

E2021-2023 Biennium Internal Budget Proposal Narrative

Division: Enrollment and 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.

Permanent Funding: Western Success Scholars

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.)*

In May of 2019, Western Washington University was awarded a 3-year grant from the East Seattle Foundation to develop the Western Success Scholars program – a program to support former foster youth and unaccompanied homeless youth. Prior to this grant award, students who met statewide eligibility for the Passport to Colleges program were supported on a part-time basis by a staff member in Student Outreach Services. This staff member also had other advising and programmatic responsibilities so attention to these students was somewhat limited by competing job functions. In addition, there were not financial support systems in place to support students who didn't meet the criteria to participate in the Passport to College program.

Through the work of a full-dedicated Program Manager, the program provides continuity and a coordinated case management approach in guiding students engaged in the program to connect with Western resources to support their personal and academic success. Coordination of care with key campus partners (e.g. Financial Aid, Counseling Center, Student Outreach Services, Career Services, Admissions, the Office of Off-campus Living, and the Office of Student Life) in providing support services has been a critical component of this program. The program also provides opportunities for the students in the program to meet each other and to build community with one another – which has been particularly critical during this time of remote work and learning.

Grant funding for the Western Success Scholars program will end in June of 2022. Funds are requested to embed this initiative as a permanent program in the institution's offerings to support a population of students that have already faced immense hurdles and experiences to access college and who have proven to be successful with adequate levels of support (See Anticipated Outcomes for early data on the success of the program)

Anticipated Outcome(s):

As outlined in the grant proposal over a 3 year period (FY20-22):

- To increase the number of students participating in the program from 20 (previously supported via the Passport to College program) to 40
- To increase the year-to-year retention rate of students in the program from 75% to 80%

- The number of students in the program in good academic standing will improve from 60% to 75%

As of census day in Fall 2020 (just one year into the project), the number of students enrolled in the program was 59 thereby exceeding the grant expectations in the first year. Two students graduated in the 2019-20 school year.

Of those students who participated in the program in the 2019-20 academic year and did not graduate, the retention rate to Fall 2020 was 86%.

At the end of fall 2020 term, 92% of the students enrolled in the program for the current year were in good academic standing, which far exceeds the expectations of the grant thus far and was during a period of remote learning due to Covid-19.

This data supports the fact that with full-time dedicated case management and support systems for this student population, retention rates are higher than average institutional rates and these students are very successful academically. Anticipated outcomes will be adjusted after the grant period has ended.

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.)*

Per the grant project, the following indicators are being used in assessing the outcomes of this program:

- Headcount enrollment on census day (10th day of the quarter) each fall term
- Spring-to-fall enrollments each year, exclusive of transfers out
- Fall-to-fall, winter-to-winter and spring-to-spring enrollments, exclusive of transfers out
- Quarterly reports of term and cumulative GPA, including scholastic standing status

In regards to the University's strategic plan, the impact of this program is quite relevant to our work in improving retention and graduation rates institutionally and more specifically in eliminating achievement gaps particularly for students who are Pell Eligible.

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.)*

Enrollment and Student Services approved a [division wide plan](#) in August 2020. This program is in direct support of the following Enrollment and Student Services goals and objectives:

- **Goal 1-1B and 1B-2**
- **Goal 2-2B-1, 2B-2 and 2B-3**
- **Goal 3-3A-1, 3A-2, 3B-1**

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 funding request directly speaks to Western's goal of Advancing Inclusive Success. This is a population of students who have routinely experienced barriers both in accessing avenues to higher education (particularly at the 4 year level) and once enrolled understanding how to navigate the systems we have put in place to remain enrolled and graduate with a Western degree. It is imperative that we factor this population into our enrollment management and planning considerations as early results indicate that with appropriate levels of support that this population can be highly successful and that they are a critical component of us eliminating the achievement gaps that have been stated in the institution's goals.

What are the consequences of not funding this proposal?

This grant project has already exceeded expectations for student connection in the first 18 months of the project well beyond grant funding expectations. Clearly there is a need to support this population of students who are integral to our ADEI efforts. To eliminate funding for this program has a series of consequences that include reducing access to higher education for a key group of students and not fulfilling our grant commitments. We stated in the original grant a commitment to support this program, albeit before Covid-19 impacted our operations. Not fulfilling this commitment could be detrimental to future funding requests or commitments with other funding sources.

What alternatives were explored?

We will continue to explore opportunities with the current grant funding agency to extend their financial support beyond the grant period. Due to Covid-19, many of the original grant activities we had envisioned have been difficult to implement in a remote setting. However, we cannot rely on the East Seattle Foundation as a permanent source of funding for staffing and programming support. In addition, we are working with University Advancement to solicit other external sources of financial support - both long and short term - but this funding is also uncertain at this time. If we are to continue this effort, a permanent and sustainable source of funding will be necessary.

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

Western Success Scholars, Student Success Initiatives unit, Financial Aid, University Advancement, Office of the VP for Enrollment and Student Services

Equipment needed:

Not applicable

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

Item:

Not applicable

Purpose:

Not applicable

Cost:

Not applicable

Anticipated Useful Life:

Not applicable

Replacement Cost if any:

Not applicable

Human Resources *(Complete the table below adding additional rows if necessary):*

See Attached Excel spreadsheet for more detail on budget information

- Western Success Scholar Program Manager: 1.0 FTE at \$56,822 salary (beginning FY23 – the second year of the biennium)
- Student Navigators: 3 students working 10 hrs per week during the academic year, each paid \$4,396 for a total of \$13,188 plus benefits (beginning FY23 - second year of the biennium) We're counting each student employee as 1 headcount and as a .50 FTE in the spreadsheet since students are limited to 20 hours per week.

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

See attached spreadsheet on expenses

Space Requirements:

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

Space is currently allocated. No need for additional space.

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

Not applicable

What needs can be accommodated within your existing space?

Not applicable

How much new space will be required?

Not applicable