

2019-2021 Biennium Internal Budget Proposal Narrative

Division: University Relations & Marketing

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.

Recurring Marketing Operations Budget

- 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.

In Fall 2017, the university changed the mission and focus of this division from University Relations & Community Development to University Relations & Marketing. However, there was no marketing budget assigned to the division. During the FY19 emergent budget process, \$300,000 in one-time institutional reserves were granted to the division to support a print, out-of-home and digital ad buy for Western's first brand advertising campaign designed to address two goals: To [support the Western Foundation's efforts](#) to secure more funding for admissions scholarships, study abroad experiences and student research opportunities; and to [tell Western's story to prospective students](#) in a new and exciting way. Both of these goals work in tandem with [Western's Strategic Plan](#). The campaign was launched on January 22, 2019 and is expected to run through June, 2019 with current funding.

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.)*

There is growing recognition that higher education is an increasingly competitive marketplace. To compete for the best students and faculty, to generate significant donor and funding agency investment, and to command adequate tuition levels, universities need more than just great curricula. They require great marketing, along with innovation, and – importantly – a differentiated and consistently messaged brand positioning in a sea of similarly positioned institutions.

Marketing budgets vary widely across our sector. According to [Educational Marketing Group](#), public and private nonprofit institutions typically spend anywhere from 1.5 – 6% of the institution's annual operating budget on marketing. (In 2010, that range was 1 – 4%). So if we assume \$300 million in operating revenue (for year ending June 30, 2017), then we should be investing \$4.5 - \$18 million on overall marketing and recruiting activities. Currently, Western is spending approximately \$1.8 million (largely in headcount) institution-wide. Additionally, these efforts are highly targeted, transactional direct marketing programs that don't tell the depth of the Western story to a broad audience.

After steady increases in the overall number of high school graduates over the last 15 years, the U.S. is headed into a period of stagnation. According to the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE), the nation is projected to produce fewer high school graduates in all of the 10 graduating classes between 2014 and 2023, compared to the highest recorded number of graduates in 2013.

This national plateau is largely fueled by a decline in the white student population and counterbalanced by growth in the number of non-white public school graduates – Latinx and Asian/Pacific Islanders in particular.

As population growth continues a marked decline in the Midwest and Northeast, we are experiencing new competition for students in Washington from universities across the country. Additionally, we can expect to see further pressure for first-year students due to the Seattle Promise program approved by Seattle voters, which gives high school graduates of Seattle Public Schools two years of community college tuition-free, no matter their family income. The Seattle Promise is phasing in over two years, and although the tax levy is currently limited to seven years, this will have an immediate impact on our recruiting efforts.

Prospective students represent just one of our many target audiences. Currently, about 95% of our alumni have not had any meaningful engagement with the university since they graduated. Our new “Make Waves” campaign is designed to raise our profile with alumni – especially among the majority living in King and Snohomish counties – to help increase fundraising and other forms of engagement. It is also designed to increase visibility among private-sector funding partners, faculty recruits, state legislators and prospective students and their families.

We are currently tracking conversions from the digital campaign and increases in fundraising activity. Please see the link to the marketing dashboard below for more information on current stats.

Anticipated Outcome(s):

- A minimum of \$10 million secured for admissions scholarships, study abroad experiences and student research opportunities.
- Year-over-year donor growth.
- Measurable increases in prospective student qualified web traffic and conversions (taking action to schedule a campus visit or request more information).

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.)*

- A minimum of \$10 million secured for admissions scholarships, study abroad experiences and student research opportunities.
- Growth in targeted diverse student enrollment inquiries and applications.

- Growth in donor retention rate.
- Access the Make Waves campaign analytics dashboard [here](#). We are tracking traffic to the iModules giving page, donation activity, and admissions conversions.
- This campaign is expected to impact three overall university strategic plan metrics: increases in underrepresented students of color; increases in underrepresented faculty of color; and increases in annual revenue from external research and sponsored programs.

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.)*

Please see attached divisional strategic plan. This proposal aligns primarily with the following priority:

Undertake proactive, broad-based, consistent messaging and brand visibility targeted at key stakeholders using modern marketing techniques.

1. Strategic Plan Goal 1.C
2. Strategic Plan Goal 2.B
3. Strategic Plan Goal 2.G
4. Strategic Plan Goal 4.C
5. Strategic Plan Goal 4.D

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.)*

See above.

What are the consequences of not funding this proposal?

Effective marketing campaigns are not “one and done” transactions. Prior to the collaborative brand strategy and planning work of the past year, Western’s marketing efforts tended to exist in silos, each marketing effort largely unrelated to others (and often targeted at the same constituency in the case of Admissions and Extended Education). This lack of cohesion results in mixed messages and inefficient marketing spend and reach.

The initial institutional investment of \$300,000 is a good down payment, but in order to garner greater mindshare of key audiences in an increasingly competitive marketplace, we should have a recurring institutional marketing budget and consistent messaging and presence in the market in order to build on the visibility, goodwill and results from the current “Make Waves” campaign.

What alternatives were explored?

We could continue to rely on siloed efforts by individual divisions and departments, but this tends to result in unsophisticated, transactional marketing that lacks cohesion and results in inefficient spending and market reach.

We could also rely on unpaid, earned media efforts on social media platforms and via traditional news media sources. While these are important parts of the marketing mix, in isolation, they are not efficient for reaching large audiences with lasting brand messages. They also do not allow us to control the message and brand presentation.

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

University Relations & Marketing in collaboration with Admissions, Advancement, Extended Education and marketing & communications personnel embedded in the Colleges and Western Libraries.

Equipment needed:

N/A

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

Item:

N/A

Purpose:

N/A

Cost:

N/A

Anticipated Useful Life:

N/A

Replacement Cost if any:

N/A

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>
Communications Consultant 3 - Videographer	1	1.00	\$95,331	\$95,331*

**We are requesting salary funding through Step L (12) to ensure full funding for positions. Because URM is a small division with little turnover and a small budget that does not have the annual savings of other larger divisions, funding through Step L is particularly important.*

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

\$373,200 annual recurring budget:

1. \$300,000 will fund an **annual institutional brand advertising budget** to support ongoing fundraising and student recruitment goals. The approximate breakdown for this funding is as follows:
 - a. \$70,000 for print media
 - b. \$200,000 for out-of-home media (billboards, transit)
 - c. \$30,000 for digital media
2. \$30,000 annual funding for **SiteImprove software**. Initially licensed for a period of two years to assist in the remediation of websites for accessibility concerns, there is considerable work yet to do to be in compliance with the DOE Voluntary Resolution. In the last six months, WebTech has gone from more than 1.5 million occurrences of accessibility issues to about 825,000. The software is available for the entire university to use, and there is no limit on the number of users. SiteImprove is also an important automated tool in governance, quality control and auditing.
3. \$43,200 annual funding for **BrightEdge search optimization software**. We have piloted BrightEdge over the past six months to make our content more visible and interpretable to search engines. When we started, only 86 Western search terms ranked on page 1 of Google. Now 156 search terms do so. We are currently investing time and effort to improve search results for our popular majors and those with growth capacity. Continued investment in organic SEO will expand the brand presence of WWU and will assist Western in achieving its goals of increasing engagement with traditionally underrepresented student populations and increasing Washington impact by making it easier for those who have shared affinities with Western to find the resources they need.

Space Requirements:

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

N/A

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

N/A

What needs can be accommodated within your existing space?

N/A

How much new space will be required?

N/A