

WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Vision for Future Development at the Bellingham Waterfront

Project Overview and University Guidelines and Goals

For more than a decade, Western Washington University has worked with partners and engaged in planning to extend its main campus to the Bellingham waterfront. As the third largest public university in Washington in terms of enrollment and the smallest in terms of campus size, having a presence at the waterfront provides a unique opportunity to alleviate spacing needs on campus and to expand capacity for academic programming. Having a programmatic and physical presence at the waterfront would assist Western in carrying out its mission and strategic plan and provides an opportunity to strengthen partnerships with the local community, including with government entities, other local higher education institutions, non-profit organizations, and the private sector.

Mission Statement developed by the 2014 WWU Waterfront Planning Committee:

Leverage the creativity and expertise of Western and its partners to empower and sustain local, regional, and global innovation for the well-being of individuals and communities.

Guiding Principles to Inform the Work of the Waterfront Planning Committee:

Nurture collaboration	Increase access	Seize opportunities
Ignite innovation	Embrace community	Model sustainability
Seek solutions	Imagine possibilities	Cultivate leadership
	Promote well-being	

Western on the Waterfront will enhance the Role and Mission of the University by:

- Meeting the educational and professional needs of the state by expanding delivery modes to reach additional enrollment;
- Offering the possibility of new revenue streams that support Western as a publicly-purposed university;
- Providing appropriate space for the delivery of applied educational experiences for students of all ages through academic programs and Extended Education offerings;
- Expanding space for professional credentialing opportunities to support professional growth and advancement of faculty and staff, community members, and alumni;
- Creating opportunities for specialized and non-traditional learning that attracts students and stakeholders with diverse interests; and
- Facilitating the delivery of innovative approaches to learning through:
 - Hybrid and collaborative activities
 - Guest speakers
 - Colloquia/conferences
 - Video-conferencing
 - Evening and weekend instruction
 - Presentation and exhibit space
 - Specialized instruction
 - Break-out sessions

Western on the Waterfront will enhance the University's ability to meet its Strategic Goals of:

- Building upon Western's strengths to address critical needs in the State of Washington;
- Expanding student access to rigorous and engaging baccalaureate and graduate education;

- Fostering and promoting life-long learning and success in an ever-changing world;
- Applying Western's expertise and collaborative approach to scholarship, creativity, and research in ways that strengthen communities beyond the campus; and
- Serving as a model for institutional effectiveness, innovation, diversity, and sustainability.

Academic Programming and Space-Use Guidelines for Western on the Waterfront:

Western is increasingly taking an interdisciplinary approach to academic programming throughout the University, and accordingly, cross-disciplinary programming will be a key component of programmatic planning at WWU waterfront facilities. Interdisciplinary programming at the waterfront will help Western meet student demand for such programs and economic demand from employers for well-rounded employees that have demonstrated an ability to work with people across disciplines. Additionally, as a publicly-purposed university, Western strives to efficiently utilize space for purposes that foster learning, build community, and contribute to educational attainment.

Given the interdisciplinary nature of future University waterfront facilities and the need to effectively use University space, Western seeks to meet the following overarching guidelines with regards to academic programming and space-use at the waterfront:

- Promote and enhance Western's reputation through the creation of facilities that serve as a "destination point" for people within the local community, and from around the region, state, nation and world;
- Enhance the quality of a Western education through collaborations that promote constant learning;
- Improve access to WWU and strengthen partnerships and community relations by:
 - Providing a venue for easier access to WWU resources;
 - Providing a welcoming and enhanced stakeholder experience with easy access;
 - Providing a venue that promotes collaboration with other higher education institutions and local community partners;
- Create academic and community space that does not currently exist at Western's main campus;
- Configure space for both critical-use and unique-use;
- Generate foot traffic that contributes to economic development in the Bellingham community.

Because Western's main campus is landlocked by neighborhoods and the Sehome Arboretum, the University has limited options for expansion. Developing at the Bellingham waterfront provides Western a rare opportunity to alleviate crowding on campus and to plan for future enrollment growth that strategically keeps up with student demand and the economic needs of the state.

Space design will emphasize maximizing a diverse accommodation of users and uses. The WWU Center for Community Engagement and Innovation (CCEI) at the waterfront will be open to all WWU programs and community-engaged partners. The use of space will be adaptable to meet the changing needs of various stakeholders.

The Three-Phase Process of Western on the Waterfront

As Western continues to plan for land acquisition and facility development and academic programming at the waterfront, current plans for the expansion in the Bellingham Waterfront District include the three-phase process outlined below.

Phase I – The WWU Technology Development Center:

Western Washington University already serves as an anchor on the Bellingham waterfront in the form of the Technology Development Center which is part of the Technology Development Zone, a State and Federally funded initiative. The facility, which is shared with partner Bellingham Technical College, was dedicated in the fall of 2009 and is now home to a research arm of WWU's College of Sciences and Engineering.

Phase II – The WWU Center for Community Engagement and Innovation:

WWU envisions the construction of a multi-purpose facility that focuses on academic engagement and innovation, and brings people together through conference and large group gatherings. This facility would likely be constructed in partnership with a private developer and would provide needed space for student, faculty and community innovation activities while also enabling Western to tap into its potential to host large conferences.

Phase III – Future WWU Growth:

Entails the development and construction of new academic facilities on the 6 acre plot designed for use by WWU in the Institutional Mixed Use area of the Waterfront District. The facilities will be determined by emerging enrollment growth, academic programmatic and community needs, and by opportunities with potential private and public partners.

Recommendations from the WWU 2014 Waterfront Planning Committee regarding the Community Center for Engagement and Innovation

As outlined above, Phase II of Western on the Waterfront anticipates construction of a multi-purpose facility known as the Center for Community Engagement and Innovation (CCEI). Below is a list of recommendations from the Waterfront Planning Committee to include in development of the CCEI, followed by detailed information regarding these recommendations.

Space Design for the CCEI should include:

- A medium-sized auditorium for presentations, conference talks, lectures, and performances;
- Engagement spaces that are working studios of various sizes for collaborative innovation, incubator related projects, seminars, discussions, and non-traditional uses fostering collaborative creativity;
- A Great Hall space to host conferences, receptions, exhibits and special events, including an option to be sub-divided for breakout space and smaller meeting needs;
- All three spaces described above should be equipped with state-of-the-art telecom/video facilities for outreach beyond the local community;
- A state-of-the-art facility and technology-intensive environment that cultivates an atmosphere of learning and meets the educational needs of students and guests – including full Wi-Fi access and access to WWU Libraries' electronic scholarly resources;

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- LEED Gold certification to reflect the University's sustainability values;
- Offices for staff that manage the facility;
- Offices for University/Community-related partners;
- An adequate amount of free or low-cost parking to increase access to the facility;
- Meeting spaces need to meet the International Association of Conference Centers [Quality Standards](#).

Auditorium Space:

This would be a room with seating for approximately 150 people. Seating should be portable fixed theatre-style seating for multiple forms of presentations, interactive discussions, recitals and performances. To keep the space as multi-purposed as possible, seating should fold-back or elevate, such as bleachers. The space should be acoustically-friendly and offer specialized lighting and projection technology with a screen that has a dedicated sound box. