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: **Advancing Sustainability at Western**

Division: Academic Affairs
College/Unit: Sustainability Engagement Institute
Department Contact: Grace Wang

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?

Climate change is an existential crisis and has highlighted the need for higher education institutions to mobilize educational and operational efforts to mitigate harmful impacts. In 2007, President Morse committed the university to a path toward climate neutrality. As a part of this commitment, we implemented a greenhouse gas inventory and began development of a Climate Action Plan, which was completed in 2010. The Climate Action Plan then grew into a more comprehensive Sustainability Action Plan (SAP), which was published in 2017.

Inside Higher Education (January 3, 2023) released survey results in early 2023 in which 45% of college students considered sustainability in their college enrollment decision. With a more and more

competitive enrollment landscape, we want to do all that we can within the Sustainability Engagement Institute to make Western a compelling institution based on our sustainability leadership.

As a self-identified "university of the Environment," positioning ourselves as a sustainability leader for higher education is not only imperative to meeting the needs of future generations but will continue to be an important factor in recruiting and retaining students, faculty, and staff.

We are building and administering innovative climate resilience partnership programs and programs to equip students to be leaders addressing climate change. Further, we need to better understand our metrics such that we can generate high leverage educational campaigns and systems re-structuring.

These are unprecedented times for which we do not yet have best practices, which will require unprecedented and bold solutions. A small investment to increase FTEs in fiscal year 2024 will result in our ability to track and disseminate sustainability metrics and cover existing salary expenses enabling focused and coordinated efforts to advance implementation of the SAP.

Then, in fiscal year 2025, we will be able to more deeply infuse sustainability across the curriculum and engage in climate solutions-oriented work in the broader community. Increasing the capacity of our staff at the Sustainability Engagement Institute is key to accomplishing the sustainability goals that Western has established through its SAP.

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.

Fiscal Year 2024

Full-time Sustainability Data Analyst: Developing a dedicated compliance and reporting staff position will ensure that the university is able to report regularly on sustainability data and will support the ongoing and growing legislative reporting requirements such as Clean Buildings Act, Climate Commitment Act, State Agency Greenhouse Gas Report, as well as building certification requirements, DOE and EPA certifications that benefit Western operationally and highlight these accomplishments to the public. In the first year of the position there will be focused work to create an interactive Sustainability Dashboard. This dashboard will share key metrics from the SAP and the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS), which is the sustainability standard in higher education that is administered by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. Increasing the ease of reporting to both required and voluntary reporting and certifying bodies increases Western's standing as a leader in higher education and supports our position as a leading institution for environmental stewardship in WA state which supports enrollment and research into the future.

> Salary + benefits: $75,508 @ 1.0 FTE = $3,000 startup costs

Increased base funding for Associate Director to allow for hiring of SAP Implementation Manager: While the SEI has had a state-funded staff of 3.5 since its inception, current salaries exceed existing state allocated funds. With a recent staff vacancy, we intend to hire a SAP Implementation Manager, instead of a full-time communications manager. We know this is a full-time position, but do not currently have funds to hire at a 1.0 FTE. If we received 0.35 FTE to cover the current deficit for the Associate Director, we would have sufficient funds to cover the full-time SAP Implementation Manager, a position that would shepherd the advancement of the SAP, convene the President's Sustainability Council, and lead communication and outreach work for sustainability across the institution.

Salary + benefits: $72,974 @ 0.35 FTE = $40,904

0.5 FTE Institute Director: Academic year course buyouts and summer salary plus benefits are currently being funded with one-time dollars.

Salary + benefits: $119,113 @ 0.39 FTE = $88,343

Fiscal Year 2025
In addition to ongoing funding of the Sustainability Data Analyst and increased base funding, we are requesting additional funding to bring the SEI Director to 1.0 FTE and a full-time Community Engagement Program Manager.

Increasing SEI Director from 0.5 FTE to 1.0 FTE: This will allow dedicated time for grant-writing, fundraising, support for more robust sustainability research across campus, and deeper engagement with sustainability across the curriculum initiatives.

Salary + benefits: $119,113 @ 1.0 FTE = $165,245

Full-time Community Engagement Program Manager: this position will institutionalize the many off-campus and municipal relationships that the SEI has established since the onset of the Sustainable Communities Partnership. In particular, relationships have been developed with our rural neighbors in Whatcom and Skagit Counties. This is a critical role to maintain sustainability and climate-related work undertaken by the Institute. Innovative partnerships that bridge campus and community will be a necessary element to addressing climate change. We believe the impact in the region, the sticker appeal of the program from a marketing perspective, and the significant faculty/student support provided through this program provide value far exceeding the dollar value.

