

## **Emergent Budget Proposal Narrative**

### **Division: University Relations & Marketing**

#### **MARKETING OPERATIONS BUDGET**

**Please check the appropriate category for this proposal and provide a brief (1-2 sentences) explaining the selection:**

- Urgent unforeseeable items that have arisen since the FY17-19 budget build process
- Items calling for prompt action that are so critical they cannot wait until the FY20-21 biennial budget build process
- Items that have arisen as a consequence of changed conditions, such as, but not limited to:
  - a) additional enrollments,
  - b) a change in leadership at planning unit level, and/or
  - c) State or federal policy changes
- Time-sensitive strategic opportunities that advance the university toward strategic plan fulfillment and are of the highest priority

**Statement of Purpose:** *(What is the problem or opportunity being addressed? How will you address this problem or opportunity?)*

There is growing recognition that higher education is an increasingly competitive marketplace. With this recognition comes an acknowledgement that 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.

Western has never undertaken true brand advertising and promotion. Rather, our efforts to date have been highly decentralized, resulting in fragmented and finite programmatic messaging from Admissions, Advancement and Extended Education that lacks cohesion and coordination. In addition to engaging in more coordinated planning and execution with campus stakeholders, all of our efforts would benefit from higher-profile brand advertising that provides lift to our programmatic efforts.

Even though WWU's Fall enrollment headcount has increased 6.5% since 2013, we are bucking a national trend of declining enrollment. The National Student Clearinghouse reported a one percent drop in Fall 2017 enrollments, marking the 13<sup>th</sup> consecutive term of declines starting in Spring 2012. The projected total increase in high school graduates from 2017-18 to 2022-23 in Washington is a mere 0.8%, with the traditional, college-bound white, non-Hispanic population expected to decline by 2.7%, according to the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education. There are currently 86 institutions of higher education in the state and a 48.3% college continuation rate (putting Washington 46<sup>th</sup> in the U.S.), while 24.5% leave the state to go to college. Western currently enrolls about 7% of the available in-state, college-bound freshmen. With sweeping changes in student demographics and increased competition from universities in the Northeast and Midwest facing even greater population pressure, competition is bound to increase.

It is imperative to increase our visibility with differentiated and consistent marketing efforts in state, and given population growth trends in Washington, we would also like to test some highly targeted advertising efforts in two high-growth Western states – California and Colorado – where population is expected to continue to boom. Currently, about 26% and 12%, respectively, of our incoming out-of-state freshmen come from these two states. Controlled campaigns in these two states would allow us to continue our current commitment to 85%+ in-state students, while also adding incremental revenue from diverse out-of-state students.

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. Raising our profile with alumni – especially among the majority living in King and Snohomish counties – will help us increase fundraising and other forms of engagement. It will also help us increase visibility with potential private-sector funding partners.

Strategic enrollment management consultant Ruffalo Noel Levitz recommends that, to be competitive, Western should be spending 2-4% of operating budget (or \$7-14 million) on marketing efforts. While it is difficult to put forth a definitive institution-wide total marketing spend, a good proxy includes dedicated spending (both goods & services and staff overhead) from Admissions, Extended Education, Advancement and the Alumni Office, and University Relations & Marketing. Currently, these groups are spending approximately \$1.88 million annually, which is primarily focused on highly transactional direct marketing efforts. Of that, URM accounted for a mere \$56,000 in marketing goods & services.

The competitive environment necessitates that we become more proactive in our marketing efforts. We should begin this activity now, from a position of relative strength, and build consistent messaging that speaks to historically under-represented populations, who will increasingly shape the future of our student body, and expand our efforts to more consistently message to alumni and to statewide private industry and legislative audiences. We propose addressing this opportunity in the following ways:

1. Invest in brand advertising to elevate our visibility in Seattle metro and other key markets statewide and in highly selective external markets.
2. Invest in search engine optimization and marketing data analytics to:
  - Improve our organic, non-paid page one search rankings which are low given our overall enrollment size;
  - Address demand across campus for help with marketing and search engine analytics (since March 2016, the Web Tech team has received more than 2,250 such requests and currently manages 92 analytics properties for groups across campus); and,
  - Analyze ROI on nascent paid digital media campaigns and recommend improvement strategies.

