As we welcome the first blossoms of spring, we are taking time to appreciate the significant strides we continue to make in our campaign while also focusing on new efforts that will help us achieve our $60 million campaign goal. Across WWU’s division of Advancement, it’s all hands on deck as we engage with donors through the Annual Fund, through our Alumni Association events and through our major gift officers’ interactions with Western’s extended community. We look forward to an exciting 15 months with you, as we all work together towards ensuring the success of the Western Stands for Washington campaign.

CAMPAIGN RESULTS THROUGH FEBRUARY 28, 2015

ADVANCEMENT FAST FACTS
JAN. 1 – FEB. 28, 2015

Over the past two months, we secured eight major gifts totaling $470,637.51.

Our current Alumni Association membership stands at 2,807.

Gifts through the Annual Fund since the beginning of January totaled $348,697.00.

In January and February, Phonathon students made 73,305 phone calls, securing 1,006 pledges totaling $58,246.00.

Twelve Alumni Association events in five different spots across the globe, brought together 641 WWU alums, community members and supporters.

Our major gift officers engaged in 457 interactions with donors and potential donors via in-person visits, phone conversations and email correspondence.
In January and February, Advancement was in full swing with our Western Stands for Washington Campaign. As our Advanced Course advertorial by Western trustee Ralph Munro rolled out in print, our online, bus and billboard ads popped up with Oscar award-winning alumnus TJ Martin (‘05) – just in time for the Academy Awards. TJ joined in the fun by taking a “selfie” of himself with his billboard, which he shared over social media.

We also began a new effort to increase engagement and strengthen the Western brand as promotions for the “Ignite Your Intellect” Speaker Series were launched in The Seattle Times online and The Bellingham Herald. This series spotlights our talented – and expert – alumni, faculty and community; it was the first time we used paid ads to highlight alumni special events outside of Back2Bellingham. The new igniteyourintellect.com landing page had about 700 visitors, helping to boost our overall web traffic by 22% over this time last year, bringing us more than halfway to this year’s fiscal year target of 100,000 visitors.

On February 25 an extra-festive Alumni Association coffee booth celebrated Western’s founding 122 years ago.

President Shepard handed out 122 t-shirts in 17 minutes.

150 cupcakes disappeared in 37 minutes.

8 vats of coffee (that’s 24 gallons, folks!) were drained in 1 hour.
ENGAGEMENT  EVENTS FROM JANUARY – MARCH, 2015

On March 5, the Annual Fund raised awareness of the impact of philanthropy on campus by hosting Thank A Donor Day with a booth in Red Square. Students stopped by to win prizes, sign a “Thank you” banner and learn about the Western Stands for Washington Campaign. Seven different languages represent the 150 students who left messages of gratitude.

Our annual scholarship events celebrate the transformative power of philanthropy, bringing together our generous donors with their beneficiaries. This year’s Seattle luncheon was held at the Sheraton Hotel on February 12, and dinners were held on Western’s campus on February 25 and March 12. It was the greatest turnout to date, with 36 donors and 60 scholars in Seattle, and 83 donors and 197 scholars combined in Bellingham.

Each event includes a featured scholarship recipient speaker (see p. 6 for an in-depth look) as well as quality time for donors and students to get to know each other. The highly personalized experience for donors ranged from individual donors meeting their student recipients, to donors Jack and JoAnn Bowman who dined with 25 of their scholarship recipients.

We recently welcomed two sibling alumni to campus: On February 24, Richard C. Veith, M.D. (’69) – Tutt Professor in the Neurosciences; professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at UW School of Medicine; chief of psychiatric services at UW Medical Center; adjunct professor of global health at the School of Public Health; and CHSS Advancement Council member – spoke about new opportunities and programs in integrated care.

The event was offered to faculty teaching in health-related professions, so that they can help WWU students pursue growing career opportunities in Integrated Care.

Two days later, students and faculty from around campus enjoyed visiting with Rob Veith, M.D., (’70), an orthopedic surgeon with Proliance Orthopedic Associates as well as a noted humanitarian.

