

2024

A REPORT FROM THE COUNCIL OF PRESIDENTS

Workforce Education Investment Act

Update on Public Four-Year College and University Investments

CENTRAL WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY



EASTERN WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY



THE EVERGREEN STATE
COLLEGE



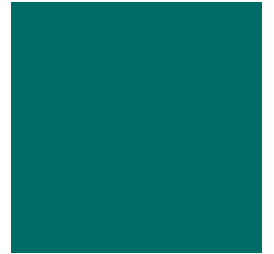
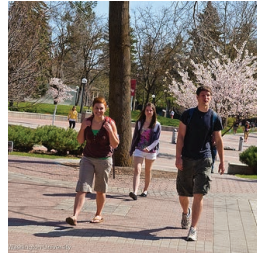
UNIVERSITY OF
WASHINGTON



WASHINGTON STATE
UNIVERSITY



WESTERN WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY



WASHINGTON STATE
Council of
Presidents

www.councilofpresidents.org

Introduction

Washington's public four-year college and universities continue to serve a catalyzing role in economic and workforce development across all 39 counties in our state. There is a significant supply-demand gap for jobs that require a bachelor's degree, and Washington employers want to hire local talent to fill these positions.

Earning a bachelor's degree is critical to meeting the needs of Washington employers and is the only and best predictor within a student's control for earning a good wage in Washington.¹ A bachelor's degree can narrow the racial income gap by up to 70%, outside of uncontrollable factors, and bachelor's degrees are more likely to interrupt intergenerational cycles of poverty and close income-based equity gaps than any other pathway.²

Washington's public baccalaureate institutions are the largest producer of bachelor's, graduate and professional degrees in our state. With a record of providing access to an affordable quality degree through completion, together we have the capacity to meet the needs of Washington employers and closing the equity gap among Washingtonians.

Each institution is profoundly committed to meeting the needs of a 21st century workforce with increasing credential requirements. The investments made in each institution through the Workforce Education Investment Account (WEIA) reflect this commitment and are critical in assisting Washington employers to fill the jobs of the future with qualified Washington students.

This report includes updates from each college or university on legislative investments through WEIA in a myriad of academic programs and student success initiatives that support access, retention, persistence, completion, and entry into the workforce. It builds upon the [Council of Presidents' prior WEIA reports](#) in addition to other regular updates, both to the legislature and to the [Workforce Education Investment Accountability and Oversight Board \(WEIAOB\)](#).

1, 2 [Myths, Misinformation and Upward Movement Executive Summary](#), Washington STEM

Central Washington University

2023-2025

In the 2023-25 biennium, Central Washington University (CWU) received funding to implement Senate Bill 5048 related to College in the High School, funding for peer mentoring programs in the Learning Commons, funding for grow-your-own and dual language educator preparation programs, and funding for a benefits navigator. In the 2024 supplemental operating budget, CWU received \$399,000 to implement a student basic needs package.

Student Basic Needs – The CWU Wildcat Pantry (Food Pantry) received \$126,000 for Year 1 and \$123,000 for Year 2 to hire a full-time food pantry coordinator and up to five paid student interns. Since July 1, 2024, this funding has been used to hire five student interns (effective September 16, based on the academic year schedule) and a full-time coordinator to ensure the food pantry's operations and availability to the CWU campus community. Since July 1, the Wildcat Pantry has recorded 2,956 visits through one primary pantry and approximately five grab-and-go pantries located across campus. The Wildcat Pantry has hosted eight large-scale programs and educational events for students since September 22 and has participated as a partner in an additional four campus programs to ensure students are aware of available resources. This funding is on track for the remainder of the fiscal year.

CWU Financial Aid has created two positions for Financial Aid Coaching Specialists. One serves Pierce County and the west side of the state, while the other works in the central Washington region. Their role is to support Admissions staff at recruiting events by presenting financial aid information, assisting with aid applications, and providing necessary details on financial aid timelines as prospective first-year and transfer students navigate the admissions process.

The Financial Aid Coaching Specialists also provide individual and group financial aid coaching on-site at high schools, community colleges, and recruiting events. They identify and develop tools to promote the value of higher education in relation to career options and earning potential. Additionally, they serve as a resource for high school staff to keep them informed about financial aid options for students. They promote scholarship opportunities and connect prospects to local, regional, and national funding options. Furthermore, the coaches support the main Financial Aid Office by assisting with emails, drafting flyers, communications, and social media posts, and following up with students and prospects who have missing paperwork.

CWU has hired a 1.0 FTE PATH Advocate and continued to fund a 1.0 FTE Assistant Director/PATH Advocate. The purpose of PATH advocates is to provide confidential support for CWU students who have experienced or been impacted by sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, stalking, or sexual harassment. With two full-time PATH staff members, CWU has expanded the number of student survivors it can serve and increased awareness of PATH services. Additionally, CWU has enhanced its campus violence prevention efforts through more presentations, trainings, awareness campaigns, and events.

College in the High School – For the 2023-25 biennium, CWU was appropriated \$8,060,000 in workforce education investment funds for the College in the High School (CiHS) program. This funding supports the CiHS program instead of relying on student fees. CWU offers more CiHS coursework than any other higher education institution and has a presence in high schools across the entire state of Washington, from Neah Bay to Washougal and from Colville to College Place. This funding enables CWU to maintain the College in the High School program at its current level.

During the 2023-2024 academic year, CWU awarded over 98,000 credits to students statewide who participated in the program. This translates to more than 12,000 unduplicated students, 21,000 registrations processed, and 1,126 courses offered (1,088 courses for public schools and 38 courses for private schools). For the fall of 2024, there has been a 38% increase in the number of registrations processed compared to fall 2023 (fall 2023: 8,162 registrations; fall 2024: 11,263 registrations). This growth demonstrates the direct impact of the funding that replaced the previous fees.

Learning Commons – In the 2023-25 biennium, CWU was appropriated \$1,406,000 for student success initiatives in peer-assisted learning, tutoring, and academic success coaching. To date, CWU is in the program building and hiring phase of implementing these services. As of November 2023, the Learning Commons has hired an Assistant Director to oversee the tutoring areas, as well as key staff to support each initiative.

- ◆ **Peer-Assisted Learning Sessions (PALs)** – CWU has hired 10 additional undergraduate student employees (averaging 10 hours each) and two graduate students (averaging 17-20 hours each) to support the expansion of PALs.
- ◆ **Academic Success Coaching** – CWU has hired an Academic Success Coaching Coordinator to supervise and support a team of 15 undergraduate student employees and three graduate student employees to provide academic success coaching services.
- ◆ **Discipline-Specific Tutoring** – CWU has hired the Discipline-Specific Tutoring Coordinator and is in the process of training and program development.

Educator Preparation – In the 2023-25 biennium, CWU has been appropriated \$967,000 for “grow your own” teacher residency programs in high-need areas, including elementary education, bilingual education, special education, and English language learners. This funding has been used to support student scholarships and to hire a faculty Program Coordinator for the existing teacher residency program. Additionally, CWU created a workgroup consisting of faculty, staff, and school district partners to collaboratively revise the program structure, ensuring it aligns with national best practices for teacher residency and meets evolving state and P-12 school needs. Several members of this group also joined the Professional Educator Standards Board’s statewide teacher residency workgroup. Over the next year, the University plans to finalize the updated program structure, recruit students, and hire faculty and staff support.

In addition, CWU was appropriated \$844,000 for dual language expansion programs in Yakima and Des Moines. To date, CWU has hired a staff Program Coordinator to support the implementation of this program in Yakima and allocated funding to support a faculty team in developing the curricular framework. Over the next year, CWU plans to finalize this framework, collaborate with school districts in Yakima and Des Moines to build the program structure and establish partnerships, and recruit students. The University is also working to hire a staff Program Coordinator in Des Moines and a faculty member at each of our CWU Center campuses in Yakima and Des Moines.

The funding supporting the development and training of more K-12 teachers aligns with all WEIAOB performance metrics. By certifying more teachers for schools, the quality of K-12 education will improve and so should the student success metrics. These high-quality teachers should help reduce dropout rates, thereby supporting statewide student enrollment in K-12 and improving the high school to postsecondary retention rate. They are also expected to assist more students in completing FAFSA/WASFA applications, increasing the higher education enrollment of Washington College Grant-eligible students. The additional capacity for teacher

candidates and the enhanced training that students will receive in high school should lead to higher retention rates in the programs, increased degree completion rates, and shorter time to degree. With highly qualified teachers in K-12 schools, positive economic outcomes are anticipated as more students succeed in their educational pathways.

Postsecondary Basic Needs (2SHB1559) – The CWU Basic Needs Resource Coordinator (BNRC) has been employed full-time for one year and has collaborated with the Wildcat Pantry Coordinator, the Office of Case Management, and the Financial Wellness Center to ensure that students at CWU have their basic needs met, thereby improving student retention. Over the past year, the CWU BNRC has assisted nearly 200 students, averaging 8 to 12 students per week (depending on the academic schedule), and has achieved a 100% retention rate from quarter to quarter and/or graduation for the students served. Funding for this position covers salary and benefits, and a part-time student employee was hired to help meet the demands of student needs. This funding is on track for the remainder of the fiscal year.

2022

In the 2022 supplemental budget and renewed thereafter, CWU was appropriated funds to develop a Jump Start orientation program, develop a Wildcat Academic Mentoring Program, and expand cybersecurity capacity by adding faculty resources in the Department of Computer Science.

Jump Start Program – In fall 2023, the Jump Start experience was expanded into a year-long connection. During their first year on campus, students participate in events, activities, and programming that provide them with an on-campus connection. The program also aims to create a sense of belonging while providing access to academic advising, study sessions, cooking classes, and more.

In June 2024, the Jump Start Coordinator position was made permanent, with Rebekah Bresee joining the team as the primary facilitator for the Jump Start cohort of students—currently numbering 44—who will join CWU in September 2024. Rebekah, along with seven Jump Start peer mentors (referred to as Jump Start Leaders or JSLs), created an inclusive pre-Week of Welcome experience to help students acclimate to campus life. This experience includes participation in activities, leadership-building exercises, mindfulness workshops, and resource sharing led by CWU faculty, staff, and Jump Start leaders. The Jump Start Experience is exclusive to program participants and is primarily held on the CWU campus and in surrounding Kittitas County areas. These students represent the second Jump Start cohort to benefit from a full year of engagement, with Jump Start Leaders connecting with them weekly throughout their first year.

From spring 2024 to fall 2024, the 2023-2024 Jump Start student participants who returned to CWU for their second year achieved an 85% retention rate. Of the 44 Jump Start student participants in fall 2024, 40 are enrolled for winter 2025, resulting in a 91% retention rate.

This program aligns with WEIAOB's goals and guiding principles by providing students from underrepresented groups with a pre-orientation program to help meet WEIAOB's goal of 70% of each high school cohort graduating from college. Developing this program supports equitable educational access for underserved students by providing an early orientation program to onboard them to Ellensburg and CWU.

Cybersecurity and Computer Science – In the 2022 supplemental legislative session, CWU was appropriated \$613,000 to expand cybersecurity capacity by adding additional faculty resources in the Department of Computer Science. The funding provides an opportunity to increase cybersecurity course offerings and funding for a physical lab. It directly supports students graduating from a high-demand field and equips them to positively impact the Washington workforce. CWU also upgraded the campus supercomputer, giving students and faculty the ability to better analyze large datasets, simulate cyber-attacks, perform cryptographic analysis, and detect threats in real-time. Additionally, CWU also developed and outfitted a computer lab specifically for cybersecurity coursework.

This program aligns with WEIAOB's goals and guiding principles by increasing cybersecurity courses to provide a needed specialization. The additional cybersecurity specialization provides access to this educational opportunity, which may not be otherwise available for systemically underserved students.

Wildcat Academic Mentoring – In the 2022 supplemental legislative session, CWU was appropriated \$293,000 to develop a peer mentoring program called the Wildcat Academic Mentoring program.

With this funding, 10 undergraduate and four graduate students are employed, working an average of 15 hours per week. Two of the graduate students are specifically tasked with supporting student assessment and assisting with developmental coursework. These academic and wellness strategies will transition into the real world, equipping students with the skills to succeed in Washington businesses and become valuable members of the workforce post-graduation, aligning with WEIAOB's goals and guiding principles.

2019-2021

Educator Preparation - In the 2019-21 biennium and renewed thereafter, CWU was appropriated \$1,050,000 to increase the number of certified K-12 teachers. HB 2158 specified that \$800,000 be spent on grow-your-own (GYO) high school teacher academies and \$205,000 for expanding alternative route capacity. Regarding GYO high school teacher academies, CWU developed several additional partnerships over the last year. Over 250 high school students across 24 diverse high schools participated in CWU teacher academies during the 2022-2023 academic year, and the number of partner schools has increased to 30 for the start of the 2023-2024 academic year, with three more teacher academy schools currently in development. These numbers surpass the original legislative goal of engaging 20 schools and 200 students in teacher academies with this funding.

During 2022-2023, these activities supported visits to CWU's campuses for 10 teacher academies, several presentations and visits to teacher academy schools by CWU advisors, faculty, and student ambassadors, professional development for teacher academy educators, and the integration of high-impact co-learning activities between high school and university students in some of CWU's education courses. Furthermore, the University has begun developing a student club and other support activities for teacher academy alumni who come to CWU and enroll in a teacher preparation program.

The alternative route program is a streamlined pathway for individuals with bachelor's degrees to become teachers. Students can obtain a [Master of Arts in Teaching](#), or have the option to complete a quarter early and still become certified to teach. To date, the alternative route funding has supported CWU in increasing enrollment to approximately 60 students for 2023, maintaining two cohort start dates annually and increasing enrollment in the elementary education cohort. CWU also improved how support for students in geographically remote placements by increasing in-person observations and visits to student/mentor teacher teams during the yearlong field placements.

Mental Health Counselors – In the 2019-21 biennium, and renewed thereafter, CWU has been appropriated \$736,000 to hire additional mental health counselors. This funding aimed to address the overwhelming caseload of students requesting services. The \$736,000 biennium funding was used to cover salaries and benefits for two full-time equivalent (FTE) mental health counselor positions and to increase four case manager staff positions from 11-month cyclic employees to 12-month FTE staff. The annual funds not dedicated to these staff positions were applied to CWU’s virtual counseling services platform, which expanded access for students in need of services outside standard business hours and regardless of their location; this expansion especially benefits CWU online and center students.

Eastern Washington University

Eastern Washington University (EWU) is a driving force for the culture, economy, workforce, and vitality of Washington state. Our graduates think critically and make meaningful contributions to both their career fields and their communities. EWU is the public university whose students, faculty, staff, and alumni make profound and significant contributions to the economic and social vitality of the region. The following investments EWU has received through the WEIA are mission critical in these endeavors.

Bachelor of Science Nursing Program - \$4.6 million

In the FY 2022 supplemental operating budget, the Washington State Legislature approved funding to start the conversion of EWU's two-year pre-nursing program into the four-year Bachelor of Nursing (BSN) program. In the 2023 budget, the University received additional funding that has allowed EWU to secure and outfit a space with state-of-the-art equipment, learning spaces, and SIM labs in the historic SIEER building on Spokane's health peninsula. Eastern has also received Phase II approval from the Nursing Commission, made key hires, and secured clinical placement for students. This critical funding also allowed EWU to fully fund faculty and staff needed to enroll the first cohort of 40 students in the fall of 2023.

Eastern invited 40 students and waitlisted 15 for fall 2023. An additional 40 students were admitted in January 2024. The intention is to have cohorts of 40 students for both the fall and spring terms over two years, resulting in a total of four cohorts. As of fall 2024, total enrollment stands at 141 students, with an anticipated 160 students in the pipeline for spring 2025. The first graduating class will complete their program in June 2025.

As of July 2024, EWU has hired one Professor, three Assistant Professors, four Clinical Assistants, one Operations Manager, one Nursing Support Technician, and one Program Specialist. Current recruitment efforts include positions for nursing tenure track faculty (Open Rank Assistant or Associate), one Nursing Skills and Simulation Laboratory Special Faculty member, and one Nursing Skills and Simulation Laboratory Assistant. The additional funding from the 2023-25 State Operating Budget has provided enough funding to fully staff the nursing program.

The Nursing BSN degree provides transformative educational experiences to create a culture of excellence in the art and science of nursing. The program prepares students for rewarding careers in nursing at a time when there is a critical shortage of nurses throughout the state and nation. Our graduates are lifelong learners prepared to practice with integrity and compassion as they care for people across their lifespans in various healthcare settings.

The baccalaureate degree program in nursing (BSN) at Eastern Washington University is pursuing initial accreditation from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education.

Computer Engineering Investment - \$1.3 million per year

EWU is continuing to build a program in Computer Engineering (CpE) with the additional staffing provided by the legislative appropriation under HB 2158. To support the CpE initiative, the Department of Computer Science merged with the Department of Electrical Engineering in FY 2021. The newly formed Department of Computer Science and Electrical Engineering received full approval to offer a bachelor of science degree in Electrical and Computer Engineering beginning in academic year 2021-22.

The original CpE proposal targeted three graduates by the end of academic year 2021-22. As of fall 2022, the program has graduated three students with a BS in Electrical & Computer Engineering, with an additional 24 students enrolled in the program. At the end of 2024, there were 74 students enrolled in the program.

In the Bachelor of Science in Electrical and Computer Engineering program, students learn about digital circuit design, electric and electronic circuits, computer systems, digital signal processing and communications, power and energy systems, and control systems. Students are prepared to enter and progress in electrical and computer engineering positions in business, industry, and government. Graduates are generally expected to work in the research and development of ideas, products, and processes, applying engineering principles to address practical problems in the field.

This degree combines studies in selected areas of engineering, physics, mathematics, and science, equipping students to solve real-world problems in electrical and computer engineering. The EWU Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering degree is accredited by the Engineering Accreditation Commission of ABET.

Center for Inclusive Excellence - \$150,000 per year

The Center for Inclusive Excellence is a unique model that offers a multicultural center for employees which ensures a space to educate, foster personal and professional development, and promote an inclusive culture on campus.

The space is used for:

- ◆ Professional development workshops and trainings.
- ◆ Onboarding with a distinct focus on equity.
- ◆ Search Advocates Program.
- ◆ Library of resources, activities, books, and videos that can be utilized by employees for use in their units and/or for personal growth.
- ◆ Space offered for small meetings and gatherings relating to equity and inclusion (e.g., Inclusive Leadership, affinity groups, brown bag discussion space, reading groups.)
- ◆ Space to invite community groups and advisory committees into University DEI space.
- ◆ Display space for relevant art and creative works of the campus community.

The Office for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) added a DEI Training and Development Consultant position to assist the Senior Director for Diversity and Inclusion in the completion of the space and implementation of the Center for Inclusive Excellence. The Consultant coordinates activities in the Center, as well as assist the University with coordination, facilitation, and tracking of required campus-wide DEI and Anti-Racism training. This position also helps in the creation of offerings for a full training and development program offered to the campus, which is offered in the Center.

The Center for Inclusive Excellence opened in fall 2022, culminating with a Grand Opening and Hispanic/Latinx Heritage Month celebration on October 12, 2022. The Center is now fully furnished with couches, chairs, side tables, and lighting, as well as movable tables and chairs for meetings and trainings. There are additional amenities such as lap desks to offer quiet space for working, connecting, or reading books from the University's borrowing library of over 200 DEI and Anti-Racism books. The Center houses trainings and meetings for up to 26 people in-person and offers audio/visual equipment for including the campus via Zoom. The Center walls are decorated with photographs from previous DEI events on campus, as well as student-designed artwork of social justice heroes throughout history. The Center is currently used for campus-wide quarterly DEI reading groups, DEI and Anti-Racism Training, the Search Advocates program, and DEI affinity groups. The Office for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion also holds meetings, hosts guests, and offers a variety of activities and events in the space to which all of campus is invited.

Cyber Security - \$2.8 million of one-time and permanent funding for 2023

EWU is on track to achieve or surpass all objectives outlined in the 2022 cybersecurity appropriation.

EWU developed two bachelor's programs in this field in Fall 2022: a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science (BSCS) Cyber Operations and a Bachelor of Science (BS) in Cyber Operations. The two programs are similar. The primary difference is that the BSCS Cyber Operations program requires more math and natural science coursework than the BS Cyber Operations program.

With EWU's Bachelor of Science in Cyber Operations, students will learn all aspects related to cyberspace operations that are both technical—networking, malware analysis, digital forensics and incident response, attacking and defending—and non-technical, including the ethical, privacy, legal, and human-centered impacts of the field.

EWU's Bachelor of Science in Computer Science Cyber Operations builds upon the Cyber Operations BS with a much deeper understanding of the mathematics and computer science needed for cybersecurity. In this more advanced program, students will develop a deeper understanding of cryptography and the reverse-engineering of programs, as well as the technical and non-technical aspects of cyber operations.

These programs focus on preparing graduates with the following cybersecurity-related skills:

- ◆ Reconnaissance skills: packet analysis, network traffic sniffing, forensics, network and system mapping, binary analysis, and reverse engineering.
- ◆ Offensive skills: network engineering, ethical hacking, penetration testing, Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks, and website exploitation.
- ◆ Defensive skills: incident response, network system administration, and cloud security.
- ◆ Critical thinking skills: analyzing large and complex data sets, engaging in proactive and reactive actions against threats.

The range of careers program graduates can prepare for includes Cybersecurity Analyst, Security Operations Center Analyst, Software Developer, Penetration and Vulnerability Tester, Network Engineer, and Systems Engineer.

In association with these programs, EWU has hired talented faculty for the cybersecurity program and has established strong partnerships in the Spokane area. For example, they are partnering with the City of Spokane to work with the Wastewater Treatment Facility's cybersecurity team. Eastern is also developing a master's program in cybersecurity, which is anticipated to launch in September 2025.

The original proposal targeted 30 Computer Science graduates with a cybersecurity minor by the end of academic year 2022-23. By 2022, the program had graduated exactly 15 students with the cybersecurity minor, five cybersecurity minor students at the end of winter quarter 2023, and 20 cybersecurity minor students at the end of spring quarter 2023. FY 2025 student enrollment in the Cyber Security program is currently at 59. FY 2024 enrollment was 35. Once full capacity is reached, the number of students will exceed 150. The enrollments have had a substantial increase since the inception of the program, and EWU anticipates that they will continue to increase.

The Cybersecurity allocation included funding for four tenure-track faculty, two lecturers, and two staff positions. The department successfully hired one new tenure-track faculty member in cybersecurity during spring 2022 and has an active ongoing search for additional faculty. The department is in the process of launching a search for staff support positions.

Funds were used to design the lab as well as purchase tables, podiums, 40 computers for the lab, office supplies and computer software, video conferencing equipment, cybersecurity marketing, research equipment, and to configure the office spaces. The aim is to have specialized equipment with specialized computer security features for the students to gain the necessary experience for career success. The labs that were retrofitted are used by both students in the bachelor's and master's programs. Eastern is also purchasing laptops, equipment, and software for use in these programs.

Coordinated Care Network - \$1 million per year

These funds were used to implement Eagle Care, a robust and coordinated care network designed to coordinate and maximize various student support services. This wrap-around care helps students navigate and overcome social, financial, and health obstacles that can delay or prevent the successful completion of their degrees. The multifaceted challenges faced by students often require effective coordination and collaboration among various offices across campus, including Student Accommodation and Support Services, Housing and Residential Life, Financial Aid, Academic Advising, Student Financial Services, and Counseling and Wellness Services.

Perhaps the most powerful aspect of Eagle Care is the shift from engaging with students in distress after their social, financial, or health challenges have impacted their academic progress to a preemptive and proactive model of support that identifies risks and provides support before students' grades and academic progress are impacted. EWU has initiated an early warning system that alerts faculty and staff when certain academic behaviors (e.g., excessive absences) or performance indicators (e.g., failing a class) are observed. Eagle Care expands these alerts into non-academic areas, such as visits to multiple university offices for the same issue, increased indebtedness to the university, or a sudden decline in campus participation. These indicators suggest that a student's normal behaviors are changing and may signal an underlying need for additional support and services. By monitoring both academic and non-academic alerts generated by the early warning system, Eagle Care case managers can proactively offer students the support and resources they need before reaching a crisis point that could lead to poor academic performance or abandonment of their educational goals.

Currently, the Eagle Care program includes an Associate Director, an Assistant Dean of Student Initiatives, a Case Manager, two Accommodation Specialists, and a Health Education Coordinator. Positions currently being recruited include a Manager for Disability Support Services, two Case Managers, and a Coordinator of Student Equity & Belonging.

MESA University Center - \$520,000 per year

EWU received funding in the 2024 supplemental session to develop the Math, Engineering, and Science Achievement University Center (MESA). The Center will focus on operating EWU's MESA University program to support underserved and minoritized students in STEM majors. It aims to develop and implement evidence-based, equity-minded STEM pedagogy and practices designed to improve retention in both MESA and general STEM teaching across K-12, community college, and university levels. Additionally, the Center will facilitate STEM community engagement to increase recruitment in STEM fields.

By leveraging EWU's overall STEM Education program alongside Washington MESA and the state's first four-year MESA University Center, EWU will create a unique integrated resource to increase and diversify the STEM talent pool from elementary through graduate-level education. This center has the potential to make a profound impact on the educational landscape, foster a thriving STEM ecosystem, and nurture the next generation of skilled and diverse professionals and teachers.

Recruitment will soon begin to staff the MESA Center. Available positions include a Director, a Business Manager, a Program Specialist, and multiple student employees for general assistance.

Dental Therapy - \$127,000 one-time funding

EWU received funding in the 2024 supplemental session to develop a post-baccalaureate Dental Therapy Certificate. Dental Health Aide Therapists were introduced in Alaska in the early 2000s and in Washington tribal communities in 2005. A 2017 study demonstrated that greater access to dental therapy resulted in fewer extractions for both children and adults. Because the Dental Therapy Certificate requires post-baccalaureate work, EWU is the only dental hygiene program in Washington State capable of offering this program, as it is housed within a graduate degree-granting university. This one-time funding will enable EWU to engage key stakeholders (e.g., UW School of Dentistry, practicing dentists) and align their needs with the accreditation requirements set by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA). CODA is the recognized industry standard for quality assurance in all dental degrees; no one in the United States or Canada can obtain licensure without graduating from a CODA-accredited program.

Dental care is in high demand in our region, state, and nation. This initiative aligns with EWU's mission of serving the region and supports its goal of educating students for careers that meet the needs of rural and underserved communities.

The Evergreen State College

The Evergreen State College (Evergreen) is a public liberal arts and sciences college located in Olympia and serves students from throughout the state. Evergreen’s mission and activities contribute to goals set forth in Results Washington to achieve a world-class education, contribute to a prosperous economy, improve environmental sustainability, contribute to community health and safety, and be accountable and effective stewards of public resources; and to the Washington Student Achievement Council’s (WSAC) ten-year roadmap to increase educational attainment in Washington state.

Within Washington state’s baccalaureate system, Evergreen’s distinctive model of education provides students and their families with unique options. Evergreen’s students thrive in a model using narrative evaluations as opposed to traditional grades and immersive interdisciplinary programs instead of departments and majors. With structures differing from that of Evergreen’s peer institutions, the way in which the College reports outcomes of initiatives is not side-by-side comparable with the universities. For example, for high-demand psychology, Evergreen does not provide data on majors, as another institution might. Nevertheless, the narrative below demonstrates that WEIA investments are producing outcomes in line with the principles set forth by the WEIA Board.

In the fall of 2024, Evergreen experienced a 7.4% increase in headcount compared to the previous year. This marks the third consecutive year of rising fall enrollment, reflecting a total increase of 19.1% since fall 2021. Partnerships with the state legislature, WEIA investments, and the dedicated efforts of Evergreen faculty and staff all contributed to this turnaround in enrollment for the college.

Psychology

HB 2158 provided funding to expand psychology offerings to 75 additional students. The funding has allowed for hiring of new faculty and expanded curricular offerings. Evergreen’s psychology offerings have grown from 293 seats in fall 2018 to 419 seats in fall 2024. HB2158 funding has allowed Evergreen to hire two long-term visiting faculty and two more regular (tenure-track) faculty members. The college is currently searching for another regular faculty member in psychology to start on contract in fall 2025.

These regular and visiting faculty positions are anchors for our undergraduate interdisciplinary paths of study. Our “Psychology, Health, and Community” path primarily serves students who study full-time and in person. A second path, “Psychology and Wellness,” within our new School for Professional and Continuing Education, caters to students who wish to study part-time and online. The “Psychology and Wellness” path includes several career-connected certificates:

- ◆ Behavioral Health Support Specialist
- ◆ Trauma-Informed Engagement and Healing
- ◆ Writing Trauma, Healing, and Resilience

As one example, the Behavioral Health Support Specialist Certificate, developed in coordination with UW and the Department of Health, prepares students for the Washington state BHSS certification. In addition to their coursework, students participate in an internship placement within a behavioral health setting. This certification opens up employment opportunities in behavioral health settings, as well as in brief behavioral health treatment and intervention.

Evergreen has designed several certificates in psychology and other academic disciplines. These stackable micro-credentials are a vital part of Evergreen's turnaround strategy. By offering undergraduate students easily accessible, clear, and distinct career-connected learning opportunities, The college has attracted new students and strengthened Washington's workforce.

First-Year Experience (Student Success Class & Pre-College Immersion Program)

WEIA funds are helping Evergreen build and expand upon intentional programming for first-year students. These programs aim to support students and build community so that they will persist to degree completion. There are two major components to Evergreen's first-year experience: our first-year student success course, Greener Foundations, and our Pre-Orientation program. Both programs continue to expand and attract students:

- ◆ Greener Foundations served 194 students in fall 2023 and 224 in fall 2024.
- ◆ Pre-Orientation served 90 students in fall 2023 and 114 in fall 2024.

Evergreen sought funding for these programs to improve the retention and persistence of first-time, first-year students. In 2019-20, Evergreen's fall-to-fall retention rate of first-time, first-year students was 60%; this rate has increased to 70% in 2023-24. Importantly, both Greener Foundations and Pre-Orientation have contributed to Evergreen's success in retaining these students.

Greener Foundations: Key Points

- ◆ Faculty and staff development of curriculum and assessment protocols
- ◆ Faculty and staff training
- ◆ Professional development for instructors teaching first-year students
- ◆ Delivery of a 4-credit student success course for new students

Greener Foundations is a foundational course for first-time, first-year students and transfer students with fewer than 40 credits. Over fall and winter quarters, students develop academic skills like time management and metacognition, learn what it is like to be part of a learning community, and how to engage with campus resources (e.g., library, writing center, financial aid, advising, Student Wellness Center). Faculty and staff instructors for Greener Foundations receive training to assist with effective instruction for this student population and are engaged in ongoing assessment and improvement.

Greener Foundations has shown early results in student retention and academic achievement. For instance, in 2023, data shows that the fall 2021 to fall 2022 overall retention was 64% for all students who were expected to enroll in the program, with a 73% retention rate for students who did enroll and have the Greener Foundations experience, and 51% for those who did not.

Pre-Orientation: Key Points

- ◆ Waived program costs for Pell-eligible students
- ◆ Faculty and staff development of curriculum and assessment protocols
- ◆ Delivery of a 2-credit pre-college immersion program for new students

With the help of WEIA funding, Evergreen expanded Pre-Orientation with a focus on critical thinking, biodiversity, wellness, civic engagement, and multicultural scholarship. The program underwent a significant redesign in fall 2023, bringing on more faculty and offering these courses for academic credit. Evergreen offered three sections in fall 2023 to 90 students, increasing to four sections and 114 students in fall 2024.

Pre-Orientation courses are offered to students in their first year and occur just before fall quarter begins. These courses allow students to jump-start their Evergreen journey by connecting with faculty, staff, and peers; Evergreen's campus; and the Olympia community ahead of the beginning of the academic year. Building on Evergreen's history in community-based experiential learning, students build a supportive peer and community network while exploring the South Sound region and learning about multicultural scholarship, biodiversity, wellness, civic engagement, and critical thinking.

WEIA Principles

Help achieve the goal that 70 percent of students in each cohort of Washington high school graduates complete a postsecondary credential by age 26.

- ◆ Expanded offerings in psychology courses is providing further educational access for systematically underserved students and creating more psychology professionals that represent their communities.
- ◆ Pre-college and first-year experience programming has been shown to be factors in retaining students at a higher level than peers who did not have that programming. This programming is especially important for first-year and first-generation students who experience higher barriers to enrolling and persisting to graduation. Investments in programs that retain students through a successful college transition are key to helping achieve the 70% credential attainment goal.

Provide support for equitable educational access and economic outcomes for systematically underserved students.

As of fall 2024, Evergreen serves an incredibly diverse student body:

- ◆ 48% non-traditional age (24+ for undergraduates and 30+ for graduates)
- ◆ 60% female
- ◆ 20% first-generation students
- ◆ 32% low income
- ◆ 37% students of color

Evergreen knows students from systematically underserved backgrounds face unique barriers to accessing and persisting through postsecondary education. Providing pre-college and first-year experience programming helps break down those barriers and welcomes students to the Evergreen experience.

Help Washington businesses fill the jobs of the future with qualified Washington students, including the current workforce.

- ◆ As of fall 2022, 85% of Evergreen students are Washington residents. Investments in programming that support student retention result in graduates entering, re-entering, or moving up in Washington's workforce.

Improve statewide systems and/or test innovative approaches that can be replicated across institutions.

- ◆ Evergreen's interdisciplinary model merges theory with practice, giving students a broader view of the behavioral health field than a traditional psychology major. Evergreen's paths in "Psychology, Health, and Community," as well as "Psychology and Wellness," in addition to other new offerings and certificates in the College's School of Professional and Continuing Education, offer multiple stackable means to a degree with an emphasis in Psychology.

- ◆ Pre-college and first-year experience programming is based on current best practices to support student transitions. Understanding the campus, services available, and getting to know their faculty are important steps to student success. This programming helps students locate the library and health center and learn how to access financial aid and advising help before the need arises. Students are immersed in seminar-style learning that they will experience throughout their Evergreen journey. This model has been replicated across other institutions to varying degrees; all students deserve this type of support during their college transition.

The University of Washington

The University of Washington's (UW) WEIA funds received in recent biennial budgets are primarily allocated to enhance and create STEM degree programs, which continue to see unprecedented demand from Washington students and industry. The funding stream adds enrollment slots at the UW for Washington high school graduates and community and technical college transfers in engineering, computer science, and other STEM disciplines. WEIA funds also support related student support programs on all three campuses (Seattle, Bothell, and Tacoma). The funding stream adds enrollment slots at the UW for Washington high school graduates and community and technical college transfers in engineering, computer science, and other STEM disciplines.

During the 2024 legislative session, the UW received nine additional WEIA-funded provisos. These new provisos span a wide range of policy issues and other state-driven priorities at the University. For the purposes of this report, the UW has provided updates where WEIA funds increased enrollment and support for students.

WEIA appropriations are expanding access to UW STEM and healthcare degrees for in-state students and are creating a pipeline of future qualified talent for local businesses and communities. Ultimately, UW graduates will see improved opportunities for economic prosperity post-graduation, and local businesses will have skilled workers to fill in-demand jobs and further cutting-edge technology and research. Both outcomes fuel economic growth and a greater quality of life throughout Washington State.

Beginning with the 2019-21 budget requests, the UW has utilized WEIA funding to expand STEM degree program enrollment on all three campuses. From FY 2020 to FY 2024, UW Seattle expanded undergraduate enrollment in these programs by 941, and UW Tacoma expanded by 131. Overall STEM enrollments at UW Bothell have declined from FY 2020 to FY 2024, in part due to declines in biology, engineering, and mathematics degree programs. However, enrollments in computer science and computer engineering have increased by 60. UW Bothell is working to improve transfer pathways for Cascadia College students in pre-engineering programs and is engaging with local industry partners to better support students.

WEIA funds were also allocated in the 2019-21 budget to the [Washington State Academic RedShirt \(STARS\)](#) program at the University of Washington in Seattle, which supports engineering and computer science students from low-income, first-generation, and underserved backgrounds in navigating the transition to college-level courses and the path toward a STEM degree. STARS is a two-year program with a specialized curriculum designed to build learning skills and strengthen academic preparation for core math and science prerequisites. STARS scholars are guaranteed placement into an engineering or computer science major. Since 2019, the program has enrolled 183 new students and continues improving access to STEM degrees and educational outcomes, including degree attainment.

In the 2021-23 biennial budget, the UW received WEIA funds to increase degrees at the Paul G. Allen School of Computer Science & Engineering (CSE) by 100 per year by FY 2026, with a focus on Washington students from traditionally underserved backgrounds. To date, CSE is on track with the enrollment and degree targets assumed in the 2021-23 budget. CSE expanded undergraduate enrollment by 419 from FY 2021 to FY 2024. Additionally, CSE has increased enrollments of students from traditionally underserved backgrounds. Since FY 2021, the number of Pell-eligible undergraduate enrollments, one metric used to measure this goal, increased by 27.6% (81 students).

From AY20 to AY24, Pell-eligible undergraduate student enrollment increased by 7.5% (66 students) at the UW Seattle College of Engineering. At UW Tacoma, 42% of undergraduate students enrolled in the School of Engineering & Technology were Pell-eligible in AY24. At UW Bothell, 26.6% of STEM declared majors were Pell-eligible in AY24. The average time to a bachelor's degree for UW students entering STEM degrees from high school is 4.1 years at UW Bothell, 4.1 years at UW Tacoma, and 3.68 years at UW Seattle. Retention rates after admission into a major remain very high.

In the 2023-25 biennium, the UW received WEIA funds to again support additional enrollments in computer science and engineering disciplines. Each campus received funding, which is detailed below:

- ◆ The University of Washington in Seattle, for the Allen School of Computer Science & Engineering: \$2 million in FY 2024 and \$4 million in ongoing funding starting in FY 2025. In addition, the Allen School received one-time funding of \$125,000 in each of FY 2024 and FY 2025 to support the Allen Scholars program (student support program). This funding was increased and made permanent during the 2024 supplemental session.
- ◆ UW Bothell, School of STEM and First-Year and Pre-Major Programs (FYPP): \$862,000 in FY 2024 and each year thereafter to create an equivalent to the STARS program.
- ◆ UW Tacoma, School of Engineering and STEM: \$854,000 in FY 2024 and \$2 million in ongoing funding starting in FY 2025 to expand engineering enrollments.

