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: **Western Community Commons**

Division: Enrollment & Student Services (partnering with University Relations & Marketing and colleagues in academic programs/institutes).
College/Unit: Student Engagement
Department Contact: Eric Alexander

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?

Inherent to the mission of a regional university, WWU is charged to create lasting impacts in the communities, region, state, and beyond. In particular, our students come eager to make a difference in the world and to create lasting positive social change in the systems and structures they see around them, including manifesting a more just and equitable world. Our staff and faculty are charged with community service and engagement between Western and local communities (WWU Strategic Plan, Goal 2.G) and with increasing Inclusive Student Success (WWU Core Theme). However, WWU currently lacks the infrastructure to accomplish this combined mission through one of the most salient and impactful tools to do so – a structured community service/community engagement center. This

proposal offers a modest framework and request for resources that moves us in a direction to more fully realize our mission to increase our impact to the State of Washington (WWU Mission) and advance our strategic initiatives focused on "advancing a deeper…engagement with place" (WWU Strategic Plan, Goal 2) and "ensures all students have access to high-quality educational experiences beyond the classroom," (WWU Strategic Plan, Goal 1.D.).

In conversations with a keystone community partner, the Whatcom Volunteer Center, volunteer managers and community organizations around the region say that one of the most pressing needs that our community has is for more volunteers...and that is something Western can support.

Over the past five years, 41.4% - 49.4% of newly enrolled students at WWU reported that they wanted to engage in community service/volunteerism (those numbers declined over the past few years of the pandemic; pre-pandemic numbers all tended to be closer to or above 50%). In addition, students who come to us have engaged in an average of 2 hours of service PER WEEK prior to attending WWU. If we quickly compute the access to resources we are missing, that could be roughly 5750 – 6860 students who are interested in being a part of community service and volunteerism. If each is willing to serve up to 2 hours per week, that equates to 11,500 – 13,720 hours (about 1 and a half years) per week of service! Now, these numbers seem absurd, and are truly astronomical. Not to mention that each classified and exempt staff member has a full workday (8 hours/person) that can be dedicated to community service each year.

In addition to student engagement, faculty connections to our community that can be developed through service-learning courses, community engage pedagogy focused on working with local businesses, and institutes who support community partners and are connected to the community through community advisory groups, would all benefit from the space and support this program could offer. In concert with the ongoing work of our University Relations - Community Liaison, this space will support University staff and faculty who want to develop community service and engagement options across non-profit sectors, governmental and public agencies, and local businesses to increase Western's impact in our region. Developing programs that could tap into even a small portion of these opportunities for community engagement and care should be a priority for this institution.

In addition to creating an environment and pathway to public service and community engagement, the work of community service is foundational to a just and equitable campus. Critical Service Learning/Community Service "encourages student to see themselves as agents of social change and use the experience of service to address and respond to injustices in communities (Mitchell, 2008). By moving towards a model that supports a social change orientation that focuses through authentic community relationships, WWU students can more closely connect to and positively impact the region through service and care. However, to accomplish all of this, we need an accessible shared space that removes the barrier of community members having to come to campus, which opens opportunities to develop and enrich volunteer and community service partnerships that our students desire and provides the reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationship that our community deserves.

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 Western Community Commons proposal asks for investments in three key areas: 1) personnel support, 2) infrastructure support (IT and space lease), 3) communications and marketing support. Typically, a substantial portion of this request would have been related to capital needs for space. However, fortuitously, Western was given the opportunity to partner with Spectrum Development and the Laird-Norton Group to enter into a ZERO DOLLAR LEASE agreement for 1660 sq. ft. of space at 903 N. State Street in the State Side complex. This agreement offers a low barrier to entry into this community engagement opportunity if we can take full advantage of it. Therefore, main cost driver for this proposal is to create an accessible shared space that removes the barrier of community members having to come to campus, which opens opportunities to develop and enrich volunteer and community service partnerships that our students desire and our community needs, to grow opportunities for our staff and faculty to engage with our community, and creates a distinctive opportunity for Community Relations to support those efforts while simultaneously creating a visible and accessible off-campus space to enrich community-university relationships. Overall, the expenses requested include:

1) Community Commons Volunteer Manager/Coordinator: this 1.0 FTE position will focus on developing community partnerships and relationships for service engagement, ensuring values alignment with University goals from those partnerships, developing regular service programming options for student and staff/faculty engagement, supporting large-scale service events for campus, and providing a regular and central touchpoint for our campus and community partners.

2) Community Commons Graduate Assistant: this position will focus on building capacity with campus student groups to engage in regular and/or one time service projects, facilitate pre-flection and reflection activities, develop learning models and outcomes for each service experience, teach students through the lenses of Critical Service Learning (Mitchell, 2008), Social Action, Leadership, & Transformation (SALT; Museus, et al., 2017), and ensuring outcomes and spaces that align with Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (Museus, 2014) ideals.