Rob Veith visited with kinesiology students in Professor Dave Suprak’s Biomechanics class – Kinesiology 311 – along with fellow WWU supporters Jerry and Truc Thon (’75, ’82, ’85). As part of the class, they witnessed WWU’s new electromyograph (EMG) machine in action. The EMG was purchased with a campaign gift from the Thons, and is a key piece of medical equipment for the Kinesiology program, currently the largest and fastest growing major at Western.

Rob Veith also spoke with a standing-room only crowd of pre-med and kinesiology students, answering questions about orthopedics, recalling his memories of Western (“My brain clicked here”), as well as sharing his medical humanitarian work in Vietnam, Haiti, Papua New Guinea, Bangladesh and Sierra Leone.

Nearly 100 people gathered on March 12 to celebrate the life and work of president emeritus Jerry Flora at the dedication of the Charles J. (Jerry) Flora Marine Science Education Building at the Shannon Point Marine Center in Anacortes. Guests included the Flora family, friends, members of the Anacortes community and Shannon Point and WWU faculty and staff. Remarks by President Shepard, Jerry’s wife and daughter, Rosemary Flora and Lise Flora Waugh, SPMC director Erika McPhee-Shaw, and Bert Webber, Huxley emeritus professor, celebrated Jerry’s legacy, while paying homage to his boisterous personality.

Following the unveiling of the dedication plaque, guests enjoyed light refreshments on the deck with a beautiful view of Fidalgo Bay and a beach walk – one of Jerry’s signature activities – led by Webber and biology professor Benjamin Miner.
On February 18, a group of four WWU alumni – including two Alumni Association board members – gathered in Olympia to join in a statewide Alumni Day of Action. “Alumni from all six of the public universities came to lobby the legislature in a unified voice for more higher education funding,” says Patrick Stickney (’14), who participated alongside Marc Oommen (’13), and Alumni board members Vini Samuel (’94), and Don Hardwick (’84).

Their efforts that day included back-to-back meetings with state legislators. The alumni were advocating for increased funding for the state’s higher education system as well as sharing personal stories about how they were impacted by their university, asserting the importance of funding higher education and discussing the ways in which they have benefited from their degrees.

The global Western community gathered for a variety of Alumni Association-sponsored events over the past two months:

About a dozen alumni and supporters in Tokyo reunited for the annual wine and beer tasting party hosted by the Washington State Department of Commerce’s Japan Office in Tokyo on January 30. They enjoyed reminiscing about WWU while sampling Washington wines and food.

A week later, 33 Vikings from across Washington and Northern Oregon gathered for a pregame party at Hales Ales in Seattle before cheering on the WWU Men’s Basketball Game to a victory at SPU that kicked off an eight-game win streak.

Part of that winning streak included the home game of the year versus the Central Wildcats on February 12, when the Alumni Association hosted about 120 fans at a pregame party in Carver Gym. This annual event is always a hit – and a great opportunity to bring supporters back to campus to show their Viking Pride – as it showcases the Vikings on home court and features our exceptional campus catering crew along with local Boundary Bay beer and wine.

Meanwhile, on the East Coast, 15 alumni in the Washington D.C. area connected with our WWU D.C.-based interns, an exciting networking opportunity for the students, and a terrific engagement event for our growing number of alums working and living in the “other Washington.”

Back in “this Washington,” the second event in the Ignite Your Intellect series was held at Boeing’s Future of Flight Museum on February 21. More than 130 members of the community and Western supporters came to hear WWU alum Jason Clark (’93), Boeing 777/777X vice president of operations (pictured above right), talk about the future of flight, airplanes and engineering before enjoying a 90-minute tour of the facility.

College of Science and Engineering dean Catherine Clark also provided an update about the expanded engineering programs that are now offered at Western.

The Alumni Association’s February 28 Whatcom Wine Tour sold out in record time, filling our bus with 32 participants who toured five Whatcom County wineries.

Due to popular demand, a second tour was scheduled for March 14 and the bus was again filled with alumni and their guests. Spending an entire afternoon with a small group allows for a deeper engagement with fellow Vikings; this is an event that we will continue to grow.