WWU.edu is currently showing up for 49,263 non-branded pieces of content on Google, but currently only 1,398 are in a traffic driving position today (95%+ of all clicks happen on Page 1 of Google), leaving room for a lot of opportunity to drive student applications with the content we already have built out on the site. Using a conservative conversion rate of 2%, optimizing could yield over 900 additional conversions (campus visits, applications, etc.) per month from organic search, or more than 11,000 additional conversions annually.

3. Produce a third edition of *Window Magazine* (most universities of our size produce university alumni magazines three to four times per year). In a recent readership survey, nearly three quarters of readers say they've taken some action after reading *Window*, including sharing articles, writing a note to Western, making a donation and contacting a friend.

4. Add a dedicated front-end web design developer. Currently, we rely on a traditional graphic designer to design the “front end” (the look and feel that users experience) on our web pages. He lacks experience in visual design for the web including page layout, navigation and data visualization, and technical background with web application and plug-in tools, including HTML5, CSS3 and JavaScript. Not only does this delay our ability to rapidly build, deploy and update web pages, it also hampers our output on traditional print graphic projects.
5. We would also like to add a multi-media content producer given the exploding demand for visual storytelling and promotion across campus. Currently, we rely on highly variable student talent and a dedicated still photographer who already has a full-time commitment. This work could continue to be handled by student workers for the time being, but as the university continues to grow and expand beyond Bellingham, it would be most efficient to have recurring budget for this position.

**Anticipated Outcome(s):**

- Higher visibility for Western that creates more in-bound requests for faculty expertise and partnerships, and greater engagement with alumni and donors;
- Growth in targeted diverse student enrollment inquiries and applications;
- Greater unaided recall of Western’s strengths and points of distinction among prospective students and families, potential private industry partners and legislative champions.

**Metrics:** *(How will outcomes be measured?)*

- Growth in overall first-year enrollment inquiries and applications
- Growth in targeted diverse population enrollment inquiries and applications
- Fundraising return on investment (cost per dollar raised)
- Year-over-year donor growth
- Donor retention rate
- Growth in inbound inquiries from potential industry partners looking to access university talent and expertise
- Measurable increases in qualified web traffic and conversions (taking action to schedule a campus visit or request information)

**How does this project support the University Mission and Strategic Objectives?**

Investing resources to elevate our visibility statewide and in highly selective external markets will help us increase understanding of, and appreciation for, the positive impact Western makes, and it will help us advocate for more public and private resources to accelerate that impact. It will also help us position Western in the minds of future students, faculty and staff members from diverse and historically under-represented backgrounds as an institution dedicated to pursuing justice and equity in its policies, practices and impacts and help us enroll more under-represented and first-generation students.

**What are the consequences of not funding this package?**

- Continued fragmented, unsophisticated and transactional messaging to key audiences;
- Inability to accelerate our digital media efforts and an inability to accurately measure our return on investment of current efforts;
- Inability to garner mindshare of key audiences in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

## **What alternatives were explored and why was this alternative chosen?**

We could continue to rely primarily 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. One of the biggest struggles that we face is gathering together enough creative assets to support a robust earned media content marketing strategy. It is time-consuming to constantly create new content, and it drains our already slim resources.

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

University Relations and Marketing in collaboration with Admissions, Advancement and Extended Education.

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

### **Purpose:**

N/A

### **Cost:**

N/A

### **Anticipated Useful Life:**

N/A

### **Replacement Cost if any:**

N/A

## **Human Resources:**

- 3 FT Classified positions:
  - SEO/Analytics specialist (IT Specialist 3)
  - Front-end web design developer (IT Specialist 3)
  - Multi-media content producer (Communications Consultant 3)

\*Please see spreadsheet for data on salaries and benefits. 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:**

\$576,000 annual recurring budget and a one-time \$260,000 commitment from URM carryforward funds:

1. \$260,000 URM carryforward will fund:
  - Computer equipment and office modifications for three FT positions
  - BrightEdge SEO/Analytics software: \$45,000 annual\*\*

- Third edition of *Window* Magazine and adjusting budget for increases in paper costs, printing, freelance writer fees and 3% annual growth in mailing list: \$35,000 annual\*\*

\*\* Results from these efforts will be evaluated at the end of three years to determine if they should be continued.