3) Database/Community Engagement Tracking Software: Annual licenses for this type of software is critical for tracking service, administrative back-end project management, and assessment/data collection and tracking. The two most frequently used companies are Galaxy Digital (https://www.galaxydigital.com/) and GivePulse (https://learn.givepulse.com/).

4) Programming dollars: In order to build up community service projects, provide transportation for students/volunteers, and engage in the core of the work (including curriculum development) programming dollars are needed.

5) Marketing/Outreach/Website: Core to any of this are marketing and outreach to campus, community, and other key stakeholders about the service opportunities and learning opportunities that are present.

6) Supplies/Equipment: Annual need for supplies and equipment replacement for a fully furnished co-working space and a separate conference room are part of the Community Commons at Stateside. Initial outlay for this has been about $45,000, so the annual upkeep of equipment and supplies is needed.

7) Travel/Learning: Dollars to both travel for service site development and programs, as well dollars for staff to attend professional conferences focused on community engagement and/or culturally relevant and engaged learning.

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.

It is critical to note that WWU continues to strive to better support historically marginalized and underrepresented students. The Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (CECE) model (Museus, 2014) suggests that campuses who foster cultural relevance and cultural responsiveness increase a sense of belonging, academic dispositions, academic performance, and ultimately, college success. One of the 5 indicators of cultural relevance include Cultural Community Service that gives students opportunities "to give back to and positively transform their home communities," (Museus, 2014). These efforts, then, become critical to Westerns goal of Inclusive Student Success. Student can engage and be supported to learn through the lenses of Critical Service-Learning, moving beyond learning-to-serve/serving-to-learn dynamics to those more grounded in positive social change, developing authentic community relationships and partnerships, and working to redistribute knowledge and power throughout our community (Mitchell, 2008). In addition, the focus on leadership development through the Social Action, Leadership, and Transformation (SALT) framing (Museus, Lee, Calhoun, Sanchez-Parkinson, & Ting, 2017) provides additional background context for supporting student leaders who which to make a change and can lead through the most democratic and accessible opportunity to develop and grow leadership skills – and that is community service and volunteerism. This critical leadership model (SALT) lifts up leadership learning through increasing: 1) Capacity for Empathy, 2) Critical Consciousness, 3) Commitment to Justice, 4) Equity in Purpose, and 5) Value of Collective Action; 6) Controversy with Courage, and 7) Coalescence. This deep learning and support for Inclusive Student Success can be found through The Western Community Commons, but it needs financial support to realize these goals.

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.

Success will be tracked through several metrics that support students graduating with high-impact experiences, including:
1) Total number of community partners connected to WWU Community Commons

2) Total number of faculty/staffs utilizing Community Commons
3) Total number of student volunteers supported by WWU Community Commons
4) Total number of student volunteer hours through WWU Community Commons and its associated WWU volunteering platforms
5) Analysis of student-completed "Self-Report of Experience" who volunteer through the associated co-curricular path associated with WWU Community Commons
6) Space utilization data (for reservable conference room and Community Commons space)
7) Total number of community partners from Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian and other racial/ethnic/gender/sexuality/disability/veteran/etc. communities

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.

As an organization, the WWU Community Commons would be/is committed to supporting historically marginalized and underrepresented groups through service and community engagement. This work will rest heavily on the concept of critical community engagement (Tania Mitchell), which is informed by a deep understanding of the intersectional and structural challenges facing marginalized communities, is committed to equity and justice, and relies on an assets-based view of community (Tara Yosso). This focus will not only serve the community in a more holistic and grounded manner but would also be attractive to a more diverse candidate pool.

As we seek to recruit for this position, we will work to diversify the candidate pool through broad dissemination, as well as focused recruitment, cross-cultural and equity/diversity experience in position requirements. In addition, staff will be supported in their onboarding to WWU with a focus on retaining the successful candidate through care and connection.

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.).

Our primary driver for success is connecting our campus to active community service opportunities. Over these past few years, the impact of the global pandemic showed us all how vulnerable operations, like volunteerism, can be to large-scale public health or other environmental challenges. However, volunteerism has moved on-line, and safety mitigation strategies (vaccination/mask wearing) will be in place for all WWU programs.

Community engagement always needs to operate on the understanding that environments, on-campus and off-campus, can have unanticipated risks. Best practices for community engagement and partnerships that minimize and plan for potential risks will be implemented, just as they are in campus

studies and activities. Community partners will be known and reliable or screened for safe and conducive for good partnerships that are safe for all involved.

