Western Global Pathway: The Basics

Western has entered into a partnership with Study Group (SG), a global leader in international student recruitment and on-campus "pathway" student success programming. Through its global recruiting network, SG will help Western reach well-qualified prospective students in more than 150 countries worldwide. On campus, SG will help Western serve the needs of this growing cadre of international students by providing a program of student support services built around and integrated with the university's existing Intensive English Program (IEP). This enhanced program will be known as the Western Global Pathway. Students in the pathway program will be Western students, and the program itself will be under the university's oversight and control. Our partner, Study Group, will integrate their own programming and student services into Western's existing structures.

A pathway program combines credit-bearing coursework with English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction. Pathway programs are an extension of what university-based intensive English programs, like Western's IEP, do through bridge courses or sheltered instruction, in which students receive English support while taking academic courses. Pathway students are regularly admissible students admitted to the university on a conditional basis because their English fluency is insufficient. They spend their first year, the pathway year, in a special program to gain the required English proficiency for full admission, participate in classes designed to help them understand the expectations in U.S. higher education, assimilate into the life and culture of the United States, and complete some first-year course work. Upon completing the first-year program successfully, students are fully admitted to the university and transition into the general student population.

Similar pathway partnerships at other major universities have proven to enhance campus diversity, improve international student retention and graduation, and contribute to the institution's international ethos. However, the necessary extensive international recruiting activities and program and student service enhancements can be prohibitively expensive, and are beyond the means of most universities. They only become realistically possible through partnership with another organization with the requisite expertise. Study Group is one of the oldest and largest organizations in this highly specialized field. Their joint venture with Western will be an entirely self-supporting initiative. Western will not be required to make any up-front investments. Study Group will provide the start-up financing. Once operational, the partnership is expected to generate a significant annual surplus the university will be free to invest in other needs or initiatives.