

2019-2021 Biennium Internal Budget Proposal Narrative

Division: Enrollment & 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.

Financial Aid: New Systems Staff Position

- 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.

[Click here to enter text](#)

Statement of Purpose: *(What is the challenge or opportunity being addressed? How does the proposal address this challenge or opportunity? Limit response to 1 page – please link to any existing reports, data, supplemental materials, etc.)*

Financial Aid relies exclusively on one position – the Associate Director of Financial Aid – Systems, for systems software research, development and support and for completion of complex state and national surveys that Western must complete to meet state and federal regulatory requirements and maintain our institution’s profile as a four-year public regional institution in Washington state.

Our Associate Director of Financial Aid – Systems:

- Supports the Director by providing strategic administration of student financial aid programs through the effective implementation, configuration, and management of computer software for financial aid, and by oversight of the application processing flow, system documentation, and staff training in system related functions.
- Directly supervises the Financial Aid Counselor in charge of the Federal Pell Grant program, one Information Technology Specialist III, the Assistant Director for Operations, and indirectly supervises the four classified staff and one temporary staff position in the Operations work group.
- Completes reports and surveys including IPEDS, U.S. News & World Report, the State Unit Record Report, the Washington State Need Grant/College Bound quarterly reports and reports that feed into publications such as Kiplinger’s Personal Finance and Money Magazine.
- Serves as Security Administrator for Financial Aid personnel by maintaining access and security levels for all Banner Financial Aid forms, NOLIJ Financial Aid electronic document files, the Washington Student Achievement Council secure website and portal, and Federal Title IV web access (COD, CPS, NSLDS).
- Performs file review and award adjustments for Graduate Teaching Assistants, students in the North Cascades Institutes graduate residency program, and grant recipients in the graduate Rehab Counseling program.

Having one position responsible for so much puts the institution at great and unnecessary risk. Further, consistently working an extreme number of hours to try to keep up with workload demands is not humane, good for the Associate Director of Financial Aid – Systems or the work environment, including Financial Aid and extending to a host of other departments: Admissions, Registrar’s Office, NSS/FO, Student Business Office, the Graduate School, Enterprise Application Services and others. If this individual left, the result would be delays in the delivery of financial aid to students and parents and increased potential liability for noncompliance with ever changing state and federal regulations, which would negatively impact recruitment, retention, and institutional profile. Therefore, Financial Aid asks for authorization to hire an IT position to back up our Associate Director of Financial Aid - Systems and support succession planning.

Financial Aid systems require at least four times as many systems upgrades and testing as other departments within Enrollment and Student Services due to federal and state regulatory updates. Aid regulations requiring systems support are growing and ever changing. In addition to Banner 9 and imaging software, there is a need to support institutionally-written software to meet state aid requirements and perform data reportage. The chart below illustrates that Financial Aid has significantly fewer systems-like positions than the similarly-sized Registrar’s and Admissions offices. We use the term “systems-like” because the position held by Tom Baldrige was determined to not be a systems position by State HR (he primarily oversees Federal loans); it should be noted the Marc Fromm has his hands full supporting systems hardware, the interactive Financial Aid website that includes part-time employment and scholarship listings, our internal website, appointment calendaring and work study earnings reporting. For purposes of mainframe research, development and support, the Registrar’s Office and Admissions have at least one additional mainframe systems software position, along with one primary systems position. In comparison, Financial Aid has just has one primary systems position.

Adding an additional systems staff position in Financial Aid will not only bring us into better alignment with other Departments in the Division, but will more importantly protect us from disbursement delays, regulatory compliance issues resulting from systems software setup and the potential damaging effects on recruitment and retention.

Anticipated Outcome(s):

Hiring an additional Financial Aid systems staff position will:

- Provide a backup to our primary systems staff position, who currently has no backup. If this position becomes vacant, no one can perform the primary duties and we will run not just the risk but probability of delayed financial aid disbursements, lack of compliance, and the attending impacts on recruitment, retention and institutional profile.
- Allow for additional compliance, assessment, self-auditing and cross training.

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.)*

Enrollment:

Approximately 2 out of every 3 Western students receives some form of financial aid: scholarships, grants, work study employment, and/or loans; this has held steady over the years.

For some families and students, getting a college degree may appear unattainable given the high cost. Financial aid assistance can make a huge difference in turning what appears impossible into an attainable goal.

This new systems position will help to oversee the design, update, implementation, maintenance, testing, evaluation, and documentation of the Financial Aid software systems (Banner, Financial Aid Data Warehouse, NOLIJ Imaging, and Department of Education software). Financial aid cannot be disbursed without the proper operation of these systems.

