

Budget Proposal Narrative

2023 Strategic Budgeting Process

Please carefully review the [Call for Proposals](#) with particular attention to the evaluation criteria before beginning this application. Criteria should be addressed throughout the proposal narrative.

Section 1: Proposal Title and Department Contact

Proposal Title: **CSD Diversity, Equity, Justice Graduate Initiative**

Division: Academic Affairs

College/Unit: CHSS/Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders

Department Contact: Doug Sladen, Department Chair

Section 2: Proposal Summary and Problem Statement

Check the most relevant box (one selection only).

Priority Program and Service Areas:

- Graduate Programs
- Inclusive Student Success

Identified Structural or Legacy Funding Needs (to be used sparingly and in conjunction with Division VP)

- Core Infrastructure, Safety, and Regulatory Compliance
- Remaining funding needs from partially funded prior request
If checked, please identify original funding request amount and actual funding received in narrative section
- Other [Click here to enter text](#)

Statement of Purpose (One Page or Less):

What are the challenges or opportunities being addressed? How will the new investment(s) in this proposal address this challenge or opportunity? What are the expected outcomes if this proposal is funded?

The Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSD) offers STEM-based graduate programs in Audiology (AuD) and Speech-Language Pathology (SLP) as well as an undergraduate degree. Our reliance on student tuition dollars to fund our departmental salaries makes our programs too costly for underrepresented students and limits our ability to grow to meet student and community needs. Therefore, we are seeking funds to 1.) increase our base funding to pay personnel, and 2.) hire two new staff members.

Challenge 1: Nationally, only 7-8% of SLPs/AuDs belong to a racial minority and only 15% of our graduate students are students of color. Recruiting and retaining underrepresented students to increase diversity in our field is one of our top priorities. However, high tuition costs required by our current

funding structure leads to a limited applicant pool and unduly burdens our students. This is troubling when there is a national mandate to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion in the fields of speech language pathology and audiology (and allied health in general). As compared to other graduate students at WWU, our students pay higher tuition costs and are not eligible for certain types of financial aid (e.g., tuition waivers, teaching assistantships). They frequently report that the high cost of tuition, fees, and living expenses cause them hardship and most report working many hours outside of school to make ends meet. When choosing a graduate program, our top candidates frequently choose other regional CSD programs (e.g., WSU, UW) which offer lower overall program tuition, lower cost of living, and/or other financial incentives. If we could support our personnel budget without relying on tuition funds, we could lower student costs making our graduate programs more accessible and equitable to a wider range of students.

Two TT faculty salaries, two NTT salaries, and seven classified staff salaries in CSD are supported through increased student tuition (significantly above the base/state rate). Furthermore, because our budget model is *entirely* dependent on student tuition in the AuD program, students in that program are not eligible for TA positions. Students in our SLP graduate program are eligible for TA positions, but not full tuition waivers.

Challenge 2: A second challenge is that, due to budgetary constraints, we do not have a clinical staff person qualified to work with neurodivergent populations, specifically children and adults on the autism spectrum or children and adults who use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC). These are high needs in our community and region, and a training gap for our graduate students. These teaching and clinical areas are also required per our accreditation requirements. We are currently without clinical staff in either area.

Opportunities:

- 1). We have an opportunity to recruit more diverse graduate cohorts by eliminating the differential tuition in the AuD and SLP programs, thereby making our graduate programs in speech-language pathology and audiology more accessible and equitable to a wider range of students. We would like to increase our base funding to pay all faculty and staff faculties and eliminate the differential tuition for students.
- 2). We have an opportunity to better support individuals with disabilities on Western's campus and regionally by expanding our clinical services. We would like to hire at least one clinician with expertise in the wholistic support of children and adults with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and/or expertise in supporting children and adults who use augmentative and alternative communication systems (AAC). This could be 1.0 FTE or 2.5 FTE positions. People with ASD have been marginalized, pathologized, and "othered" in higher education for decades. Our hope is to hire a professional who understands and appreciates concepts of neurodiversity and ableism, and who can be a support for individuals with ASD on Western's campus as well as a mentor for our students, many of whom will be assigned to work with children who are ASD in the public schools. Further, Whatcom County desperately needs more services for children with ASD and their families. Hiring someone with clinical expertise in AAC would advance the goals of supporting and respecting all modes of communication; and promoting diversity, equity and linguistic accessibility for school age and college students. Increasing our services in both the areas of ASD and AAC would increase opportunities for interprofessional education (collaboration with physical therapy, occupational therapy, early childhood education, special education, etc.).

