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Subject: [Cse-news] CSE News  
To: cse-news@cs.washington.edu

As the VP for University Relations at Western Washington University, I am writing in response to your posting yesterday regarding our computer science program. This is a statement I am sharing with multiple groups.

First of all, no decisions have been made about cutting programs at the university. In accordance with our shared governance processes, we engage the campus in open and transparent budgeting. This is just the beginning of the campus-wide discussion about the need to make further cuts. Over the past year in every university college, bottom up, additional scrutiny has been given to the quality, size, centrality and cost of academic programs. The Department of Computer Science, as with many academic departments at Western, has been asked to engage in an evaluation process of its programs.

We will always have computer science, but we have opened up questions of how to best do this for Washington. Given the state budget cuts, we are only investing in programs that are of the highest quality and we are asking the computer science program to step up to that level of quality.

The fact is that more and more of our students are moving to science-based majors. In this budget rebasing initiative, we are determining what areas of strength we need to concentrate on as we adjust to declining state funding. We need to bring together two considerations to see the intersection: where are we strongest and what are Washington's top needs?

A fair question to ask is why are computer science, and many other programs, on the rebasing discussion list? Through this rebasing effort we are striving to meet the state's expectations for quality and curriculum, and that includes computer science. We are striving to determine what areas of strength we need to concentrate on. As we have done in every university college, we have asked the faculty in computer science to engage in evaluations of the current computer science program, and we want them to ask some serious questions. Among them are:

What kind of program do we want to offer?  
What versions of computer sciences do we want to offer?  
What are the degrees we want to offer?  
What are the concentrations we want to offer?

What we are doing in computer science and throughout the university is what the business world does on a regular basis - we are asking computer science to do an evaluation of their program. We are asking them to think about the future of their disciplines and the needs of the State of Washington.

We are continuing to have conversations that include people from computer science related businesses to help inform our views about what a computer science program of the highest quality should look like at Western.

We appreciate your interest. Thank you!

Steve Swan  
Vice President for University Relations