Other Select WEIA-Funded Provisos from the 2023-25 Biennium:

- ◆ Regional Initiatives in Dental Education (RIDE) Expansion: \$2.5 million beginning in FY 2025 to expand the capacity and footprint of the RIDE program in Spokane. This funding doubles the cohort and adds a second year to the program.
- ◆ Student Support Services (UW Tacoma): \$698,000 in FY 2024 and \$699,000 in FY 2025 at UW Tacoma for student support services.
- ◆ College in the High School Fees: \$1.34 million in each FY 2024 and FY 2025 for College in the High School courses as provided in Second Substitute Senate Bill 5048.
- ◆ Behavioral Health Support: \$96,000 in FY 2024 and \$61,000 in FY 2025 for the implementation of Substitute Senate Bill 5189, which establishes behavioral health support specialists.
- ◆ Center for Indigenous Health: \$500,000 in each FY 2024 and FY 2025 for the Center for Indigenous Health to increase the number of American Indian and Alaska Native physicians practicing in the state.
- ◆ UW Barnard Center: \$250,000 in FY 2025 to identify existing infant and early childhood mental health workforce initiatives and activities.

The legislature funded additional provisos out of WEIA, most of which were member-driven. The University of Washington is happy to provide the list of all WEIA provisos upon request.

Washington State University

WEIA has enhanced Washington State University's (WSU) ability to produce graduates and recruit and retain faculty in several high-demand sectors through key investments. The account provided a critical component of core funding used to operate and expand class sizes at the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine. During the 2022 legislative session, WEIA also provided funding for WSU to establish a baccalaureate program in Cybersecurity Operations offered through the Voiland College of Engineering and Architecture. In the 2023 legislative session, WEIA funded two new degree programs to address the demand for professionals in the behavioral health workforce needed throughout the state. This included a social work program offering four years of undergraduate programming and an additional fifth year for a Master of Social Work degree, in addition to a baccalaureate program in Public Health with concentrations in behavioral health and infectious disease. Further, in 2023 the WEIA provided resources to enhance nursing faculty salaries. During the 2024 legislative session, the Legislature appropriated funds from WEIA to WSU for the Complex Social Interactions Lab to expand applied research in public safety through the hiring of student researchers and other lab enhancements.

At full maturation, the College of Medicine will produce 80 graduates annually. The Cybersecurity Operations program — offered at WSU campuses in Pullman, Tri-Cities, and Everett — added capacity to produce 80 graduates annually at full maturity. The undergraduate social work program at WSU Tri-Cities provides capacity to produce 50 graduates annually at the undergraduate level and 25 master's degrees, while the Public Health degree has the capacity to produce 200 graduates across WSU campuses in Pullman, Spokane, and Vancouver at full maturity. These programs are meeting the WEIA principles in the following ways:

Help achieve the goal of 70% of students in each cohort of Washington high school graduates completing a postsecondary credential by age 26.

- ◆ The Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine aspires to recruit and sustain a broadly diverse student body from Washington, train them here, and build the likelihood that graduates will practice here. The college only admits students from Washington. Among enrolled students, 18.4% grew up in a rural county, 29% are the first in their families to have obtained a bachelor's degree, 62.5% identify as women, 7.8% have served in the military, and 39.1% have low socioeconomic status. The program includes students from 26 counties and 89 individual Washington communities. Pathway programs have been established by the college to target traditionally underserved populations in Washington and those who align well with the college mission. While these pathways may not result in students pursuing a career that leads them to medical school, students may end up pursuing other health science disciplines, such as nursing. These pathway programs include:
 - ▶ The Dare to Dream Health Sciences Academy works with the state's Superintendent for Public Instruction and the Association for Washington State Principals to engage K-12 students in migrant populations.
 - ▶ Students of Medicine delivers hands-on experiences in a remote format as part of a one- to three-week curriculum for high school students from low socioeconomic backgrounds or prospective first-generation college students.
 - ▶ WSU Honors College Pathway Program is a partnership with Pullman's program to select up to eight students who are aligned with the College mission in a two-year pathway while they finish their undergraduate degrees before matriculating into the College.

- ◆ The Cybersecurity Operations program is located on WSU campuses in Pullman, Tri-Cities, and Everett. This was a deliberate decision intended to reach place-bound students. By having the program at three distinct locations, it provides an in-state option for high school graduates and degree-seekers who may have otherwise left the state or chosen to not pursue a cybersecurity degree at all. The funding provided is also being used to establish dedicated student support staff for this program to promote academic progress and completion for all.
- ◆ The Public Health degree is offered at WSU campuses in Pullman with a concentration on infectious disease, and Vancouver and Spokane with a concentration on behavioral health. The concentration offerings align with the academic and research strengths of the campuses where they are located. The degree equips students with an interdisciplinary degree that will have them in careers in state and local health departments, private and public research laboratories, and community health settings. This new program at WSU is working hand in hand with the Washington State Public Health Academic Learning Collaborative and the Department of Health. This group has organized [a webpage](#) that serves as a centralized repository of resources to include scholarships, internships, and fellowships available for Washington State public health students, and resources for instructors. Visit WSU's [Bachelor of Science in Public Health webpage](#) for details.
- ◆ Social work coursework was first offered this academic year. Plans to admit the first cohort of undergraduate students are set for fall 2025, with the first cohort of MSW students eligible for admission in fall 2028. Once enrolled, students in the graduate program will have access to the only MSW program in the Tri-Cities, providing a pathway to education for those interested in the social work workforce without needing to leave town. Designed with a four-plus-one model, the program confers a Bachelor of Social Work degree, preparing graduates for high-demand careers as mental health assistants or family service specialists, while also offering a pathway to becoming a licensed social worker with an additional year in the master's program.
- ◆ The WSU College of Nursing is preparing nurses at five different locations throughout the state: Spokane, Tri-Cities, Vancouver, Yakima, and a hybrid RN-to-BSN program with coursework delivered primarily online. The funding allowed WSU to more adequately compensate high demand nurse educators, bringing salaries for such faculty to the 50th percentile. This has ensured that the pipeline of roughly 435 nursing degrees conferred annually at WSU remained undisturbed.

Provide support and improve educational and economic outcomes for systemically underserved students (e.g., first-generation college students; students from low-income backgrounds; and students of color, particularly Black, Hispanic, Latinx, and Native American students).

- ◆ The Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine deploys a holistic admissions process that only considers GPA and test scores as transparent pre-screening criteria to receive a secondary application. The Admissions Committee, screeners, and interviewers never see GPAs or MCAT scores when assessing eligible applicants' candidacy. This holistic admissions process focuses on mission-aligned experiences and attributes including connections to Washington and coming from or having served communities historically underserved or marginalized and rural. This has produced a diverse current student body of which 39% come from low-income backgrounds. Once enrolled, students engage in a curriculum that includes instruction on systematic challenges in medicine, health literacy and cultural barriers.

Additionally, students complete required curriculum to earn a leadership certificate through training that spans the four-year curriculum to help equip them with the tools to advocate for their patients, bring about positive change, and address health disparities prevalent in rural and underserved communities.

- ◆ The Cybersecurity Operations degree is offered at three WSU campuses. WSU is organized as a multi-campus system to meet students where they are and produce a student body that is representative of the state at large. The University offered a variety of resources for student interest in and enrolled in STEM majors, of which include MESA, the Team Mentoring Program, among other programs across WSU campuses. In addition, the University anticipates significant numbers of transfers from community colleges, also homes to diverse populations of students. Finally, the inclusion of considerable advising resources reflects clear national evidence that expanded advising is especially impactful on underrepresented and first-generation students. Advisors are trained to meet the specific needs of these students.
- ◆ The Public Health degree will be offered at three WSU campuses, including the Vancouver and Spokane campuses, which serve populations of students underrepresented in higher education. That includes 39% first-generation students at WSU Vancouver. Offering this program on these campuses continues to open college pathways for students from these and other underrepresented backgrounds. Funding will also support staff that will support outreach/marketing, recruitment, and partnerships that are focused on rural, remote, and underserved populations. WSU will leverage strong health sciences partnerships in Native American health on the Spokane campus to build the program.
- ◆ The Social Work program provides an educational pathway for students on the WSU Tri-Cities campus, where 51% of students are the first in their families to attend college. The addition of this program only enhances WSU's ability to produce a workforce that looks like the Tri-Cities and Washington.
- ◆ The College of Nursing continues to educate a greater population of students from underserved communities, with 23.4% being first generation college students, and 18% identifying as coming from a rural community. The funding to retain current faculty helps the College continue to serve this population of students and recruit new faculty from underrepresented backgrounds to help foster a sense of community and belonging for students. In addition, the funding investment helped the college to hire academic coaches and experiential learning staff on all campuses to provide additional resources necessary to ensure that all students are successful.

Help Washington businesses fill the jobs of the future with qualified, homegrown talent.

- ◆ The College of Medicine continues to admit only Washington students or those with strong ties to the state. Narrow exceptions are made primarily so as not to penalize Washingtonians who left the state to go to college or serve in the military. Applicants who fail to meet the residency requirement are automatically removed from the applicant pool. The College does not have a nonresident tuition rate. Today's student body hails from 89 different Washington communities in 29 counties. Of those from the inaugural graduating class of 2021 who have completed 3-year residencies in June 2024, 75% have entered practice and 25% are pursuing fellowships or additional training. Among those who entered practice, 62% have done so in Washington, and another 33% of those practicing out of state planning for a return to the state in the near or long term.

