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: Institute for Critical Disability Studies Sustaining Budget
Division: Academic Affairs
College/Unit: Institute for Critical Disability Studies
Department Contact: Andrew Lucchesi and G McGrew, icds@wwu.edu

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 Institute for Critical Disability Studies (ICDS) addresses an urgent need at Western and across the state for a regional hub that connects the rapidly growing interdisciplinary academic field of critical disability studies with intersectional local communities, faculty, students, and the public.

Many universities around the state offer degree programs in Critical Disability Studies (CDS), but Western has lagged behind. The ICDS is building a new minor and a slate of courses with our new DISA designation to expand our offerings and consolidate the expertise we already have. CDS has experienced dramatic growth, with both the number of sections and net enrollment in disability-focused courses increasing by a factor of more than 5X since AY 2018-19 (see Figure 1). Our new minor
will allow us to build off this momentum and create an academic program that Western can be proud of.

There is a critical need to provide for students who are often marginalized or underserved at institutions like Western. In a recent survey, disabled and chronically ill students at Western reported unmet needs and feeling excluded (SJEC Underrepresented Student Needs Assessment)\(^1\). ICDS addresses this challenge by providing mentorship to students through our committees and events; student support and empowerment are core to our mission. In this way, the ICDS will contribute to recruitment and retention of disabled students at Western.

One exciting opportunity that comes from the ICDS’s work is the opportunity to reach out from Western into the local community. Several existing programs, such as the Salish Sea Institute, include an intentional connection to community members and the region as part of their mission. ICDS puts community engagement among its core values, which is why we develop events such as the annual UnConference and our Fellows program, which explicitly bring academics and community members into collaboration. Community members continually remark that our events give them permission to be themselves and to join together in disability-affirming spaces that do not exist elsewhere. We embrace these real opportunities to contribute to our local community.

We have an opportunity to build this kind of disability-affirming community within Western as well. At the moment, disability-related student support at Western comes through the ADEI Unit, specifically the legal compliance and student resource center, the Disability Access Center. The ICDS is situated within Academic Affairs, and it is led by faculty, students, and staff working together. We offer our own contributions to disability culture at Western through programming related to disability experiences, scholarship, history, and culture. We also provide academic support for students studying CDS, including mentoring and scholarships. Students, faculty, and staff work side-by-side to create disability-positive programs and to lead the ICDS committees and initiatives. Throughout all of this work, we seek to build a positive culture of disability inclusion and pride, and in so doing to empower disabled students, faculty, and staff to create big things and make change in the world.

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.

The ICDS was funded on a one-time basis for FY 2023 at $223,576 for 3.58 FTE and $41,665 for non-personnel expenses. **This year, we seek sustaining budgetary support.**

Our one-time budget included three personnel types:
- Co-directors (faculty or staff) 0.5 FTE each
- Administrative Services Manager 1.0 FTE
- Two Graduate TAs 1.0 FTE each

It also included two major non-personnel expenses:

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\(^1\) 2020 Social Justice and Equity Committee Underrepresented Student Needs Assessment (sjec.wwu.edu)
• Academic and Community Events $18,000
• Fellows Program $20,000

To accommodate our program’s expected growth, for FY 2024 we are requesting $306,851 for 4.66 FTE and $107,665 for non-personnel expenses. For FY 2025 this will be $344,153 for 5.95 FTE and $72,665 in non-personnel expenses.