Summary of Proposed New Investments:

Summarize the new investments included in this proposal (total monetary amount, number of FTE and type of positions, and other expenses). Explain the need for any goods and services or professional contracts.

Two TT faculty salaries, two NTT salaries, and eight classified staff salaries in CSD are currently funded through increased student tuition. We are requesting funding to cover the salaries and benefits of these faculty and staff so that we can reduce student tuition to the base level that all graduate students pay at Western. We are requesting funding to add a 1.0 FTE clinical staff member in the SLP program to work with clients with autism spectrum disorders, and clients who use AAC. We are requesting funding for our .25 FTE summer AuD scheduling position (Graduate RA Hourly), the two part-time TA positions we currently fund (.5 FTE per quarter) for the AY, as well as four new part-time (2 FTE per quarter) TA positions. This would provide much needed incentive for applicants in the AuD program. We recently purchased an electronic medical records system which is an important element of bringing our clinic up to date. This investment is necessary for student training experience (as they will be working with non-paper records upon graduation), and for HIPAA compliant clinical record keeping. In connection to this, we are also requesting to add a 0.5 FTE IT Customer Support for ongoing support for the new EMR and other clinical software system support. This position will provide training and support to students as they learn how to use the EMR system, a skill that will be crucial as they enter their professional careers.

The total amount of this proposal is \$1,438,174. This includes covering the salaries of faculty, staff and graduate teaching assistants that are *currently* being funded through differential graduate tuition:

AuD Program (\$706,220):

- Two 1.0 TT faculty members
- One .17 NTT faculty member (teaching)
- One .96 NTT Clinic Director
- Two .96 FTE classified staff members (AuD)
- One .96 Patient Services Coordinator
- Two .25 FTE Graduate Teaching Assistants
- One .25 FTE Graduated RA Hourly

Goods and services: \$54,900

- Annual audiometer calibration: \$5,000
- Electronic medical records system license: \$33,500
- Internship site visit travel: \$5,000
- Internship supervisor honorariums: \$2,400
- Operating budget increase for two new faculty: \$4,000
- Travel for two new faculty: \$5,000

SLP Program (\$329,616):

- One .18 FTE classified staff member (SLP)
- One .88 FTE classified staff member (SLP)
- One .44 FTE classified staff member (SLP)

- One .42 FTE Office Assistant

And one *new* position to support clients who have autism spectrum disorders and/or who use AAC (\$122,016 + \$3,000 startup), one *new* IT Customer Support position to support the EMR and other clinical software systems (\$59,613 + \$3000 startup), and four *new* graduate teaching assistant positions (\$35,096):

One .96 classified staff member (SLP)
One .5 classified IT Customer Support
Four .25 graduate teaching assistants

Impact of New Investment on ADEI and Sustainability:

Please provide data or an analysis to support this request and illustrate the anticipated impact of this investment, including in advancing accessibility, diversity, equity, inclusion, and sustainability.

Eliminating differential tuition would not only make school significantly more affordable but would provide our graduate students with access to Teaching Assistantships (because our program is tuition-driven, current AuD students are not eligible for tuition remission; SLP students are only eligible for partial tuition remission). All students applying to our graduate programs ask about scholarships, assistantships, and other forms of financial support. We have not been able to offer any support to many of these students and invariably, they decline our admissions offer. Graduate school is long and expensive (the 4-year AuD program tuition is about \$100,000) and the cost of living in Bellingham is high. In addition, our retention of underrepresented students is poor because they cannot earn money while in school (unless they work off-campus, which then increases their economic stress). Research shows that “The availability of financial support affects postsecondary attendance and persistence for students in general and for underrepresented minority students in particular.” (National Academy of Sciences (US), National Academy of Engineering (US), and Institute of Medicine (US) Committee on Underrepresented Groups and the Expansion of the Science and Engineering Workforce Pipeline, 2011). By making our programs more financially accessible, we can recruit more diverse students, which will increase innovation, creativity, and productivity in our program. Ultimately this will create a more diverse work force that aligns better with the clinical populations allied health professionals serve. By increasing diversity in our graduate programs, we expect to increase diversity in our undergraduate major because undergraduate students will see and interact with a diverse graduate population.