- ◆ As mentioned, the Cybersecurity Operations, Public Health, and Social Work programs are strategically placed throughout the state of Washington to draw from local high school graduates and prospective students interested in the rapidly expanding cybersecurity and behavioral health field. In cybersecurity, Washington's existing capacity to produce the workforce needed is undersized in a field expected to grow 30% according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. WSU is engaging with colleagues at Pacific Northwest National Laboratory to refine its recruitment and retention strategies to support students across programs, but especially in those STEM focused majors like cybersecurity. Furthermore, the inclusion of dedicated advisors and an internship coordinator will help facilitate pathways to Washington businesses to meet their demand for qualified graduates who have demonstrated experience. The Social Work program will look to bolster the state's high-demand mental health workforce particularly in rural, remote, and underserved communities where impacts from mental health challenges like the pandemic caused disproportionate harm.
- ◆ This year, 91% of students enrolled in the College of Nursing's Bachelor's of Science in Nursing program are Washington residents, with 90% of all other undergraduate and graduate students being residents. The College remains one of the top producers of nurses in the state. Investments made in faculty salaries help ensure that the College can continue producing homegrown nurses without any disruptions.

Improve statewide systems and/or test innovative approaches that can be replicated across institutions.

- ◆ At the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine, clinical training in the third year is conducted via longitudinal integrated clerkship. Here, students are trained in clinical settings in the core disciplines of family medicine, pediatrics, surgery, OB/GYN, internal medicine, and psychiatry. Rather than isolate all training in a single discipline into individual blocks of time, the longitudinal integrated clerkship allows a student to receive training in all disciplines simultaneously over a prolonged period, just as they will as professionals. This allows them to remain at a single training site or region and develop relationships with patients they see repeatedly. These 46-week clerkships help students retain empathy and improve learning retention as they apply knowledge in each discipline time and again.
- ◆ The Cybersecurity Operations degree is unique in that an internship coordinator and targeted advising capacity just for this academic program was built into the funding proposal. Additional advising capacity will be available at each campus, while all three will share a single internship coordinator.
- ◆ The Public Health degree, being offered across three campuses (Spokane, Vancouver, and Pullman) and three colleges (Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine, College of Veterinary Medicine, and the College of Arts and Sciences), demonstrates interprofessional education that spans the state of Washington. This strategy capitalizes on WSU's healthcare professionals and researchers as they educate students in public health and meet the needs of Washington state in the areas of infectious disease and behavioral health, with practicum experiences in the local communities that they will be serving.
- ◆ The Public Health degree curriculum will include education in communication, leadership, human development, and more, which will further connections across disciplines and colleges at the University. After the initial launch, WSU has developed microcredentials and certificates, including a public health minor and a sub-track in general public health that will permit the University's students to have the direct credentials necessary to be career-ready for Washington state jobs.
- ◆ The Social Work program utilizes a four-plus-one model, as previously mentioned. This is an innovative approach to expedite students who are already in the social work educational pipeline to not only equip them with an undergraduate degree that can be utilized in the workforce, but allows a student to spend one more year to earn their graduate degree, where other programs would typically require two years.

It is worth noting several outcomes to date:

- ◆ The College of Medicine's most recent graduating class, the class of 2024, matched to residency at a remarkable rate of 100%, exceeding national averages. Furthermore, 38% matched to residency programs in the Pacific Northwest. When including the full Western Region, 71% are training on this side of the country. All of these show promise for returning to Washington for practice.
- ◆ The College of Medicine has developed three accredited residency programs so far at no cost to the state. They include an internal medicine residency program with Providence Regional Medical Center in Everett, which will at full maturity have 40 total residents. A second residency program with Pullman Regional Hospital focusing on family medicine took its first three residents in July 2023 and at full maturity will have nine total residents. A third residency program in pediatrics matched its first cohort who began in July 2024. The primary training location for this program is located at Providence Sacred Heart Children's Hospital, but residents will have outpatient experiences at local community pediatrics clinics. The program will match six residents per cohort for 18 total residents. Slots in these residency programs are not reserved for WSU students, just as WSU graduates are eligible for existing residency programs in Washington, but make valuable additions to the state's supply.
- ◆ The development of the medical school has spurred new research activity on the Spokane campus with important work being done on cancer, addiction and mental health, population health, autism, pharmacology, chronic disease, sleep and performance, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Research grants and awards at WSU Spokane, catalyzed by the emergence of the College of Medicine, totaled approximately \$34 million in FY 2022. The National Institutes of Health has been the leading funder.
- ◆ The Cybersecurity Operations degree program has currently enrolled 52 students as of this fall 2024 across campuses. Additionally, 24 students have indicated the program as their academic interest. Currently, six faculty have been hired and searches are being conducted for two faculty positions. More than 20 organizations were consulted regarding educational and research needs. A student club has also been formed in the WSU system, which includes students from other degree programs and competes in regional and national competitions, such as the National Cyber League and Spokane Mayor's Cup. The student club has achieved [impressive accomplishments](#) in these competitions, which represent significant experiential learning opportunities.
- ◆ The Public Health degree curriculum has been finalized, and courses in Pullman will be offered starting fall 2024. The first introductory course had over 30 students, and some of these students have declared public health as their major. The Behavioral Health track in Vancouver will be offered in fall 2025. Two program co-directors and inaugural faculty have been hired in Pullman, three faculty members have been hired in Spokane, and two faculty positions are being recruited for Vancouver. Discussions with community partners and stakeholders highlighted the need for specialists in health policy, environmental health, and community-based rural health. This year, the focus is on enhancing entry-level competencies, including advancing micro-credentialing in public health. A subtrack in general public health is being created to appeal to pre-health professional students and attract transfer students who can complete the degree in two years at WSU. Recruitment and marketing efforts are ongoing, with informative postcards created and sent to students who exhibit both a passion for and a commitment to impacting their communities. The postcards will also be translated into multiple languages, including Spanish and others.

- ◆ Nursing salary enhancements have led to an increase in the number of applicants and have helped alleviate many areas of critical shortage. This fall, for the first time in several years, WSU began the semester without needing to make last-minute instructional hires for the BSN program. Additionally, WSU has several high-quality recruits for key leadership positions in our Doctor of Nursing Practice program. However, the College of Nursing still falls short of the faculty needed to fully meet the demand for our nursing degrees.

Western Washington University

New and ongoing investments of WEIA funds have been appropriated to Western Washington University (WWU) for the purposes of:

- ◆ STEM degree programs - \$1.7 million
- ◆ Ethnic studies curriculum - \$508,000
- ◆ Cyber Range technical support positions - \$200,000
- ◆ Student support services - \$1.26 million
- ◆ Cities and counties planning studios - \$200,000 one-time
- ◆ 2+2 programs and student support for the Kitsap and Olympic peninsulas - \$4.2 million
- ◆ First-year retention - \$1.5 million
- ◆ Mental health first aid - \$100,000
- ◆ Master of social work - \$694,000
- ◆ Bilingual educators - \$2.5 million
- ◆ Peninsulas student support - \$1 million
- ◆ Human services state support - \$580,000
- ◆ Small Business Development Center - \$150,000
- ◆ Special education residency program - \$1.3 million
- ◆ Electrical and computer engineering expansion - \$445,000
- ◆ Access & outreach - \$400,000 one-time

STEM Degrees

Western currently graduates over 1,000 students per year in STEM fields. The vast majority of WWU STEM graduates are Washington residents, and around 25% are students of color or the first generation in their family to attend college.

Due to unprecedented enrollment growth in STEM majors in the decade following the Great Recession, WWU had to significantly limit the number of students admitted to STEM degree programs, prior to the WEIA investment, particularly in computer science, engineering, and pre-healthcare. By 2019, many qualified applicants were denied admission to these majors because of capacity constraints. WEIA funding is being used to hire new STEM faculty to address these limitations and increase the number of career-ready STEM graduates at WWU.

- ◆ Electrical Engineering: 150% increase in graduates per year by 2026 (from 36 to over 90).
- ◆ Computer Science: 28% increase in graduates per year by 2023 (from 140 to over 180).
- ◆ Pre-Healthcare: have already seen an increase in pre-health majors (from 883 to over 1000).
- ◆ Energy Science and Technology: New degree program started in fall 2019, currently supporting around 30 declared majors.

The funding has supported 14 new faculty hires in STEM subject areas and a new lab technician position.

Other outcomes of the WEIA investment in STEM degree expansion at WWU include:

- ◆ Development of a new Biochemistry degree program designed to expand access and reduce time to graduation for pre-health students intending to pursue health care graduate programs, such as Medical, Dental, Pharmacy and others. The new program includes a 2+2 pathway to the degree for students from community and technical colleges, thereby lowering barriers to pre-health programs for a wider range of students from a diverse set of backgrounds. Since its creation three years ago, the new Bachelor of Arts in Biochemistry degree program has produced 78 graduates.
- ◆ Development and launching of a new Data Science Bachelor of Science program that will create new career opportunities for students in the areas of analytics, machine learning, and artificial intelligence focused on data science and management. Currently, there are 48 students enrolled in this new degree program.
- ◆ Development of a new comprehensive program for first-year engineering students designed to increase retention and graduation rates in engineering and hiring a Program Director for First-Year Programs in Engineering and Design.
- ◆ Development of a groundbreaking new degree program Bachelor of Arts-Education degree in Computer Science that prepares the next generation of teachers with curriculum and practical experience integrating computer science practice and principles at all levels in K-12 education. The first students admitted into this program are expected to graduate in spring 2025.
- ◆ Expanded student access and applied student research opportunities in Computer Science and Electrical and Computer Engineering.
- ◆ The Electrical and Computer Engineering department will launch Western's first Master's degree in fall 2026, with a soft launch beginning in fall 2025 and the first graduates expected by spring 2027.
- ◆ The Institute for Energy Studies "campus as a living energy efficiency lab" initiative is fully operational, deploying newly hired faculty for the coursework development and implementation, and complemented by co-curricular activities funded by private donors.
 - For example, the Institute for Energy Studies has successfully launched the Energy Assessment Program. In this program, IES students, guided by faculty mentorship, help small and medium enterprises in western Washington understand how to reduce their energy usage and costs through efficiency improvements.
- ◆ Increased partnerships with regional employers, resulting in increased research partnerships involving student researchers at the undergraduate and graduate levels, industry-supported professorships, internships and externships, and curriculum development. WWU's industry partners include Microsoft, Boeing, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, PACCAR, Enersys, McKinstry, Puget Sound Energy, Snohomish County PUD, Seattle City Light, Northwest Pathology, the Whatcom Health Department, and Seagen/Pfizer.