New expenses for FY 2024 are:
• $8,500 operating budget
• 0.42 FTE for faculty course releases to teach five DISA courses
• $128,422 salary and benefits for two co-directors
• $80,124 salary and benefits for new Admin Services Manager position
• A $25,000 Fellows Program budget
• Events and professional memberships budget of $19,165
• A $5,000 travel budget for conference travel and student recruitment
• A one-time cost of $50,000 to retrofit ICDS office spaces for accessibility
• Two 1.0 FTE Grad TA positions
• Graduate TA halftime summer pay and benefits for two GTAs, 0.25 FTE
• $5,000 hourly student salary budget

For FY 2025, our budget makes the following increases over FY 2024:
• An 0.16 FTE increase in faculty course releases for a total of 0.58 FTE to teach seven DISA courses
• An increase to our total number of Graduate TAs by 1.0 FTE to 3.0 FTE GTAs total
• An additional increase to the Fellows Program budget by $10,000 to total $35,000
• An additional increase to the travel budget by $5,000 to $10,000 total
• An increase from two to three halftime Graduate TAs supported with summer pay and benefits, totaling 0.38 FTE

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.

As Critical Disability Studies (CDS) is a highly interdisciplinary and intersectional field, students from all majors are able to engage in CDS to increase their understanding and practice of core ADEI principles, particularly the “A” for Accessibility – beyond minimum ADA compliance metrics – and “I” for Inclusion of visibly and invisibly disabled individuals, experience, and culture. There are countless students, faculty, and staff at Western who have personal stake in improving disability representation and accessibility at Western and the broader community. Education research shows that the work of programs like ICDS has the potential to directly increase the recruitment of disabled faculty, staff, and students (Palombi 2002; Izzo et al 2011)2,3.

ICDS’s impact goes beyond supporting ADEI to ADEIB, that is, Belonging. When access, diversity, equity, and inclusion are properly practiced, the historically marginalized and perennially othered may

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2 Palombi, Barbara J. “Recruitment and Admission of Students with Disabilities” 2002
3 Izzo, Murray, Priest, and McArrell “Using Student Learning Communities to Recruit STEM Students with Disabilities” 2011
finally be able to feel belonging. Even as the first letter “A” of access is often neglected, and inclusion of visibly and invisibly disabled individuals can feel like an afterthought, the ICDS actively cultivates belonging and connection in our operations by centering disabled lives and celebrating our intersectional and complex experiences and needs as valid and real. By feeling like they belong at Western, students in the ICDS minor or engaging with our programming are more likely to persist and graduate in a more timely manner. Recent research further supports the importance of belonging measured in student retention and timely graduation outcomes (Strayhorn 2018).  

Supporting a Critical Disability Studies academic program and minor is sustainable in that it already utilizes many of the existing resources and coursework across Western to help build a valuable, socially impactful, and in-demand minor. The figure below shows the annual number of student enrollments in courses that could be counted toward the ICDS’s new Minor in Critical Disability Studies (particularly Topics courses and Electives) between AY 2018-19 and AY 2022-23. Enrollments in courses aligned with Critical Disability Studies have risen dramatically across Western as the number and demand for courses has increased from both students and faculty alike, approaching almost 1,000 concluding enrollments and nearly 40 sections annually. Due to the high demand for this coursework, most of these sections conclude enrollment full or very near capacity (median 95%).

By investing in ICDS’s mission to improve accessibility, equity, and climate for our current and future visibly and invisibly disabled students, faculty, and staff, Western makes a material commitment to advancing sustainability of its most valuable resource: its people. The Western community benefits when we more sustainably engage in scholarship and employment. Disability-focused research provides opportunities for departments and faculty to explore new grants and mechanisms for recruitment, retention, and research (Richter et al 2011). These benefits are magnified by embracing

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4 Strayhorn, T. L. “College Students’ Sense of Belonging: A Key to Educational Success for All Students” 2018  
5 Richter, Loendorf, and Mackelparg “Utilizing Bridges Across Colleges to Propose a Grant to Improve the Recruitment and Retention of Students with Disabilities in STEM Programs” 2011
ADEI principles inherent in Critical Disability Studies, including accessibility and Universal Design, core components of the Institute for Critical Disability Studies’ mission.

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.

As a new Institute with a fledgling academic program, the ICDS plans to continually examine our outcomes and success through multiple metrics. Broadly speaking, we will spend much of next year collecting baseline data for a longitudinal analysis of the effectiveness of the program across various factors.