Our AuD program has been extremely successful in training skilled clinicians with a passion for providing evidence-based services. Three students out of the past four cohorts have secured highly competitive NIH training grants. Two of our AuD students published their original research in peer reviewed journals before graduation. We became accredited last year and have already established ourselves as a world class training program. In fact, the AuD at Western was one of the few programs in the country that met 100% of accreditation standards during our fall site visit. In addition, three AuD students in the past four years secured competitive NIH research training grants—an impressive number for a brand-new program. We believe by making graduate school more affordable and less stressful for students, we can support students from traditionally marginalized backgrounds in pursuing research careers.

Section 3: Performance Outcomes and Risk Mitigation

Expected Outcomes and Evaluation of Success:

Please explain how the success of the proposal will be measured, if funded. What metrics might indicate that the intended impact was achieved? How can the expected outcomes be directly tied to the investment being proposed?

Specifically, provide the targets and explain which method(s) will be used to track progress (refer to the Provost's [Overall Metrics to track progress toward University's Strategic Plan](#)), estimated return on investment (such as enrollment increases or efficiencies), divisional KPI's, recruitment and retention especially specifics for historically marginalized populations.

If this program is successful, we will:

1. have more applicants to our graduate programs,
2. have more diverse students in both our graduate and undergraduate programs,
3. be able to provide required clinical hours to our graduate students in AAC and ASD,
4. serve an increased number of students with ASD and clients who use AAC at Western and in the community (both historically marginalized groups),
5. have lower attrition from our graduate programs, and
6. see an increase in diverse students pursuing research

Impact on Recruitment, Retention, and Satisfaction of Diverse Faculty, Staff, and Administrators:

For proposals that include personnel resources, explain how the proposal improves recruitment, retention, and satisfaction of diverse faculty, staff, and administrators.

Being able to recruit more qualified, diverse students and being able to support them appropriately throughout their program will attract more diverse faculty, staff, and administrators and will improve work satisfaction for everyone in our building. During our recent staff interviews, all candidates we interviewed asked about diversity initiatives campus and asked about initiatives in our department. Being able to financially support our graduate students, in particular our marginalized graduate students is central to the mission of Western, and critical to the success of our programs and the allied health fields. We must reduce the financial stress our students are carrying right now, in the interest of the health of our department and graduate programs.

Risk to Desired Outcomes:

What might occur to prevent the desired outcomes even if funding is obtained? How will these risks be mitigated? Beyond new funding, what other criteria or external factors need to occur in order for this proposal to be successful (e.g., economic or demographic factors, etc.).

No obvious risks could be identified.

Anticipated Consequences if Proposal is Not Funded:

What are the anticipated consequences of not funding this proposal?

We will continue to lose diverse, highly qualified students from our graduate programs and the allied health professions and individuals who have communication disorders will continue to suffer as a result.

Section 4: Process and Development

Describe Collaborations and Stakeholder Engagement:

What stakeholders were involved, and in what role/capacity? Which groups were engaged and at what stages? How were concerns addressed? What process have you followed to identify unintended consequences that may result from this proposal? Is the issue being addressed a broader issue across the university?

The CSD Department consulted with the Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences in preparing this proposal. Key stakeholders also included graduate students in our department, and the Diversity, Equity, and Justice Committee in the CSD Department.

Explain how this proposal will leverage resources or commitments from other sources:

Identify any current resources in place, any new commitments, or potential funding partnerships with external entities that have been identified. If exploration is currently underway, note any conversations with university development officers, funding agencies, the Vice Provost for Research, etc.

We continue to work with our development officer (Matt Hammett) who has identified several donors who are interested in supporting allied health initiatives.

Community College partners: many students in our undergraduate major transfer from community colleges. Other SLP and AuD graduate training programs have partnered with community colleges to recruit underrepresented students who might not be aware of graduate school opportunities or the fields of audiology and speech language pathology. We plan to investigate how we can better partner with community colleges (through written agreement) in our area to recruit more diverse students into our undergraduate major and graduate programs.

Has your department previously submitted this proposal?

If so, briefly outline any significant changes and indicate the feedback received during that budget process.

