to express themselves more creatively and to have a greater impact on their communities and/or the larger society. In other words, many of the students in our degree programs (especially the three degree programs other than the MFT program) don’t “need” a degree for financial reasons, they “want” to pursue a degree to add something important in their life. **This motivation to use the pursuit of an academic degree at WISR for “self-actualizing” purposes and to contribute to the community and others can be more easily “de-railed” by a personal or financial crisis. This worthy motivation puts many of our students at greater risk for failing to complete our degrees.**

**This insight, based in evidence from our outcomes assessment and data on student program completion, has led to a recent policy change at WISR**—designed to continue to provide educational access for this group of students, but to do so in ways that will put WISR, and DEAC, less at risk for “low completion rates.” Consequently, our admissions policy now includes the following considerations as stated on our website and in our catalog:

“At WISR, we wish for students to proceed at a pace that makes sense in terms of their learning needs and purposes. Over the years, we have found that some students are interested in support for significant, personal learning goals—including help in writing a book or series of articles, creating a new program or non-profit, developing a workshop series, or support for other personal learning agendas, and that while they may wish to pursue an academic degree, this is not of prime importance. Consequently, we advise students that there are maximum allowable amounts of time for students to complete our degree programs—6 years for a Bachelor’s degree for those with no previous academic credit and 3 years for those transferring with 80 semester units of credit; 4 years for the MS in Education and Community Leadership. And 6 years for both the MS in Psychology and the EdD. In some cases, when a student has a disability or some other special, extenuating circumstances, they may petition for a little bit more time to complete the degree. We advise students who wish not to be held to these timetables—which are designed to require the pace of consistent half-time study, or more, by each student—that they should instead enroll as a non-degree student. Then, if after completing several courses of study, they wish to formally enroll in a degree program, they will be given credit for the courses completed. Students must do non-degree studies selected from courses in a degree program in which they would be eligible for admission. Faculty discuss these options with prospective students to help determine which options would likely be in their best interests.” [ <https://www.wisr.edu/prospective-students/admissions-and-enrollment/admissions-interview/> ]

**By contrast, our MFT students are, for the most part, strongly and often (but not always) single-mindedly driven to obtain the State MFT (and/or LPCC) license.** So, it is not surprising that the completion rate for students in this degree program is around 70%, and it would be nearly 90% were it not for one student running into financial troubles and another student eventually deciding not to pursue the MFT license. Further, all five of our non-degree students taking MFT coursework (to qualify for the MFT and/or LPCC exams—because of course deficiencies in their previous studies elsewhere) successfully completed one course to as many as four courses (in two to four months). [And one Bachelor’s student completed a psychology course in 9 months, as well.] The completion rate for students seeking the Master’s in Psychology toward the State’s Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) license is very high (around 70%, and 80% to 90% if we exclude from our calculations, any MFT student experiencing financial problems or a change in career plans).

## **DEEPER INSIGHTS, CONCLUDING COMMENTS, AND IMPROVEMENTS AT WISR RESULTING FROM OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT**

***Our student satisfaction is VERY high.*** Response rates to surveys are very high (students at WISR are engaged with WISR, and feel part of our learning community).

***Alumni success is very high*** (as indicated by students, by the evidence from their actual jobs and/or community involvements) and as evidenced by employer/coworker/client evaluations, and as evidenced by success of MFT alumni in passing the licensing exams.

***A significant minority of our students do not complete their degrees—primarily for financial reasons, changes in life goals and priorities, health, age, and/or family challenges*** (divorce, caring for family members with health issues, needing to use funds for family/children).

***Rarely do students drop out for academic reasons***—one didn’t like the distance learning format. One had trouble writing papers. A few decided that it was taking them more time away from other things (didn’t realize how much work it would be).

***A number of students choose to move at a slow pace***, because 1) they are busy, have health challenges or new family challenges (e.g., divorce, domestic violence) and can’t devote more time to their studies, but still they find their studies to be worthwhile (personally, professionally, and/or for community involvements) so they choose to remain enrolled.

***Based on the data and insights from our Outcomes Assessment, we have made some improvements:***

To help these students stay focused and move somewhat more consistently we have instituted **our 6- month faculty review of each student’s progress.** Further, we have instituted the

**introductory course to better orient students** as to what to expect, and we have made the courses somewhat more structured, while keeping a lot of personalization, and this does seem to be helping some of the students who are busy and have trouble “organizing” their lives to be consistent with their studies.

Some students do give up after a number of years, because they decide that they got the learning that they wanted, help with community projects and/or writing a book, for example, and that that was more important than the degree. So, as noted above, we’ve changed our admissions practices/policies to identify student who may be primarily concerned with self-actualization, and with community/professional contributions, and less concerned with a degree. **We will enroll these students, first as non-degree learners, but taking courses that could later be used toward a degree, if the subsequently demonstrate the interest and motivation to do the necessary work toward a degree, and to progress within the timeline expected by WISR and DEAC.**

**We will continue to gather, analyze and discuss outcomes data** from annual surveys of students, recent alumni, employers/coworkers/clients, faculty and Board each summer, end of program evaluations submitted by graduating students, as well as student evaluations of faculty teaching. **To these data, we are now adding to our outcomes assessment:** an annual, one-on-one in depth interviews of most students and recent alumni by members of our Advisory Committee, as well as the 6 month regular review of each student’s progress by faculty, evaluations of the uses of technology by faculty and students, and faculty members’ overall assessments of student progress based on their observations and the evidence in student learning portfolios (submitted assignments, papers, self-assessments, action-research labs, online forum, collaboration with other students).