First, since the Minor is expected to launch next year, success of our Minor will be measured initially in enrollment of DISA courses and increases in the number of students declaring – and later, completing – the Minor.

Second, we plan to conduct several climate surveys of disabled students, faculty, and staff at Western to evaluate changes and improvements in campus climate around disabled community members and improving access at Western. We will refer to the results from the SJEC Summer 2020 Assessment of Underrepresented Student Needs: Disability and Chronic Health Conditions Survey to track areas in which disabled and chronically ill students at Western communicated unmet needs and distress. In particular, staying connected with students through multiple channels will be essential: We will be checking in with the ICDS Student Advisory Council regularly to keep a pulse on student climate and respond to future emergent issues.

Third, we will partner with the Office of Admissions and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) to examine the overall impact on recruitment, and eventually, retention and graduation at the university level. We anticipate that students that take DISA courses via the minor are more likely to persist at Western and will graduate in a more timely fashion.

Fourth, the ICDS will partner with the OIE to gather data on the historical rates of retention of disabled faculty and staff to measure our impact on faculty and staff retention, which we anticipate will reflect improving attitudes toward disability and a more deliberately accessible, sustainable, and inclusive work culture for neurodiverse and disabled employees.

6 Full report for SJEC Summer 2020 Assessment of Underrepresented Student Needs: Disability and Chronic Health Conditions Survey
We expect that the ICDS’s impact includes attracting new students and faculty to our Institute. We hope that this increase will be supported by recording increases in the number of new and early-career faculty teaching DISA and cross-listed CDS-relevant coursework. We will track our community engagement through the level of participation we receive for our public programming, particularly the number of applications we receive for the UnConference and Fellows Program from outside of Western, as well as qualitative responses from exit surveys given after our flagship events and programs. We aim to achieve a high level of community involvement in these programs so that they represent more than academic programs that are ostensibly “open” to the public, but largely inaccessible.

**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.

The ICDS offers students, faculty, and staff a place to find personal acceptance, empowerment, and support for their full engagement in the life of the university. Students gravitate to DISA courses and report the personal importance of the course material. Year after year, faculty are arriving at Western with academic expertise in disability-related topics, through dissertation research, scholarly publications, and teaching experience. An increased presence of the ICDS will draw faculty and students to the university.

**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.).

Given the extensive growth of the ICDS initiative in the past two years, as well as its success this past year through one-time funding, we have demonstrated strong evidence to expect that, with the appropriate funding, the ICDS will continue to flourish and grow.

**Anticipated Consequences if Proposal is Not Funded:**
What are the anticipated consequences of not funding this proposal?

If our proposal is not funded, the ICDS will not be able to sustain programming or personnel positions. We will have to terminate the administrative staff position and remove the graduate student assistantship roles. We will not be able to fund events. We will not be adequately resourced to support positive disability culture at Western or advance the important recruitment and retention work that the ICDS already performs. Students and faculty interested in CDS may choose instead to approach the many other state institutions that already offer disability studies programs, and place-bound students and faculty will not have the option to engage in a CDS program in the region. We will let down donors, who are currently funding scholarship programs, and severely curtail initiatives to approach new donors.
Moreover, the ICDS demonstrates the 7 core principles and values endorsed on pg 4 of the Structural Equity Team’s recent report on Applying an ADEI Lens in WWU’s Budgeting Process. Given the important and public facing work the ICDS has already performed locally, regionally, and nationally, should the ICDS not receive funding, Western will be sending a strong negative message about the extent of its commitment to its own mission and ADEI budgeting priorities.