We submitted the AuD proposal many years ago as a decision package to the legislature. The university recognized the shortage of audiologists in Washington state and decided to fund the proposal internally using a differential tuition model. While we have been able to recruit students into our program, diverse students and students from out of state frequently chose more affordable programs where they can receive substantive scholarships and tuition waivers.

Describe any funding alternatives that have been explored.

Note both alternative approaches in addressing the problem, as well as alternatives to new funding (repurposing existing divisional funding or one-time fund use). If these alternatives are not being pursued, explain why.

We have charged our graduate students significantly above the base graduate tuition to cover the cost of faculty and clinical staff salaries. Though this approach is working in some ways (we have enough students to offer the program), it is not meeting the goal of training a more diverse work force. It is also not fulfilling the mission of the university or the department. At present, the number of SLP clinicians is not cover the programmatic needs of the students and the additional clinician with experience in ASD/AAC is critical.

Section 5: Fulfillment of WWU's Strategic Plan's Core Themes and Goals

Please explain how your proposal and the anticipated outcomes will advance the Core Themes and Goals of [WWU's 2018-2025 Strategic Plan](#) and the strategic priorities set for this budget cycle. How does this allocation or withdrawal of funding advance or hinder access to Western, academic excellence, and/or inclusive achievement?

Core Themes

Advancing Inclusive Success

This proposal aims to increase diversity in the Communication Sciences and Disorders program, and in the fields of speech language pathology and audiology. By financially supporting graduate students, and adding to our clinical expertise, we will be supporting inclusive success for students on Western's campus as well as community members.

Increasing Washington Impact

This proposal will serve the needs of the citizens of Washington State by training diverse allied health professionals to work in the public schools and private sector (hospitals and outpatient clinics) to support the increasingly diverse children and adults in Washington State who have culturally and linguistically diverse needs, hearing loss, autism spectrum disorders, and other complex communication needs. Although our program capacity is 12 students per cohort, the number of students enrolled is, on average, 7 per cohort. If granted, this proposal would lower tuition and allow us to enroll more students, including those from diverse backgrounds. The AuD program at WWU is the only program in the state, and providing the maximum number of diverse qualified audiologists is paramount.

Enhancing Academic Excellence

Recruiting students with diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives will elevate academic experiences for all undergraduate and graduate students. The end result will be an increase in the of diverse clinicians and researchers in our field.

Goals

Western will provide a transformational education grounded in the liberal arts and sciences and based on innovative scholarship, research, and creative activity.

Our graduate program already provides a transformational education with an emphasis on evidence-based practice and innovative scholarship. Over the past three years our faculty have published 17 peer reviewed articles and have mentored research projects of 35 graduates and 33 undergraduate students. Our third student in 4 years just earned a highly competitive NIH summer research training grant.

Western will advance a deeper understanding of and engagement with place.

A central element of our training program is our donations-based community clinic. We feel this demonstrates our commitment to community and place. In our clinic, we sell hearing aids through a contract with Indian Health Services; this is another means by which we support our local community, in particular the members of the community on whose tribal lands Western sits.

Our program provides an impressive amount of clinical service to the community. In fact, between fall of 2019 and spring of 2021 our students provided approximately 4540 hours of assessment and treatment services to clients in the Speech-Language Clinic, free of charge. The new clinical staff person in will add to this service be able to train students and community providers on communication difficulties related to ASD/AAC.

Western will foster a caring and supportive environment where all members are respected and treated fairly.

This proposal supports access to higher education for students in Washington State, most importantly, students who have been traditionally underrepresented in our graduate programs. Recruiting students into our programs with different backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences will increase problem-solving, empathy, respect, and innovation.

Our department created a Diversity, Equity and Justice committee in response to the increased awareness around discrimination. The committee has four goals including: creating a safe and supportive space for our current students, supporting, and training our faculty to provide and teach about culturally humble practices, promoting transparency in our program and recruiting diverse faculty and students. Our committee has implemented many changes over the past three years with input from current students.

Western will pursue justice and equity in its policies, practices, and impacts.

This goal of this proposal is to increase equity and access to advanced training for students who otherwise might not have access.

Section 6: Space Planning, Capital, and Maintenance Considerations

Major Equipment of Software Needs

If the proposal includes new major equipment or software (>\$25K), please indicate its anticipated useful life, and associated operating costs such as service contracts or annual licenses.

This proposal does not include major equipment or software

Space or Infrastructure Upgrades

Do you believe new space, space modifications, or infrastructure upgrades will be required? If so, please provide the following as best you can.