Ethnic Studies Curriculum

Funding from the WEIA was appropriated to WWU in the 2021-23 biennial budget to establish an academic curriculum in Ethnic Studies as part of a broader strategy to improve the success of underrepresented students at WWU. Prior to this academic year, Western has used the funding to deliver a number of ethnic studies courses while the new Ethnic Studies unit is developed and has funded course releases so that Ethnic Studies faculty could plan and create curriculum. As of September 2024, the new Ethnic Studies academic department in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences is serving students with a new Ethnic Studies major. Two new tenure-track faculty positions have been filled for the 2024-2025 academic year.

Cybersecurity

Funding and Capacity Upgrades - WWU received \$769,000 in funds for FY 2023 from the Workforce Education Investment Account to upgrade Cyber Range equipment and software. With this state support, Cyber Range Poulsbo has purchased and installed 42 high-capacity servers and related equipment, significantly increasing its ability to support other schools. These capacity additions have allowed for a significant increase in the number of students served by Cyber Range Poulsbo. The Range was initially created in the spring of 2017, serving five students who accessed the initial system. Over time, this number grew slowly as the infrastructure and systems were developed, with a focus on creating processes to support students across the state. With the new equipment funded in FY 2023, the focus has shifted to increasing availability and access for students.

Student Participation and Institutional Reach - In the last full year of operations, academic year 2023-24, 804 students accessed the range directly, while an additional 378 students accessed it through PISCES (see discussion below), resulting in a total of 1,182 users. This number continues to grow. A key contributing factor is the increase in instructors, with approximately 90 engaged with the Cyber Range this year. This is significant, as instructors typically engage with the Cyber Range for about a year, working on incorporating range exercises into their classes and developing curriculum before bringing their students onto the range. The high number of instructors is a strong indicator of significant continuing growth. Students using Cyber Range Poulsbo are enrolled in seven universities and 16 colleges and technical schools across Washington State. Additionally, 13 K-12 schools and school districts have students participating in the range.

Staffing and Curriculum Development - In addition, Cyber Range Poulsbo has hired a Research Assistant and is in the process of hiring a Software Developer. With these two positions, the Range will be able to expand the projects included in its curriculum and provide research support to additional faculty across the state.

Student Support and Future Capacity - Prior to receiving funding, Cyber Range Poulsbo supported approximately 300-400 students per year. This year, the Range has supported 1,103 students, including 350 from K-12 schools across eight districts in the state. Cyber Range Poulsbo has provided support through labs, exercises, and other systems to 12 community colleges and four universities within the state. With the new capacity in place, the Range will be able to support up to 10,000 students annually. Participating institutions include Central Washington University, Eastern Washington University, The Evergreen State College, University of Washington Bothell, University of Washington Tacoma, Washington State University Everett, and Western Washington University.

Schools Using Cyber Range Poulsbo

Public Universities: Central Washington University, Eastern Washington University, The Evergreen State College, University of Washington Bothel, University of Washington Tacoma, Washington State University Everett, Western Washington University

Community and Technical Colleges: Bellevue College, Cascadia College, Clover Park Technical College, Columbia Basin College, Everett Community College, Green River College, Highline College, Lake Washington Institute of Technology, North Seattle College, Peninsula College, Renton Technical College, South Puget Sound Community College, Spokane Falls Community College, Tacoma Community College, Whatcom College

K-12 Schools: Blaine Middle School, Cascadia Tech Academy, Cedar Heights Middle School, Clover Park High School, Explorer Academy, Ferndale High School, Lynden High School, New Horizons High School, North Kitsap High School, Renton School District, Suquamish Elementary School, Richland School District, Woodward Middle School

Outreach Events and K-12 Education - In addition to the students directly participating in exercises at Cyber Range Poulsbo, the Range conducts numerous events for K-12 and college students, teachers, and the public, providing resources and instruction in cybersecurity. In 2023-24, there were 19 events attended by over 916 participants. Some of these events may lead to future direct use of exercises on the Range. One of the areas with the greatest growth potential in the coming years will be K-12 education. The Range provides K-12 teacher training, conducts classroom visits, and offers various exercises and curriculum to support cybersecurity education at the K-12 level. Recent improvements to the Range platform have focused on increasing accessibility for K-12 programs. As part of this effort, Cyber Range Poulsbo hosts about 300-350 Civil Air Patrol students participating in the Cyber Patriot program.

Hosting the Pacific Rim Collegiate Cyber Defense Competition - This year, Cyber Range Poulsbo provided the infrastructure for the Pacific Rim Collegiate Cyber Defense Competition (PRCCDC), an event with over 150 participants from around the region. This event showcased the unique capabilities of Cyber Range Poulsbo. In the past, local colleges provided the infrastructure, but the capacity and support needed grew beyond what they could offer, leading to the event being hosted on a public cloud network. However, this posed challenges, as many activities required for a cybersecurity competition were prohibited or rendered unusable in the public cloud, which is understandable given their security needs. Cyber Range Poulsbo successfully provided and managed those capabilities due to its design intent. The PRCCDC will continue to receive support from the Range.

Collaboration with State Board and Exercise Development - Cyber Range Poulsbo has worked diligently with the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) Cybersecurity Center of Excellence (CCOE) to promote and support cybersecurity education and the use of the Range. This collaboration has included a joint workshop and a grant to assist instructors in developing exercises on the Cyber Range. The academic year 2023-24 effort resulted in the development of 27 new exercises closely aligned with school curricula. These exercises are shared across all schools. Alternatives to using the Cyber Range would involve fewer hands-on experiences for students, recreating exercises at individual schools, or seeking external providers at a significant cost.

Software Developer and Research Associate Roles - The Software Developer hired under this program works with instructors to guide their exercise development, incorporate the exercises into the Range platform, and develop new capabilities. For example, instructors can now directly manage their own students without needing to make requests to the Cyber Range systems administrator. The hiring of the Cyber Range Research Associate in AY 2023 has greatly improved the Range’s ability to support research initiatives. Currently, Cyber Range Poulsbo supports senior projects at WWU, CWU, and EWU, averaging about 8-10 senior projects per year. This year, four of those projects are being conducted in cooperation with the Naval Undersea Warfare Center – Keyport (NUWC-K). In academic

year 2023-24, one of those projects received funding through the National Security Innovation Network (NSIN), and all four projects this year are being considered for NSIN funding. Additionally, NUWC-K is reaching out to other Washington universities through the Range to identify opportunities for more senior projects. Cyber Range Poughkeepsie is continuing to develop research plans with other organizations, including the Pacific Northwest National Laboratories (PNNL).

Research Support and Future Initiatives - In addition to senior projects, Cyber Range Poughkeepsie supports other research efforts using Range resources. Current research projects are underway at CWU, WWU, and the University of Washington in Seattle, with additional projects in the proposal stage. These efforts help maintain Washington's status as a leader in cybersecurity education.

Student Supports

WWU requested funding to address critical staffing and programmatic needs aimed at ensuring underrepresented students receive the same opportunities for academic success as their peers. With the hiring of a recruitment specialist and a student success specialist with a focus on curriculum, WWU has bolstered student support services. WWU approaches student support in a collaborative life cycle model with faculty from recruitment to graduation. By fully supporting every diverse student that's admitted and enrolls, the state's initial investment in their education will be realized as they are retained to graduation and contribute as educated citizens.

This funding was utilized to further inclusive access, post-pandemic recruitment, financial aid counseling, and outreach. Positions hired include an enrollment and retention data analyst, an enrollment management data systems specialist, and financial aid specialists. Resources were also allocated to admissions resources in other languages and to support enrollment management initiatives.

On the programmatic side, in addition to funding to support the Western Success Scholars program, positions were hired aimed at retention, academic success, and targeted support for underserved student populations. Additionally, the Western Success Scholars Program was awarded the 2024 NWCCU Beacon Award for Excellence in Student Achievement and Success.

Cities and Counties Planning Studios

In spring 2023, the legislature allocated funding in the FY 2024-2025 biennial budget for the three state universities with accredited urban planning programs. This funding was allocated to support planning programs in assisting cities and counties with their planning projects, focusing on student engagement and faculty support, as well as facilitating on-site learning opportunities. This section documents how the Urban and Environmental Planning and Policy department (UEPP) at Western Washington University achieved the objectives and complied with the requirements of the budget proviso. These steps included:

- ◆ Launching a recruitment strategy to increase enrollment in the Urban Planning degree.
- ◆ Pivoting course design and creating new courses to integrate the needs of cities, counties, and tribes into course curricula and deliverables.
- ◆ Expanding program capacity to accommodate larger student cohorts.
- ◆ Temporarily filling vacant faculty positions with non-tenure track faculty who have professional experience to deliver essential courses.
- ◆ Developing and implementing a comprehensive strategy for faculty-supported internships with cities, counties, and tribes in the region.

- ◆ Initiating outreach and engagement activities with tribes in Washington to assess their communities' planning needs.
- ◆ Developing and implementing a recruitment and marketing plan focused on student success and diversity, particularly from underserved and rural communities.
- ◆ Upgrading technology and computer capabilities in planning studios.

