

Western Illinois University in the Quad Cities:

A Demographic Profile

An Abstract of a Project Report

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by

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the Quad Cities Metropolitan Statistical Area (QC-MSA) population and Western Illinois University (WIU) student body in the Quad Cities. The information was compiled to aid the University in developing marketing strategies for Western Illinois University in the Quad Cities. WIU offers courses and degree programs at the WIU Regional Center, the Rock Island Arsenal and the Quad Cities Graduate Center (QCGC).

The demographic study uses 1980 and 1990 census data and 1994 census estimates as primary data sources to profile the QC-MSA population. WIU student data sources include WIU 10th-day student and class files and WIU student survey information.

State and national demographic trends show an increase in the minority population, particularly Hispanics and Asians. It is estimated that little population growth will occur in the Midwest, and that total Illinois population is estimated to grow only 2.5 percent over the next 30 years. In addition, the aging baby boom population will significantly impact the demographic profile of the U.S. over the next 40 years.

The Quad Cities Metropolitan Statistical Area (QC-MSA) population is also getting older as a result of the aging baby boom generation. The number of Hispanics in the QC-MSA is increasing, following state and national trends. Decreases in manufacturing employment during the 1980's affected the QC-MSA population as population declined 8.6 percent between 1980 and 1990. The changing QC-MSA workplace will require continued training and education

in order to meet workplace demands in the future.

Western Illinois University students at the WIU Regional Center were slightly younger and more diverse in Fall 1995 than in Fall 1989. Females continued to outnumber males and a majority of these students were residents of Rock Island County.

WIU students at the Arsenal are older than WIU Regional Center students. Female Arsenal students were more likely to be enrolled in the Board of Governors (BOG) degree program than were male Arsenal students. The vast majority of Arsenal students attend classes to pursue a degree, and over 80 percent are employed.

Overall, the WIU Quad Cities Graduate Center student body was younger in Fall 1995 than in Fall 1989, as the proportion of students in the 35-44 age category decreased. In addition, a greater proportion of QCGC students were minorities. The majority of the Quad Cities Graduate center students were Illinois residents, but nearly 40 percent resided outside of the three QC-MSA counties.

The demographic profiles reveal that the QC-MSA population is growing older and more diverse. The WIU student population is also growing more diverse, but average age increased only among students at the Rock Island Arsenal. WIU's ability to develop marketing strategies to attract a diverse constituency will increase WIU enrollment in the Quad Cities and help provide the Quad Cities with a trained and educated population.