2. \$576,000 annual recurring budget will fund:
  - Three FT Classified positions
  - Brand advertising budget: \$300,000
    - Online, print and outdoor media buys. All creative execution and placement will be handled by university personnel.

### **Space Requirements:**

#### **How much new space will be required?**

Ideally, three workstations in the existing University Communications & Marketing suite on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of Old Main. Other options could include space in the Herald building downtown.

**Is appropriate space available on campus?** Yes No

**If no, what space is needed and what features must the space have (e.g., fume hoods, plumbing, 3-phase power, etc.)?**

**WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY**  
**Marketing Operations Budget**

	FY19				Future Years Recurring (if different than FY19)			
	Employee FTE	One Time Costs	Recurring Costs	Total Costs	Employee FTE	One Time Costs	Recurring Costs	Total Costs
Faculty Salaries	0.00		\$ -	\$ -	0.00		\$ -	\$ -
Professional Salaries	0.00		\$ -	\$ -	0.00		\$ -	\$ -
Classified Salaries	3.00		\$ 204,395	\$ 204,395	0.00		\$ -	\$ -
Student Salaries (Graduate Assistants, Hourly Student, etc)	0.00		\$ -	\$ -	0.00		\$ -	\$ -
Benefits			\$ 73,535	\$ 73,535			\$ -	\$ -
<b>Total Salaries &amp; Benefits</b>		\$ -	\$ 277,930	\$ 277,930		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Supplies and Materials				\$ -				\$ -
Professional Service Contracts (please detail below)				\$ -				\$ -
Equipment and Personal Technology - including new faculty set-up costs				\$ -				\$ -
Other Goods and Services (includes memberships, supplies, materials)			\$ 300,000	\$ 300,000				\$ -
<b>Total Goods and Services</b>		\$ -	\$ 300,000	\$ 300,000		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Lodging				\$ -				\$ -
Automobile Rental				\$ -				\$ -
Air Travel				\$ -				\$ -
Ground Transportation				\$ -				\$ -
Other travel costs				\$ -				\$ -
<b>Total Travel</b>		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Total Expenditures</b>		\$0	\$577,930	\$577,930		\$0	\$0	\$0

POSITION TITLE	FY19						Future Years Recurring (if different than FY19)					
	Proposed Annual Salary	Headcount	FTE	Budgeted Salary	Benefits	TOTAL	Proposed Annual Salary	Headcount	FTE	Budgeted Salary	Benefits	TOTAL
<b>Faculty Salaries</b>												
Total Professors	\$ -	0	0.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0	0.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Associate Professors	\$ -	0	0.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0	0.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Assistant Professors	\$ -	0	0.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0	0.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Non Tenure-Track	\$ -	0	0.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0	0.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Faculty Salary and Benefit Total</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
<b>Professional Salaries</b>												
<b>Exempt Staff Salary and Benefit Total</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
<b>Classified Salaries</b>												
IT Specialist 3 - SEO/Analytics specialist	69,240	1	1.00	\$ 69,240	\$ 24,723	\$ 93,963				\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
IT Specialist 3 - Front-end web design develop	69,240	1	1.00	\$ 69,240	\$ 24,723	\$ 93,963				\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Communications Consultant 3 - multi-media c	65,915	1	1.00	\$ 65,915	\$ 24,088	\$ 90,003				\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Classified Staff Salary and Benefit Total</b>	<b>\$ 204,395</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3.00</b>	<b>\$ 204,395</b>	<b>\$ 73,535</b>	<b>\$ 277,930</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
<b>Student Salaries</b>												
<b>Student Salary and Benefit Total</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
<b>Total Salary and Benefits - All Positions</b>	<b>\$ 204,395</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3.00</b>	<b>\$ 204,395</b>	<b>\$ 73,535</b>	<b>\$ 277,930</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>