

## **2019-2021 Biennium Budget Proposal Narrative**

### **Division: Enrollment and Student Services**

**Evaluation Criteria:** Proposals will be evaluated on every aspect of this template. It is highly recommended that the narrative portion touch on each area. Proposals forwarded to UPRC by unit leaders will be discussed at UPRC and authors are encouraged to attend so that they may answer questions and provide clarification.

#### **Increasing Capacity and Specialization of Career Support Services**

- This is a revised version of a previously submitted budget proposal.  
*If box is checked please briefly outline any significant changes and/or indicate why it is being resubmitted.*

**Statement of Purpose:** *(What is the challenge or opportunity being addressed? How does the proposal address this challenge or opportunity?)*

Currently, Career Services at Western has a staff of only three Career Counselors to provide career support services for more than 16,000 students. The work of the career counseling staff includes helping undeclared students to explore career pathways and assisting declared majors to prepare for and connect with internship and employment opportunities. With three Career Counselors serving the entire student population, the counselor-to-student ratio is less than 1:5300. In attempting to support students from all seven colleges of the university, Career Counselors can do little more than serve as generalists with limited ability to develop industry-specific job market knowledge and contacts. Furthermore, maximum capacity for each Career Counselor is 1,000-1,500 student appointments per year – meaning even generalized services are only available on an individual basis to approximately one-quarter of the student population each year.

With 98% of students identifying improved job prospects as an important reason for attending Western, it is critical to expand the capacity of Career Services to support students in transitioning into productive and rewarding professional lives. To address this issue, a 2019-2021 Biennial Budget Decision Package ([Enhanced Career Services](#)) has been submitted by the University for consideration by the state legislature. While awaiting a decision regarding new state allocations to meet this need, this operating budget proposal is being submitted to begin the necessary implementation of expanded and specialized services to support career success.

The proposed budget initiative will add two Career Counselor positions in 2020 and a third in 2021, doubling the number of Career Counselors available to support students in achieving their career goals and creating capacity for individualized services for over half of the student population each year. Furthermore, this additional staffing will allow each Career Counselor to begin to focus more fully on supporting students in specific colleges, through targeted programming for both individuals and groups of students. With the ability to focus on a defined population, each Career Counselor will be able to provide truly customized services, developing

a deep understanding of students’ interests and abilities, as well as specific job market knowledge and industry contacts.

**Anticipated Outcome(s):**

With the proposed budget initiative, it is anticipated that both the number of student appointments and the number of unique students served annually will double. Consequently, twice as many students will be supported each year in connecting programs of study to career pathways and in securing internship and employment opportunities. Internship rates will increase, resulting in expanded co-curricular engagement and improved job placement performance (Western students who graduate with internship experience are employed at an 8% greater rate and earn 13% higher wages than graduates without internship experience). Finally, overall graduate employment outcomes will increase, allowing graduates to achieve greater financial stability and attracting ambitious new students to the university.

**Metrics:** *(How will outcomes be measured? Please include current data points and goals. If this proposal will have any impact on the [Overall Metrics](#) included in the university’s strategic plan, please indicate which specific ones here.)*

<b>Metric</b>	<b>Current</b>	<b>Goal</b>
Counselor-to-student ratio	~1:5300	~1:2650
# of student appointments annually	1134	4000
# of students served annually	4111	8000
% of students graduating with internship experience	43%	65%
% of graduates employed within two quarters of graduation	77%	80%
% of graduates employed in field-related industries	70%	75%

It is also anticipated that expanded access to career support services will increase high-impact co-curricular engagement and decrease excess credits and time to degree, contributing positively to retention and graduation rates – key overall metrics in the university strategic plan.

**How does this proposal align with your departmental/divisional strategic priorities?** *(Please reference specific items from the recently completed departmental/divisional strategic plan and attach a copy.)*

This initiative aligns perfectly with the top strategic priority for the Career Services department, which is to expand staffing to increase capacity for career counseling appointments. If funded, the initiative will also support the goals of the Enrollment and Student Services division, by increasing persistence through engaging students in high-quality co-curricular learning opportunities (goals 1 and 3), enhancing equity in our impacts on the financial lives of students (goal 2), and cultivating partnerships with employers to enrich student co-curricular experiences.

**How does this proposal support the University Mission and Strategic Objectives?** *(Please refer to the [2018-2025 Strategic Plan](#) and indicate which core theme(s) this proposal will help achieve.)*

This initiative directly supports several key 2018-2025 institutional goals, including preparing students to effectively contribute to evolving societal needs (goal 1B), ensuring all students have access to high quality educational experiences beyond the classroom (goal 1D), strengthening student services to ensure professional success (goal 3C), and expanding networks between students, staff, faculty, and alumni (goal 3F). Furthermore, this initiative supports Increasing Washington Impact by contributing to future workforce needs in the region and across the state.

**What are the consequences of not funding this package?**

The consequences of not funding this proposal include:

- Career Services will be increasingly understaffed, with the staff-to-student ratio further decreasing as enrollments increase;
- Students will be increasingly disadvantaged, as fewer gain industry connections and internship experience prior to entering the workforce;
- Graduates will be increasingly underemployed, and therefore less able to pay off student loans and gain financial independence;
- Faculty will be increasingly frustrated, as graduates are seen as under-supported in fulfilling their employment potential;
- Western will be increasingly disadvantaged in recruiting new students, as career support services lag behind competing universities.

**What alternatives were explored and why was this alternative chosen?**

An expanded version of this proposal was jointly developed by Academic Affairs and Enrollment and Student Services and submitted to the state legislature as a 2019-21 biennial decision package for funding consideration. In the development of that package, a wide variety of alternative service models were considered, but no other models appeared to offer such profound benefits to students and the institutions. An increased operating budget allocation will allow for expanding services while minimizing the burden on students by avoiding implementation of new fees. (Please note that if the decision package is funded, any operating budget allocations resulting from this proposal will be returned for reallocation.)

**Which units (departments, colleges, etc.) will be involved?**

Career Services will collaborate with staff in every college to ensure appropriate connections and referrals are made to maximize opportunities for students.

**If applicable, please include a link to any Enterprise Risk Management assessments completed regarding the challenge/opportunity addressed by this proposal.**

**Equipment:** *(For major (>\$25k) purchases, please provide the following information.)*

Not applicable.

**Human Resources** *(Complete the table below adding additional rows if necessary):*

<i>Position Title</i>	<i>Total Headcount</i>	<i>Total FTE</i>	<i>Salary and Benefits per FTE</i>	<i>Total Cost</i>
<i>Career Counselor (FY20)</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>69,569</i>	<i>139,138</i>
<i>Career Counselor (FY21)</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>69,569</i>	<i>69,569</i>

**Operating & Maintenance Costs:**

	<i>Goods/Services</i>	<i>Travel</i>
FY 2020	\$2,750 (+\$6,000 one-time)	\$5,000
FY 2021	\$4,125 (+\$3,000 one-time)	\$7,500

**Space Requirements:**

**How much new space will be required?**

No new space will be required.

**Is appropriate space available on campus?** Yes No

**If no, what space is needed and what features must the space have (e.g., fume hoods, plumbing, 3-phase power, etc.)?**

As increased staffing allows for specialization of services, it is anticipated that both current and new Career Counselors will spend a significant amount of time providing programming in the classrooms and department offices of each college. As a result, current centralized office spaces in the Career Services Center can be used flexibly to accommodate expanded staffing while we work towards full funding for an embedded model within the colleges.