Please note that Capital Planning and Development will review and evaluate the request after the proposal is submitted to determine options.

Scope:

N/A

Square Footage:

N/A

Cost for capital component:

N/A

Changes to the Use of Existing Space

If existing space is being repurposed, explain how the proposed activities will be accommodated within existing space. For how long? Who will need to approve the proposed new use of this space?

Existing space will not be re-purposed.

Incorporation of Physical Accessibility and Cultural Inclusion

For proposals that include capital development or IT infrastructure, please explain how physical accessibility and cultural inclusion (beyond statutory requirements) will be resourced as foundational elements of project development.

N/A

Proposal Title: CSD Diversity, Equity, Justice Graduate Initiative

Division: HSS

Department: Communication Sciences & Disorders

Department Contact: Kimberly Peters

Salary and Benefits	Description	Fiscal Year 2024					Fiscal Year 2025				
		FTE	Salary	Benefits	One-Time Costs	Total	FTE	Salary	Benefits	One-Time Costs	Total
Faculty Positions		2.56	\$290,198	\$98,538	\$0	\$388,736	2.56	290,198	98,538	\$0	388,736
Professional/Exempt Positions		-	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	-	-	-	\$0	-
Classified Positions		6.49	\$544,709	\$224,407	\$3,000	\$772,116	6.49	544,709	224,407	\$3,000	772,116
Student Salaries (Graduate Assistants, Hourly Student, etc)		3.03	\$49,048	\$4,673	\$0	\$53,722	3.03	49,048	4,673	\$0	53,722
Total Salaries and Benefits		12.08	\$883,955	\$327,619	\$3,000	\$1,214,574	12.08	883,955	327,619	\$3,000	1,214,574

Non-Personnel Expenses	Description	Units	Price per		Recurring Costs	One-Time Costs	Total	Price per		Recurring Costs	One-Time Costs	Total
			Unit	Unit				Unit	Unit			
Supplies and Materials	EMR & Audiometer Calibration	1	\$38,500		\$38,500		\$38,500	1	\$38,500	\$38,500		\$38,500
Professional Service Contracts	Honorariums for externship supervisors	24	\$100		\$2,400		\$2,400	24	\$100	\$2,400		\$2,400
Other Goods and Services, Memberships, etc.	Increase Operating Budget to Support Facu	2	\$2,000		\$4,000		\$4,000	2	\$2,000	\$4,000		\$4,000
Travel	Site Visits	1	\$5,000		\$5,000		\$5,000	1	\$5,000	\$5,000		\$5,000
Other	Faculty Travel	2	\$2,500		\$5,000		\$5,000	2	\$2,500	\$5,000		\$5,000
Capital Facility Expenses (New Space or Space Modifications)							\$0					\$0
Total Non-Personnel Expenses					\$54,900		\$54,900			\$54,900		\$54,900

University Indirect Costs	Description	Include?	Recurring		One-Time	Total	Recurring		One-Time	Total
			Costs	Costs			Costs	Costs		
Libraries** (Estimated at \$10k per faculty member)	\$10,000 per new faculty member	YES	\$40,000		\$0	\$40,000	\$40,000		\$0	\$40,000
Academic Support Services/Student Support Services	3% of Recurring Direct Costs	YES	\$37,994		\$0	\$37,994	\$37,994		\$0	\$37,994
Institutional Support	2% of Recurring Direct Costs	YES	\$25,329		\$0	\$25,329	\$25,329		\$0	\$25,329
Plant Operation and Maintenance	3% of Recurring Direct Costs	YES	\$37,994		\$0	\$37,994	\$37,994		\$0	\$37,994
Graduate TA Waiver	Input amounts for new TA Positions	YES	\$32,700		\$0	\$32,700	\$32,700		\$0	\$32,700
Total Indirect Costs			\$174,018		\$0	\$174,018	\$174,018		\$0	\$174,018

Total Proposal, All Direct and Indirect Costs	FTE	Head Count	Recurring		One-Time	Fiscal Year	FTE	Head Count	Recurring		One-Time	Fiscal Year
			Costs	Costs					Costs	Costs		
	12.08	19.00	\$1,440,492		\$3,000	\$1,443,492	12.08	19.00	\$1,440,492		\$3,000	\$1,443,492