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 ICDS began as a collaborative enterprise at our first UnConference in Fall 2019. Interested faculty, students, and staff brainstormed the idea at a roundtable workshop. From there, we created a steering committee of students, faculty, and staff representing every college across the university, that soon grew to more than 70 participants. As we developed the proposal, we conducted listening sessions across campus, some specifically targeting student input, others for faculty and staff. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we continued to collaborate and develop Zoom events, open to interested members of the campus community, to develop and articulate the values and commitments of the institute. We invited preeminent Disability Studies scholars with experience building programs to lead the discussion. Every step in our development has been characterized by authentic and engaged participation from stakeholders across the university. Concurrently, we designed the DISA minor in Critical Disability Studies, collaborating with chairs, deans, and faculty from departments, colleges, and programs across the university, including Fine and Performing Arts, WGSS, English, Woodring, CSE, and Anthropology. As a heavily interdisciplinary collaboration, collegial communication has been essential to ensure that unintended negative impacts are minimized.

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 began working with the Foundation from the Institute’s inception; ICDS leadership corresponded with Kim O’Neill and met with Mark Bagley. Since then, we have been cultivating outside donors, and have received significant support from multiple donors, including a gift which allowed us to offer our Mark West Scholarship. We have collaborated with Manca Valum at the Foundation to develop a list of priorities for future gifts. Recently, we established a Development Committee to pursue grant and fellowship opportunities as well as to cultivate outside donors.
Additionally, as noted in Section 2, the Critical Disability Studies academic program and minor will also utilize many existing resources in the form of currently funded coursework across Western programs as topics and elective offerings applicable to our program.

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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 a proposal of similar scope in 2022. We did not receive any feedback but were awarded one-time budget approval without being asked to make any changes. The present proposal increases the budget for faculty course releases, for our Fellows program, travel funding, TA summer support, and office space.

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.

As stated above, we have pursued, or plan to pursue, supplemental funding including outside donors, fellowships, and grants. However, none of these avenues – even a major gift – could provide the critical institutional buy-in or commitment that is signaled by sustained funding within the university budget.

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

The ICDS is committed to promoting inclusive success by sustaining and empowering students with disabilities who have been historically underserved and excluded from full participation. Our aim is to improve the retention rates of disabled students through direct mentorship, student-focused public programs, and inclusion in ICDS committees and leadership. Our DISA courses offer students important opportunities to see themselves represented in a positive way and to pursue academic programs where they can explore their identity, community, and history. Not only do we offer these benefits to undergraduate students, disabled or not, we also offer graduate students opportunities to serve as community leaders through our GTA positions. Serving students is core to our mission, which is represented clearly by the way we incorporate student involvement into all of our committees and event planning, as well as offering paid hourly positions for students assisting in our events, programs, and initiatives.

Increasing Washington Impact

The ICDS strives to connect the field of critical disability studies to real-world professions and local communities. This is why our minor draws from so many disciplines, to allow students the opportunity to learn about cultural and social models of disability in a way that is relevant to their personal professional journey. Disability Studies is relevant to a wide range of professions,
including education, design, rehabilitation counseling, social services, entrepreneurship, medicine, and the arts. Students entering these and other fields will benefit from having a deep knowledge of how disability functions in society as a concept and as a lived experience. In addition, the ICDS directly engages with local and regional communities through its UnConference and Fellows program, which intentionally reach beyond Western.

Enhancing Academic Excellence

ICDS promotes the values of progressive liberal arts and science education, focusing on the values of equity, diversity, and critical engagement. Drawing on the rapidly growing scholarly discipline of Critical Disability Studies, students learn to understand disability as an aspect of the human experience, knowledge that they apply to their professional and academic lives. The ICDS enhances Western’s offerings in the areas of cultural studies and humanities, but it also brings new possibilities to the sciences, design, and business.

Goals

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

The ICDS offers a unique interdisciplinary program focused on the cultural and social aspects of the disability experience. Students find this study transformational because it allows them to confront their biases about disability and come to understand it as a source of insight and cultural connection. Our courses draw together scholarship from a wide range of fields, including the humanities, performing arts, social sciences, education, and the sciences. Students take a range of DISA courses, including a senior capstone, in which they bring their diverse scholarly and creative lives to the study of disability. We go beyond the classroom by hosting public lectures, conferences, and events.