On March 10, 12 alumni gathered for Happy Hour in Palm Springs, California. Most of these alums have either retired to or vacation each year in Palm Springs and would like to continue to meet and strengthen their Western bond.

We held information sessions on January 29 and February 7 that drew more than 50 people interested in our upcoming Alumni travel programs. These trips feature Western professors who provide education about the regions while serving as guides. At the moment, trips to France and Vietnam are both garnering much excitement.

On February 11, the Alumni office supported Western’s annual Etiquette Dinner in which 100 students joined 10 recruiters from local, regional and national companies as they discussed proper dining etiquette in a professional setting.

This program was held in partnership with Western’s Career Services Center.

On March 14, we held one of our most popular events – Curling in Canada – which had another sell-out crowd of 31 guests. This bi-annual get-together draws new participants each time, and is an entertaining way for members of the Western community to enjoy each other’s company.
UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL 16 – Ignite Your Intellect at the Anacortes Yacht Club

APRIL 22 – Ask an Alum on Campus

APRIL 26 – Robin Hood at Seattle Children’s Theatre

MAY 14 – Alumni Awards Dinner Celebration

MAY 15-16 – Golden Vikings Reunion

MAY 15-17 – Back2Bellingham

MAY 29 – Western Leadership Forum at Seattle Marriott Waterfront

JUNE 3 – Jazz Performance at BAAY in Bellingham

JUNE 10-11 – Senior Celebration on Campus

JUNE 12 – Outstanding Graduate 40th Anniversary Celebration and Outstanding Graduate Awards Ceremony on Campus

JUNE 13 – Spring Graduation on Campus

JUNE 19 – Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony for WWU Downtown Bellingham office

JUNE 20 – Whale Watching Trip in Anacortes

JUNE 30 – Bellingham Bells game in Bellingham
In 2012, the Auburn-based Muckleshoot Indian Tribe established the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe Scholarship (MITS) for Native American students at Western, an innovative and interactive program which is designed to provide both financial aid and support services to students from tribal communities around Washington.

Now in its third year, the scholarship provides individual annual awards of $2,500 for up to two years. In addition, each of the students receives advising services through WWU’s Student Outreach Services (SOS): the goal of this program includes guidance and interpersonal engagement to students from tribal communities – many of whom are the first in their family to attend college – as well as financial support. There were five recipients during the inaugural year; this year, that number rose to nine.

Each recipient of the MITS program meets one-on-one, two times each quarter, with a counselor from SOS. These visits provide students with personal support, help them formulate individualized academic plans, determine appropriate academic goals, contribute towards developing strong time-management and study skills and educate them about the wide variety of student activity and campus leadership opportunities available. The MITS program is offered to students who have demonstrated financial need, and who are Washington residents as well as enrolled tribal members.

Michaela Vendiola is a current sophomore and second-year recipient of the scholarship. The featured speaker at Western’s February 25 scholarship dinner, she attended the event with her parents, Michael and Michelle, who are both double alumni of Western, and younger brother, Melchor, who plans to apply. Michael (’97, Master of Education in Adult Education; ’94 Bachelor’s in American Cultural Studies) is also the former coordinator and activities advisor of WWU’s Ethnic Student Center, a position he held for 14 years. Michelle received her Bachelor’s in American Cultural Studies in 2002, and a Masters in Education in Student Affairs Administration in 2012. Michaela, who grew up on the Lummi Indian Reservation but is an enrolled Native American in her mother’s Walker River Paiute Tribe in Nevada, is planning a career in community health in order to address wellbeing issues in Native communities. “I have always valued the traditional teachings that come along with being a Native person,” she said, “as well as the value of education that was instilled in me by my parents and grandparents since I was born.”

As well as thanking WWU’s donors collectively, she gave particular acknowledgement to Western’s Student Outreach Services and the Disability Resource Center – both of which were critical to her adjustment and pursuit of college life – as well as to the extended campus community: “While here at WWU I have gotten to know and love so many faculty and staff who have made a huge impact on me. With their guidance and support I have decided that my calling in life is to give back to the communities that helped shape me into the person I am today.”