

2021-2023 Biennium Internal Budget Proposal Narrative

Division: Academic Affairs/CHSS/WGSS

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.

Honoring Black Feminist Thought Through Faculty Hiring

- 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.)*

WWU’s strategic plan avers that “our most important challenge is to advance inclusive success.” The 2020 statement from Black students at WWU, recognized as an important guide towards that inclusive success, calls upon all of us to address anti-Blackness in terms of programmatic offerings, course material, and faculty hiring. Therefore, we propose a mini-cluster hire within CHSS of at least three scholars of Black Feminist Thought to be appointed to any willing department in CHSS as their tenure home with half of their teaching dedicated to the WGSS program.

According to the Provost “Hiring faculty and staff who are committed to cultivating equitable and diverse learning and work environments is imperative to fulfilling [Western’s strategic plan goals](#) of Advancing Inclusive Success, Increasing Washington Impact, and Enhancing Academic Excellence.” Consequently, it is imperative that we not consider a scholar’s focus on equity and justice as a bonus but rather as a necessary, central component of their work. Western has never before conducted a tenure-track search for a scholar of Black Feminist Thought, which has contributed to the underrepresentation of Black people and ideas across the university.

Black Feminist Thought is a fundamental element of the study of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, particularly given that key concepts like intersectionality emerge out of the subfield. Yet, WGSS does not have any faculty who specialize in Black Feminist Thought and suffers from a substantial curricular gap as a result. Acting on this proposal would significantly strengthen the profile and offerings of WGSS, facilitating further growth of the program as it simultaneously infuses Black Feminist Thought into CHSS departments that also lack experts on the subject. We note that existing appointments in History, Political Science, and Communications have successfully allowed faculty to contribute extensively to both their home departments and this program.

Executing a mini-cluster hire of scholars of Black Feminist Thought would support their success and retention more than a single hire based in any one department. Furthermore, it would provide resource incentives for departments eager to diversify their curriculum while allocating the scarce resources available for hiring in a less zero-sum way than a ranked system where some departments conduct a search and others do not. Finally and perhaps most importantly, it would demonstrate the University's commitment to materially addressing the bases of inequities within the institution and in academia at large.

Anticipated Outcome(s):

The hiring of three scholars of Black Feminist Thought in CHSS would significantly expand the curricular offerings of multiple courses of study within the college. In addition to their impact on students, particularly students from historically marginalized backgrounds, these scholars would be likely to drive curricular and institutional change on many levels. A commitment to hiring in this manner should also help increase retention of faculty and staff of color, particularly Black faculty and staff.

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.)*

If executed, this proposal will have a positive impact on several Overall Metrics, including Enhancing Academic Excellence (specifically % of faculty who are poc), Increasing Washington Impact (specifically % of fall students who are students of color), and Advancing Inclusive Success (specifically enrollment and retention of diverse students). We anticipate significant impact on the Equity Scorecard, especially given the relatively modest cost of the proposal.

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 proposal was designed to address as directly as possible all five of the goals outlined in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences Strategic Plan. CHSS seeks to 'offer a wide array of learning experiences in the humanities and social sciences' but is not currently staffed with any experts in the many Black Feminist interventions within the humanities and social sciences. The college aims to 'assemble, support, and retain a diverse and engaged community' which requires a resource commitment focused on the faculty most prepared to be engaged in the diversification of our communities. We attempt to 'expand the capacity to produce knowledge, think critically, and communicate effectively,' all of which require an investment in faculty who are conducting research in their field, that is, tenure-line hiring. The goal of 'fostering better communication and cooperation among different communities and cultures' requires prioritizing the recruitment of people from groups that have been historically underrepresented at Western and in the professoriate at large. Lastly, this proposal most directly addresses the goal of 'fostering introspective, respectful environments that support diverse thought, experiences, and cultures.'

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 proposal supports every stated aspect of the University Mission and Strategic Objectives. We would recruit a trio of scholars to provide ‘a transformational education grounded in the liberal arts and sciences and based on innovative scholarship, research, and creative activity.’ Bringing these scholars to campus would ‘advance a deeper understanding of and engagement with place’ by aligning the demographic composition of our faculty more with that of the state we serve and by asking us to reckon with the problems of anti-Blackness on campus and in the Pacific Northwest more widely. These professors would contribute to ‘fostering a caring and supportive environment where all members are respected and treated fairly’ by emphasizing the importance of intellectual work done by people from marginalized communities in their courses and research. Finally, executing a mini-cluster hire in Black Feminist Thought would provide evidence for the stated aspiration that ‘Western will pursue justice and equity in its policies, practices, and impacts’ by directing resources towards structurally underfunded groups in academia and the broader community.

What are the consequences of not funding this proposal?

Continued dissatisfaction by Black faculty, staff, and students at the lack of institutional commitment to insuring the quality of their experiences, leading to lower retention and failure to meet equity benchmarks.

Continued student anger at the lack of relevant courses and programs as well as with the composition of the faculty and their specialties.

What alternatives were explored?

WGSS has successfully pursued multiple strategies to staff and expand our curriculum, including sharing NTT faculty members with multiple programs/departments, sharing TT faculty with CHSS departments, and individual course buyouts. None of these can regularly provide any expertise in Black Feminist Thought.

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

College of Humanities and Social Sciences and any departments contained within it that wish to participate.

Equipment needed:

Startup equipment.

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>Assistant Professor (FY23)</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>\$91,001</i>	<i>\$273,003</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.):

\$7,500 in operating costs.

Space Requirements:

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

Three faculty office spaces in the appropriate locations. Given that the three positions will most likely be housed in three different departments, we are not anticipating that finding one faculty office in each of those departments will be a problem. However, when departments express interest in housing one of these positions they would need to explain whether space would be a problem or not and how to address it if so.

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?

[Click here to enter text](#)

How much new space will be required?

[Click here to enter text](#)