Anticipated Consequences if Proposal is Not Funded:
What are the anticipated consequences of <u>not</u> funding this proposal?

Since the primary cost in this proposal is personnel and space for a community located program, not receiving this funding would significantly hamper our ability to 1) connect students, faculty, or staff to community partners; 2) build consistent and standing relationships with local volunteer coordinators, 3) limit our capacity to engage in pre-service education and engagement with students to help them be better volunteers in support of our community needs, and 4) reduce our presence via space in the community. Without a regular presence at the stateside location, we may also erode the relationships with Spectrum and Laird-Norton groups.

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?

This proposal is built on a strong campus relationships and initial investments of nearly $63,000 in the past year between the Division of Enrollment and Student Services (Viking Union/ Leadership and Community Engagement Program, aka LACE), Academic Affairs (the Associate Provost's Office and some of the APICS programs, including the Morse Leadership Institute and the Entrepreneurialism and Innovation Program, and the Division of University Relations and Marketing (specifically, including Community Relations). From the onset, a group of colleagues from across three Divisions worked together to grow this proposal idea.

This opportunity really presented itself when off-campus partners, Spectrum Development, and the Laird-Norton group, approached WWU to consider a zero-dollar lease opportunity in their new State Side facility. This opportunity accelerated the potential to enter this work with a lower barrier than previously imagined.

In addition to the direct partners involved in developing this space/program, we are growing a relationship with the Whatcom Volunteer Center that will be the initial focus for our connection with community service in the region. The Community Commons and volunteer development work is extremely exciting for this community partner who convenes a monthly meeting of volunteer coordinators from across the community. Those coordinators have repeatedly stated that their most dire need is "more volunteers." As we continue to grow with this partner, we believe the Western Community Commons will have the ability to be a pivotal space and deepen relationships across numerous community-service based organizations. Skagit Volunteer Center will be added also.

We also have a direct partner, with Bellingham Public Schools, for reading literacy tutoring volunteering that WWU students do in coordination with elementary schools. This had come into the Leadership and Community Engagement Program portfolio beginning this year and will grow. Bellingham Public Schools Assistant Director of Literacy is eager to continue to develop the partnership.

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.

Current resources in place for this work include:

Space: We currently have a ZERO-dollar lease with Spectrum Development/Laird-Norton Group and State Side that provides two spaces totaling over 1660 sq. ft. of space (one conference room at 532 sq. ft. and one our Commons space at 1131 sq. ft.)

Personnel: Currently, the personnel who are engaging as our Community Liaison, faculty from our partner programs, and our student engagement staff are all being leveraged to engage this program. Their salaries and support are funded through their current operating budgets. This opportunity allows for both space and connection to a new resource in the Community Commons manager position being requested to create a more holistic and community-centered model.

AmeriCorps Grant: NEW-In the Spring or 2022, WWU was awarded a 10-month full-time AmeriCorps volunteer position (roughly 40 hours/week) for an investment of $11,000/year for up to three years. We will leverage this grant as long as we can sustain the $11,000/year commitment through our student fees area.

Programming dollars: Each of the partners has dollars available to support their portion of programming related directly to their work. For instance, student fee dollars will be applied to the salary of LACE staff, as well as the dollars needed to support training and educating student volunteers prior to their placement in the community.

Partnership with external entities: There are certainly opportunities to leverage more by way of gifts or foundational dollars related to community service and community engagement. These conversations will be important to grow and develop. The initial gift in kind for space by Spectrum/Laird-Norton and Stateside are critical to the program's current start-up and future success.

Has your department previously submitted this proposal?

If so, briefly outline any significant changes and indicate the feedback received during that budget process.

This proposal was submitted during the initial strategic budgeting process in Spring 2021.

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.

There are few opportunities to garner funding for this work beyond stringing together small pockets of one-time funding year over year. The focus of this position is <u>not</u> best situated to be student fee funded, as their focus is community partner facing to explore service opportunities and operate the space on State Street that has been developed on one-time funds from ESS, Academic Affairs, and the Viking Union (student fee funded). In addition, with opportunities to support faculty and staff as well as students, this request lands squarely in the realm of state-based dollars as the appropriate funding stream. Finally, the opportunity to write for or receive grant dollars is limited due to personnel not being available to do so. This position could help support grant funding opportunities should it be funded.

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

Volunteerism and community engagement are among the most accessible forms of outside the classroom learning, leadership development, and high-impact extra-curricular engagement.

Increasing Washington Impact

As stated above, our opportunities for increasing Washington impact in our community and region are monumental if we can tap into and develop clear mechanisms to support students and faculty in community engagement and service opportunities. Our non-profit community partners have repeatedly suggested that one of the highest needs they have is more volunteers. At WWU we have access to nearly 14,000 students and over 1100 staff where community service and is both a passion and an opportunity for so many. This proposal helps us better develop mechanisms to deploy those resources to create lasting impact.