Salary + benefits: $61,632 @ 1.0 FTE = $88,575 + $3,000 startup costs

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.

The Sustainability Data Analyst position is critical to WWU in the following ways:
Participating in STARS reporting is a meaningfully way to engage in measuring sustainability practices on college campuses. And as mentioned above, this position supports reporting legislative requirements.

The interactive dashboard, translating STARS/SAP reporting to actionable steps, will motivate students, faculty, and staff to do the required collective work to address the climate imperative. By measuring what matters, the SEI can orient Western to regularly engage in sustainability integration within all aspects of the university. We are creating metrics which will drive change. To maintain and improve our rating, we need to consistently report on sustainability metrics.

The Community Engagement Manager position will maintain and build relationships with partners, some of which cannot afford to pay-to-play, which was the previous model. This position has previously supported dozens of Western faculty and community partners, addressing sustainability, climate resilience and justice projects in Whatcom, Skagit, and Snohomish Counties.

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.

In combination with our new SAP Implementation position, the Sustainability Data Analyst position would support achieving a minimum of a STARS Gold rating, which is a rating accomplished by 141 other institutions around the world (12 institutions are above that at platinum rating). We are currently Silver. This position would also increase engagement with progress on the SAP, meaningfully supporting accomplishment of additional objectives. General engagement with the data can be tracked by website visits before and after publication of the sustainability dashboard.

A measure of success for the Community Engagement Manager would be the number of partnerships/projects and perceived value and impact from faculty, students, and community partners. These metrics have been part of survey work in the past and would continue if this position is funded. On an annual basis this position could support about twelve climate resilience projects, impacting hundreds of students and community members.

The FTE increase for the SEI Director could be evaluated by looking at grants applied to, fundraising dollars secured, status of the President's Sustainability Council, and activity within sustainability across the curriculum initiatives.

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.

While the proposed positions would be written to attract a diverse applicant pool, and advancement of the SAP will inherently make Western a more attractive place to live and work for faculty, staff, and administrators, the proposal does not directly impact recruitment, retention, and satisfaction of diverse faculty, staff, and administrators. Faculty and staff engagement have long been interested in sustainability, as the Sustainability Academy (2006-2016) demonstrated.

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.).

While the SAP Implementation Manager position has the potential to lead advancement of the SAP in significant ways, shifts in university priorities, staffing shortages, or budget challenges could all impact the degree of success within this position. Similarly, the Sustainability Data Analyst might do great work assembling and distributing sustainability data, but if resources don't exist to take action on learnings associated with the data, less progress will be made than desired. The SEI has worked to build relationships across campus, supporting more resilience through challenges in the future. Further, SEI has, and will continue to have, an eye toward low-cost actions and actions that have a good return on investment.

Doing community-engaged climate resilience work requires being responsive to community needs. There is always a chance that partnership building work becomes more challenging in situations like natural disasters or through a pandemic when community partners lose capacity to engage. One way to mitigate against this challenge is to focus on relational work prior to disruptions such that we can be key allies through challenge. Another point of resilience is our strong partnership with the Center for Community Learning, which has a robust network of community partners.

The success of the director's fundraising work is a bit dependent on current economic climate. While there is always a bit of uncertainty in this, the imperative nature of finding ways to address climate solutions will not change any time soon, unfortunately. Thus, through diversifying fundraising strategies this challenge should be feasible to overcome.

Anticipated Consequences if Proposal is Not Funded:

What are the anticipated consequences of <u>not</u> funding this proposal?

Western supported a robust process for developing a comprehensive Sustainability Action Plan. This plan has laid a roadmap for sustainability progress across campus. Unfortunately, this roadmap has not been utilized to the extent it could be due to lack of capacity to manage implementation. The combination of requests for funding will add the necessary capacity to support important

implementation work. Consequences of not funding this proposal would result in Western not being able to continue its sustainability work in a meaningful way. Specifically:

Fiscal Year 2024 – no data analyst position: Currently, complex university wide data gathering is happening with student employees, which, with high turnover of those positions does not lead to data consistency and developing durable processes for data tracking over time. This haphazard approach causes this function to both take longer than necessary and risks issues with consistency.

Fiscal Year 2024 – no increase in base funding. The SAP Implementation Manager will not be able to be hired at 1.0 FTE. This could translate to a reduced pool of qualified applicants as well as continued challenges in supporting the implementation of the SAP.

