Title: Recruitment Teaching Assistants

Initiative Description, including statement of purpose and anticipated outcomes:
Each year, the Graduate School allocates to departments and colleges the number of Teaching Assistants funded out of our base funding which include stipends and tuition waivers. Departments allocate these TA’s directly to students. Stipend funding is base funding, and there is no additional money to draw upon for increased demand or other opportunities. Because of this, departments cannot offer more than what has been allocated in base. For this reason, the TA offers aren’t used strategically as a means of student recruitment. Departments are left to allocate the number of TA’s they have and wait for students to accept their offer. By the time that happens, many highly qualified students who weren’t initially offered a TA, a second-tier of students, have moved on to other institutions. Unless departments have a 100% yield on initial offers, they are left to accept a third-tier of students. What we propose is the equivalent of ten full stipends to be set aside to allow select programs to “over-award” TA’s in a pilot program. We will work with departments to identify past data helping guide decisions on how many to over-award in order to ensure they do not lose out on the best possible cohort of Graduate students. In doing so, departments will be able to capture that “second tier” of students should they lose out on the first tier. The result will be a stronger class of Graduate students, which has the potential to positively impact undergraduates in terms of mentorship, access to research opportunities, and quality of instruction.

What University units (depts., colleges, etc.) will be involved?
Potentially all departments with a Graduate program could would be impacted, including Accounting, Anthropology, Biology, Business Administration, Chemistry, Communication Sciences and Disorders, Computer Science, Educational Leadership, Elementary Education, English, Environmental Science, Environmental Studies, Geology, History, Human Services and Rehabilitation, Kinesiology, Mathematics, Music, Psychology, and Secondary Education. However, we would likely work with Graduate Council to target a select few programs to pilot this program initially.

How does the initiative support the University Mission and Strategic Plan?

Build upon Western's strengths to address critical needs in the State of Washington; expand student access to rigorous and engaging baccalaureate and graduate education; apply Western's expertise and collaborative approach to scholarship, creativity, and research in ways that strengthen communities beyond the campus; serve as a model for institutional effectiveness, innovation, diversity, and sustainability.

Are there potential partnerships with external organizations/institutions?
The Graduate School will partner directly with targeted academic programs

Anticipated new positions needed to implement the initiative:
Faculty: N/A
Staff: N/A
Graduate Students (supported): 10

Space needs (boldface one; attach note from Space Administration):
- Existing space is sufficient
- Existing space will be sufficient after modification
- New space may be required

New equipment or other one-time costs: Click here to enter text.

Recurring operating costs: $112,000 at current stipend level

Estimated timeline for implementation: Click here to enter text.

Potential funding sources (boldface all that apply; attach notes from University Advancement and University Relations)
- State operating budget (decision package)
- New enrollments (tuition-based)
- External Education (fee-based)
- Reallocation
- Federal Support (agency: ______ )
- Grants
- Partnerships (organizations/institutions: ______ )
- Private Funds
- Other We could additionally partially re-direct some of our existing tuition waivers which are used for continuing student scholarships in order to fund the tuition waivers for these ten additional Graduate Students.