Retention:

As stated above, this new systems position will help to oversee the design, update, implementation, maintenance, testing, evaluation, and documentation of the Financial Aid software systems (Banner, Financial Aid Data Warehouse, NOLIJ Imaging, and Department of Education software). Financial aid cannot be disbursed without the proper operation of these systems. Not disbursing financial aid will cause financial hardship for many students, hindering their academic progress and causing them to withdraw from Western.

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.)*

Our Division recently completed a Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) self-assessment. According to the CAS Standards and Guidelines, “the mission of Financial Aid Programs (FAP) is to develop, review, and disseminate financial resources and information to students to assist them in achieving their educational goals from pre-enrollment through graduation.” Creating a new systems position will allow us to work toward these goals which we identified as key issues to address:

- In the CAS Section 6.2, Policies and Procedures, our Department concluded:
 - FAP does not currently have capacity (personnel/resources) to update the Policies and Procedures Manual regularly.
- In the CAS Section 7, Technology, our Department concluded:
 - FAP needs to strengthen its adherence to policies and procedures regarding ethical and legal use of technology, as well as for protecting the confidentiality and security of information.

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.)*

Advancing Inclusive Success

Creating a new systems position will support the University core theme of Advancing Inclusive Success. We are continuously responding to federal and state regulatory changes to ensure we administer financial aid programs accurately and ethically.

This position plays a key role in allowing Financial Aid staff members to:

- Administer the Washington Student Financial Aid Application (WASFA) to the FAFSA for undocumented students.

Aid Year	1819	1718
# of WASFAs loaded	As of 12/27/18 602	714
# of students who submit WASFA using WWU school code	As of 12/27/18 135	139

- Determine eligibility of undocumented students for Western Grant and need-based waivers effective 2018-2019.
- Administer the Federal Pell Grant Program, which provides need-based grants to low-income undergraduate and certain postbaccalaureate students to promote access to postsecondary education.
- Provide a liaison for students who are deemed an Unaccompanied Homeless Youth according to the McKinney-Vento Act.
- Act as a resource for high school counselors and community-based college access programs and initiatives.
- Help students complete the FAFSA and WASFA (aid applications)
- Aid students with their scholarship searches
- Apply for aid as an institution, to disburse to eligible students
- Provide information about different types of financial aid
- Place students in part-time jobs on and off campus
- Partner with employers to create part-time jobs for Western students
- Work with students and their families to correct and update information reported on their aid applications
- Recalculate aid eligibilities based on extenuating circumstances, as well as new information
- Refer students to community resources
- Calculate eligibilities for parent loans via the parent PLUS program
- Provide short-term emergency loans
- Assist students in crisis, not only with aid but with referrals to other student services
- Provide information to outside agencies upon the request of students to help them be considered for outside aid
- Provide emergency food credits for use at on-campus eateries
- Educate students on matters related to financial literacy

What are the consequences of not funding this proposal?

Staff burnout and potential turnover, delayed financial aid disbursements, compliance issues, potential harm to Western’s reputation, attending negative impact on recruitment and retention.

What alternatives were explored?

When our previous Associate Director of Systems indicated she was retiring, we hired our current Associate Director of Systems to work alongside her for approximately 10 months solely for cross training. We were lucky to have that opportunity for cross training; however, given the current circumstances, we can't count on repeating this strategy. Further, this was just too risky for students, their families and the University.

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

Financial Aid

Equipment needed:

One workstation (desk, chair, computer) One Time Cost of \$3000

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

Item:

Click here to enter text

Purpose:

Click here to enter text

Cost:

Click here to enter text

Anticipated Useful Life:

Click here to enter text

Replacement Cost if any:

Click here to enter text

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>IT Specialist 3 (Range 58, Step A)</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1.000</i>	<i>\$78,576</i>	<i>\$78,576</i>

Table above should match data on budget spreadsheets submitted with this proposal. Complete the spreadsheet to get salary, benefit, and total cost amounts. Contact your division budget officer with questions.

Operating & Maintenance Costs (include service contracts, installation costs, etc.):

- \$1000 Supplies & Materials
- \$ 375 Computer Replacement Budget (every 4 years)
- \$1500 Travel

- \$2875 Total Ongoing Annual Operating

Space Requirements:

What type of space is needed for this proposal? (e.g., private office, lab space, group work/study space, etc.)

Click here to enter text

What features must this space have? (e.g., fume hoods, plumbing, 3-phase power, etc.)

Click here to enter text

What needs can be accommodated within your existing space?

All

How much new space will be required?

None; may require some construction to add or remove walls in existing space.