Enhancing Academic Excellence

The Western Community Commons offers a space, embedded in the community, for faculty to engage in service-learning coursework, connections to local small businesses for class engagement, entrepreneurial community engagement, and application of learning within the community. Outside the classroom can significantly augment student learning through application of learning.

Goals

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

The WWU Commons will directly and indirectly support the following area of Goal 1:

1.B. Provide tools and experiences for all students to follow their intellectual curiosity, to work across disciplines, and to develop the skills, knowledge, and habits of mind that will enable them to effectively contribute to evolving societal needs.

1.D. Ensure that all students have access to high quality educational experiences beyond the classroom.

1.G. Provide technological and other academic infrastructure to support curricular innovation, research, scholarship, and creative activity, civic engagement, and social justice.

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

The WWU Community Commons is perfectly situated to support this goal area. Specifically, this program will support:

2.B. Support teaching, learning, research, scholarship, creative activity, and programming that engages with place in a respectful way.

2.F. Give all students educational experiences both in and beyond the classroom that help them develop the knowledge, skills, and abilities to nurture and create the conditions for people and planet to thrive.

2.G. Increase engagement between Western and local communities.

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

In this area, the program will support the following to foster a caring and supportive environment:

3.3 Enhance student services and co-curricular opportunities to foster students' intellectual, personal, and professional development and success.

3.6 Expand networks between students, staff, faculty, and alumni/ae.

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

In this area, the work of Critical Community Engagement and Service will directly support:

4.H. Expand and support respectful collaborative relationships with community partners and underrepresented groups to advance equity and social justice.

The focus on critical community engagement embeds social justice and DEI squarely and firmly into the work of the WWU Community Commons.

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.

We have already secured funding for the initial outlay of office furniture and equipment through combined resources from ESS, Academic Affairs, and the Viking Union. This current request does not require any equipment of software (>$25K).

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:
N/A

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?

We currently have a rental agreement in place with Stateside housing on State Street that offers WWU a $0.00 rental agreement (utilities and other maintenance costs are charged through a monthly CAM fee of roughly $400.00/mo.). We can negotiate a zero-dollar lease for at least 10 years if this funding comes available for us to continue this work.

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.

N/A

Proposal Title: Western Community Commons

Divison: Enrollment & Student Services
Department: Student Engagement
Department Contact: Eric Alexander

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		-	$0	$0	$0	$0	-	-	-	$0	-
Professional/Exempt Positions	Community Commons Volunteer Manager	1.00	$52,000	$29,881	$0	$81,881	1.00	52,000	29,881	$0	81,881
Classified Positions		-	$0	$0	$0	$0	-	-	-	$0	-
Student Salaries (Graduate Assistants, Hourly Student, etc)	Community Commons Graduate Asst.	1.00	$25,050	$6,144	$0	$31,194	1.00	25,050	6,144	$0	31,194
Total Salaries and Benefits		**2.00**	**$77,050**	**$36,025**	**$0**	**$113,075**	**2.00**	**77,050**	**36,025**	**$0**	**113,075**

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	Office equipment/supplies			$2,500		$2,500			$2,600		$2,600
Professional Service Contracts	Custodial			$3,120		$3,120			$3,245		$3,245
Other Goods and Services, Memberships, etc.	WiFi and Tracking/data management software			$8,000		$8,000			$8,320		$8,320
Travel	Conference/travel to service sites			$4,000		$4,000			$4,160		$4,160
Other	Programming/outreach/marketing			$5,000		$5,000			$5,200		$5,200
Capital Facility Expenses (New Space or Space Modifications)	CAM Expense			$4,860		$4,860			$5,054		$5,054
Total Non-Personnel Expenses				**$27,480**	**$0**	**$27,480**			**$28,579**	**$0**	**$28,579**

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		$4,217	$0	$4,217			$4,250	$0	$4,250
Institutional Support	2% of Recurring Direct Costs	YES		$2,811	$0	$2,811			$2,833	$0	$2,833
Plant Operation and Maintenance	3% of Recurring Direct Costs	YES		$4,217	$0	$4,217			$4,250	$0	$4,250
Graduate TA Waiver	Input amounts for new TA Positions	NO			$0	$0				$0	$0
Total Indirect Costs				**$11,244**	**$0**	**$11,244**			**$11,332**	**$0**	**$11,332**

		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		**2.00**	**2.00**	**$151,799**	**$0**	**$151,799**	**2.00**	**2.00**	**$152,986**	**$0**	**$152,986**