From July 2023 to August 2024, with the availability of these temporary funds, the Urban Planning program at Western accomplished the following:

- ◆ Dedicated six quarters to studio-based projects supporting cities in Washington (three quarters in academic year 2023-24 and three quarters in academic year 2024-25). These year-long studies produce professional plans and reports that address needs identified by partner cities.
- ◆ Supported 13 cities and counties through internships jointly supervised by UEPP faculty and city or county planning staff. These internships were selected to assist with comprehensive plan updates, revisions to codes and regulations, and other planning needs.
- ◆ Conducted two outreach and engagement projects with Washington tribes. The first focused on community needs and planning for climate change, while the second addressed tribal engagement with the Growth Management Act.
- ◆ Doubled student enrollment in the Urban Planning degree. The program follows a cohort model with admissions in spring. Students are admitted in their junior year, and the new cohort will graduate in 2026. Continued admission and support for doubling cohort size is conditional on resource availability.
- ◆ Added new offerings for existing courses for a total of eight additional courses. Courses are added to meet increased student enrollment and to address specific city and county needs.
- ◆ Created and offered the first multi-university planning course delivered remotely to thirty students across the state's three accredited planning programs (UW, EWU, WWU). This course teaches skills necessary for implementing Washington's Growth Management Act (GMA) and provides an overview of recent legislative reforms, including those addressing housing, climate resilience, and the inclusion of tribal governments in comprehensive and regional planning.
- ◆ Addressed comprehensive plan and development regulation reforms for the city planning departments of Bellingham, Marysville, Everett, and Snohomish, as well as Skagit County, in applied coursework.
- ◆ Compiled a report on the "State of Housing in Washington," aimed at providing policymakers and legislators with a comprehensive quantitative assessment of housing conditions, patterns, and changes at the state and county levels, with a particular focus on affordability.
- ◆ Purchased two computers for the students' planning studio. These two computers supplement existing studio computers with superior computational power needed for visualization and modeling alternative building forms, such as middle housing and accessory dwelling units. This increased computational power also enables handling large datasets, modeling and forecasting urban changes, and GIS mapping and analysis.
- ◆ Provided support for student success through professional experience, research, fieldwork, and participation in professional conferences.

- ◆ Compiled a report on the causes and dimensions of housing affordability, synthesizing insights and debates from academic literature regarding housing affordability in the United States, particularly in Washington State.

2+2 Programs

In 2023, WWU was appropriated funding to expand 2+2 degree programs on the Kitsap and Olympic peninsulas. New degree programs in industrial systems engineering, data science, and sociology are currently under development including curricular review and development as well as planning for program marketing. A student recruitment specialist has been hired, and a student advisor position is currently being recruited.

First-Year Retention

In December 2023, WWU delivered a program proposal to the legislature for a first-year orientation program specifically for Washington College Grant recipients. The pilot version of this program launched in September 2024, offering an early-start onboarding opportunity to incoming, first-year, first-generation, underserved students who are recipients of the Washington College Grant. The early start will lead to a year-long series of academic seminars and enhanced opportunities for community engagement, development of a sense of place, support for mental health needs, and scaffolding for academic success. The structure of the program is based on a cohort model that relies on peer support through the work of peer mentor-learning assistants who are embedded in the seminar courses. A variety of high-impact experiences are offered to students in the program, including direct contact with faculty, peer mentoring, access to early internships, and opportunities for field study and study abroad. Students completing the program will be invited to undergo training in peer mentorship and offered the opportunity for paid employment as learning assistants in future years of the program.

The twofold intended outcomes of the seminar series are:

- ◆ To close the observed gaps described above in how well the University is meeting the needs of first-generation, low-income students.
- ◆ To build leaders from within this student group who will serve as mentors for incoming students of the same population.

Student services support teams are integrated into the fall quarter classrooms by means of a short presentation visit so students can learn more about the variation of support systems. The integration of student services as support systems within the seminar classes calls for staff classroom visits from existing WWU resources for students, such as the Office of Student Life, the Academic Advising & Student Achievement Center, and the Counseling and Wellness Center. The student resource representative visits to the seminar classes will occur four times per quarter as a 30-minute presentation with Q&A. The visits serve as a reminder of services that support students' academic achievements while enrolled at WWU.

Faculty members have been selected to support students with the following:

- ◆ Library curriculum practices
- ◆ English comprehension and readiness
- ◆ Mental health and well-being practices
- ◆ Peer engagement and leadership
- ◆ Community engagement and socialization skills

Students in this program have the social support of the cohorts in their seminars and are also part of the larger community of first-generation students in the whole cohort of participants who are brought together for events at key points in their educational journey. Western actively supports and encourages students to form, within this larger cohort, their own affinity groups based on specific interests. These might include interests represented by existing [WWU clubs](#) or they could be new interests that these first-generation students are bringing to the mix. The intention is for these affinity groups to collaborate on a project of their choosing by the end of the year, which will be presented to the larger cohort of students at a capstone presentation in the spring.

Mental Health First Aid

Faculty expressed a strong interest in accessing Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training, and in 2023, the legislature allocated WEIA funding to support this initiative. In response, WWU has been offering both in person and online MHFA trainings throughout fall 2023 and winter 2024.

Last year, Western conducted six MHFA trainings—three in person and three virtual—open to student employees, staff, and faculty. Each session could accommodate up to 30 participants and initially reached full capacity. While some participants canceled, the trainings ultimately served approximately 135 individuals, including:

- ◆ 25 faculty members
- ◆ 44 academic affairs staff
- ◆ 7 student employees
- ◆ 59 staff members from other campus departments

As of mid-November 2024, all scheduled in-person trainings (30 per class) are at capacity, and nearly all online training spots are filled, reflecting the high demand for this resource. These numbers reflect a strong campuswide commitment to building mental health awareness and providing support across roles, despite occasional cancellations. The continued demand highlights the growing need for additional training opportunities to meet the interest and expand accessibility.

Master of Social Work

In 2023, WWU received funding to launch a Master of Social Work (MSW) program. This programming will be available to students in Bellingham and on the Kitsap and Olympic peninsulas. This program is intended to match up with the new sociology degree offering that is currently under development.

Bilingual Educators

Building upon previous state funding, in 2023 the legislature directed WWU to bolster the multilingual educator program operating in Renton and build upon this work with a new site in Everett. With this funding, the Woodring College of Education will utilize a residency model to prepare students who are currently employed in local school districts to complete their bachelor's or master's degree, including options for a focus in special education.

Human Services

In 2023, WEIA investments were provided to WWU to convert the human services program at Western on the Peninsulas from self-sustaining to state supported. This investment effectively lowered tuition rates for rural students utilizing a distance learning option on the Kitsap and Olympic peninsulas to study human services.

Small Business Development Center

The additional \$75,000 in BIPOC funding for the period from July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024, was allocated to cover labor costs associated with expanding outreach and providing one-on-one business advising to BIPOC small business owners in Whatcom and Kitsap counties.

In Whatcom County, advisors dedicated 446.75 hours to advising 101 BIPOC-owned small businesses, while in Kitsap County, they spent 210.5 hours advising 44 BIPOC clients. These totals include 173.5 hours of Spanish-language advising for 28 clients.

Exploration of Effective Service Delivery - In addition to direct one-on-one technical assistance, team members significantly expanded and improved outreach efforts to underserved communities that are furthest from opportunity. Central to these efforts was “Bocados y Negocios,” a multicultural, multilingual pilot project designed to develop a service delivery model that reaches and serves entrepreneurs newly arrived from other countries.

Dr. Liliana Deck, the principal researcher, was honored with the WWU President’s Exceptional Effort Award in May 2024 for her ongoing work on this project. The outcomes of this pilot continue to inform our evolving service delivery model, enabling us to better meet the changing needs of a dynamic demographic landscape.

Outreach to BIPOC Communities - To better reach and serve BIPOC business owners, the team has developed stronger relationships with complementary organizations that are already trusted within these communities. Additionally, the goal is to provide a consistent level of service to our English- and Spanish-speaking clients by offering outreach materials and business resources in both languages whenever possible. Selected examples of these efforts include:

- ◆ Partnering with the Kitsap Economic Development Association, NAACP Bremerton, and the Up From Slavery Institute to organize and host BIPOC Business Forums in 2023 and 2024.
- ◆ Serving in an advisory and support role for the reemergence of the Latino Business Council (formerly the Northwest Washington Hispanic Chamber of Commerce) and the establishment of the Latino Advocacy Leadership Association.
- ◆ Launching a new Spanish-language section of the website to provide business resources and facilitate access to services.
- ◆ Collaborating with Sustainable Connections to create a Spanish-language video explaining Bellingham’s new regulations for single-use plastics.

Residency

In partnership with Everett Public Schools and with the support of the Professional Educator Standards Board’s residency expertise, the new WWU undergraduate special education residency program successfully launched in fall 2024 with a full cohort of 17 students, recruited in just six weeks of marketing. As stipulated by the proviso, residents will receive financial support of \$25,000, which is equivalent to the compensation for first-year paraeducators, and will be assisted in classrooms by preservice mentor teachers. This program also provides preservice mentor teachers with yearly stipends of \$2,500. Residents will have the opportunity to co-teach with both their mentor teacher and another teacher, while being supported by a dedicated residency coach throughout their yearlong internship.

Electrical and Computer Engineering Expansion

The search process for faculty is underway as of fall 2024. This expansion is planned to launch in Western's new Computer Science and Engineering Building, Kaiser-Borsari Hall, once the building is completed.

Access and Outreach

One-time funding of \$400,000 is supporting outreach operations during FY 2025, including efforts to align Compass 2 Campus, College in the High School, and other academic outreach initiatives. This funding supports campus visits for Title I schools in Whatcom and Skagit counties, covering peer mentor wages, travel expenses, and faculty involvement in Compass 2 Campus to provide academic instruction to WWU peer mentor students. It plays a crucial role in outreach to students who are outside the college-going culture, particularly low-income and first-generation students living near WWU. As a regional comprehensive university, WWU is committed to serving the northwest region of the state, and continued funding would help ensure the sustainability of this important work.