Fiscal Year 2025 – the community-engaged sustainability and climate resilience partnership work that has been established by Sustainable Communities Partnership will not be supported by a staff person any longer. Some of the previously engaged faculty might continue to work with partner communities to some capacity, but grant-funded financial support will go away as well as staff coordination and partner development. Since the program's inception in 2016, the program has worked with 13 partners, completed over 40 projects with more than students, and brought in over $450,000 in grants and contracts. Multiple students who have participated in Sustainable Communities Partnership projects have gone on to be employed by the partner organization. Finally, survey data indicates that students find great value in the "real-world" experience they gain as a part of these projects.

Fiscal Year 2025 - If the director role does not become full-time, 1) opportunities to develop external funding opportunities will be lost, 2) the President's Sustainability Council will continue to lack the leadership support needed for robust progress, and 3) Curriculum for the Bioregion will remain an inactive initiative on Western's campus.

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 time since the inception of the Sustainability Engagement Institute has been full of learning. We have worked with the cross-campus President's Sustainability Council to better understand the need for sustainability support at Western. Further, we have built strong working relationships with staff on-the-ground in operations (specifically, Director of Sustainability Integration). Finally, we have experimented with what we could accomplish without a permanent staff person within the Sustainable Communities Partnership position. We have discovered the places in which our capacity is stretched, and we have found strong partners for doing more with less, together.

Specifically related to this proposal, we have been in contact with the VP for BFA, Joyce Lopes, who sees the need to better understand the data. We have also engaged Chuck Lanham and John Krieg to understand alignment and capacity for building a sustainability dashboard.

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.

Seeing the need to understand the data, VP for BFA Joyce Lopes has offered to contribute one-time dollars to support the data analyst position (covering ½ year of the position). While neither Chuck Lanham or John Krieg could commit to fully building the imagined dashboard at this time, they both offered to consult on technical details and support where they could.

The Community Engagement Manager position aligns with a position that the Center for Community Learning (Travis Tennessen) developed in collaboration with the Sustainability Engagement Institute, but did not have funding to hire at the appropriate classification. While the staff position that this position is modeled from was not self-sufficient, approximately $450,000 has been brought in via contracts and grants since the inception of the program in 2016. Current SEI staff are engaged in grant-writing conversations with community partners now. Based on the demonstrated history, current conversations with community partners, and upcoming federal and state funds (e.g. Inflation Reduction Act), we have reason to believe the person in this position will continue to generate some revenue.

Has your department previously submitted this proposal? No.
If so, briefly outline any significant changes and indicate the feedback received during that budget process.

Click here to enter text

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.

The SEI Communications Manager position is vacant, and we are repurposing it to partially fund the SAP Implementation position described above.

We could consider building the sustainability dashboard with a contract instead of a full-time person. There are a number of reasons why this option is less desired, including ongoing maintenance and data work beyond dashboard development that we believe is important, but this tactic could be considered for cost-savings purposes.

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
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Increasing Washington Impact
The SAP Implementation Manager and the Data Analyst will support meeting the state's climate goals through better understanding our sustainability data and making significant strides toward reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing sustainability, generally.

Washington State has proposed several ambitious climate goals. In February 2022, the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges received $1.5 million in funds to initiate a statewide Climate Solutions Program focused on integrating climate solutions education across the curriculum, coordinating green workforce development, and making our colleges more sustainable. The Director of the SEI represents Western within the Program to develop a statewide climate action plan for all CTCs to decarbonize their operations, build leadership capacity, and integrate sustainability throughout institutional practices and academic programs. Transfer students coming to Western from those programs will have an established sustainability pathway.

The Community Engagement Manager will support faculty in applying their expertise and students in applying their energy to real solutions for addressing climate change in the region.

Enhancing Academic Excellence
Students who have participated in past community-engaged projects supported by SEI have expressed feelings of efficacy and perceived increased learning outcomes, and faculty have made similar observations of their students. These outcomes would continue with the establishment of a Community Engagement Manager.

The Sustainability Data Analyst and SAP Implementation Managers will both support additional opportunities for using campus as a living laboratory, which has proven beneficial to student learning in the past.

Additional attention to integrating sustainability across the curriculum via the Director's programming will improve student job preparedness in many fields of study.

Goals

Western will provide a transformational education grounded in the liberal arts and sciences and based on innovative scholarship, research, and creative activity.
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Western will advance a deeper understanding of and engagement with place.