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

The ICDS takes seriously its commitments to engage with our state, region, and community. We offer several programs each year that draw in participation from members of the local community, especially those representing Whatcom county. For instance, the annual UnConference has attracted participants from local community colleges, Bellingham city services, nonprofits, and local entrepreneurs. Our Fellows program similarly draws in participants from the region who are not affiliated with Western. We operate with the value that place-based engagement requires an understanding of disability principles, including universal design, which asserts that if a place is not accessible to all, it is not sufficiently accessible. We work actively to include interdisciplinary and intersectional philosophies within our real-world practices, incorporating the values of disability justice, a BIPOC-led movement for radical inclusion and local action.

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

One of the central tenets of disability justice is "Nothing about us without us is for us." The ICDS takes this idea as our starting point. We have reached out to a wide array of stakeholders within
Western and the larger local community. We center the participation of our disabled community and encourage the engaged participation of their allies. Our committee membership is structured to come from all parts of the university, including faculty, staff, and students to ensure enfranchisement of key stakeholder groups. Our attention to access and universal design reflects our commitment to proactively fostering a supportive and respectful community.

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

The ICDS holds justice and equity as central principles in developing its policies, practices, and impacts. Our mission aligns with the values of the disability justice movement, which asserts that disability advocacy must be led by members of the disabled community themselves, and that decisions must be made communally: “Nothing about us without us”. Metrics for success must also be made collaboratively. Representation of all stakeholders, particularly students, is a core value reflected in our committee structure. In terms of impacts, we measure our success by the impact our classes, programs, and mentorship will have on student retention, believing that having opportunities to be in community with other disabled students and to learn about disability community will have direct benefits for students. We do this by offering supportive environments for students, who often do not receive mentorship from other disabled people elsewhere in their lives. Faculty and staff find solidarity and receive mentorship in personally relevant matters such as disclosing disability and responding to bias they may encounter in their own lives. At Western, we contribute our expertise on disability-related issues, including teaching and advocacy. We also partner with other units in student services and ADEI whose work intersects with disability.

**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.

N/A

**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:**

The Institute for Critical Disability Studies requires permanent office space to accommodate in-person administrative staff and graduate teaching assistants. While the space was expected to be identified in FY 2023, the search to locate appropriate space is ongoing and expected to extend into FY 2024. We are requesting $50,000 in one-time costs to ensure that the ICDS office space will be appropriately furnished and/or modified to include a fully accessible design.

**Square Footage:**

TBD
Cost for capital component:
$50,000

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?

The ICDS does not yet have an existing space.

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.

The Institute for Critical Disability Studies operates under the ethos of Universal Design, and requires office spaces that are able to comfortably accommodate multiple disabled students, faculty, and staff, including wheelchair users and any accompanying service animals. Our one-time cost estimate includes any potentially significant accessibility renovations to the space, in case it is not sufficiently accessible, such as door frame widening or installing button-operated doors.
**Proposal Title: Institute for Critical Disability Studies Sustaining Budget**

**Division: Academic Affairs**

**Department: PROV/Institute for Critical Disability Studies**

**Department Contact: Andrew Lucchesi and G McGrew, icds@wwu.edu**

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**Total Salaries and Benefits**

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**Non-Personnel Expenses**

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**Total Non-Personnel Expenses**

| Units | $57,665 | $50,000 | $107,665 |

**University Indirect Costs**

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**Total Indirect Costs**

| | Total | $51,479 | $0 | $51,479 |

**Total Proposal, All Direct and Indirect Costs**

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Fiscal Year 2025

**Department Contact:** Andrew Lucchesi and G McGrew, icds@wwu.edu

**Division:** Academic Affairs

**Department:** PROV/Institute for Critical Disability Studies

**Description**

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*Fiscal Year 2024:

Fiscal Year 2025:

University Indirect Costs*

**EB (Estimated at $10k per faculty member)**

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