Western houses an initiative called Curriculum for the Bioregion, supported by SEI staff. Its mission is to actively engage college students with sustainability ideas, especially in the context of their local communities. This fosters critical knowledge, skills, motivation, and leadership. We work with higher education faculty in the Salish Sea region to build sustainability concepts and place-based learning into a wide array of undergraduate courses.

Building on that place-based education, in February 2022, the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges received $1.5 million in funds to initiate a statewide Climate Solutions Program focused on integrating climate solutions education across the curriculum, coordinating green workforce development, and making our colleges more sustainable. The Director of the SEI represents Western on the Program to develop a statewide climate action plan for all CTCs to decarbonize their operations, build leadership capacity, and integrate sustainability throughout institutional practices and academic programs.

This process will be leveraged to create learning living lab opportunities for faculty and students as institutions transition and develop local climate solutions on their campus and will support code compliance and significant reductions in carbon emissions from this statewide sector.

The Community Engagement Manager will support students and faculty in engaging authentically and deeply in the communities surrounding Bellingham.

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

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

The SAP has equity elements embedded throughout. Thus, creating staff positions that can support swift implementation of the SAP will be beneficial toward pursuing more equity at Western. Co-creating accessible climate resilience projects with community partners is another mechanism for pursuing justice and equity.

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.

Click here to enter text

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:

Existing office space can accommodate new staffing needs.

Square Footage:

Click here to enter text

Cost for capital component:

Click here to enter text

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?

Click here to enter text

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.

Click here to enter text

Proposal Title: Advancing Sustainability at Western

Divison: Academic Affairs
Department: PROV Sustainability Engagement Institute
Department Contact: Grace Wang

Salary and Benefits	Description	FTE	Salary	Benefits	One-Time Costs	Total	FTE	Salary	Benefits	One-Time Costs	Total
				Fiscal Year 2024					Fiscal Year 2025		
Faculty Positions	SEI Director & Associate Director	0.74	$87,321	$41,926	$0	$129,247	1.35	184,358	59,759	$0	244,117
Professional/Exempt Positions		-	$0	$0	$0	$0	-	-	-	$0	-
Classified Positions	Data consultant & Program Manager	1.00	$50,592	$24,916	$3,000	$78,508	2.00	112,224	51,859	$3,000	167,083
Student Salaries (Graduate Assistants, Hourly Student, etc)		-	$0	$0	$0	$0	-	-	-	$0	-
Total Salaries and Benefits		**1.74**	**$137,913**	**$66,842**	**$3,000**	**$207,754**	**3.35**	**296,582**	**111,618**	**$3,000**	**411,200**

Non-Personnel Expenses	Description	Units	Price per Unit	Recurring Costs	One-Time Costs	Total	Units	Price per Unit	Recurring Costs	One-Time Costs	Total
Supplies and Materials						$0					$0
Professional Service Contracts						$0					$0
Other Goods and Services, Memberships, etc.						$0					$0
Travel	Annual Conference Attendance	1	$1,500	$1,500		$1,500	2	$1,500	$3,000		$3,000
Other						$0					$0
Capital Facility Expenses (New Space or Space Modifications)						$0					$0
Total Non-Personnel Expenses				**$1,500**	**$0**	**$1,500**			**$3,000**	**$0**	**$3,000**

University Indirect Costs	Description	Include?		Recurring Costs	One-Time Costs	Total			Recurring Costs	One-Time Costs	Total
Libraries** (Estimated at $10k per faculty member)	$10,000 per new faculty member	NO		$0	$0	$0			$0	$0	$0
Academic Support Services/Student Support Services	3% of Recurring Direct Costs	YES		$6,188	$0	$6,188			$12,336	$0	$12,336
Institutional Support	2% of Recurring Direct Costs	YES		$4,125	$0	$4,125			$8,224	$0	$8,224
Plant Operation and Maintenance	3% of Recurring Direct Costs	YES		$6,188	$0	$6,188			$12,336	$0	$12,336
Graduate TA Waiver	Input amounts for new TA Positions	NO		$0	$0	$0			$0	$0	$0
Total Indirect Costs				**$16,500**	**$0**	**$16,500**			**$32,896**	**$0**	**$32,896**

		FTE	Head Count	Recurring Costs	One-Time Costs	Fiscal Year Total	FTE	Head Count	Recurring Costs	One-Time Costs	Fiscal Year Total
Total Proposal, All Direct and Indirect Costs		**1.74**	**3.00**	**$222,755**	**$3,000**	**$225,755**	**3.35**	**4.00**	**$444,096**	**$3,000**	**$447,096**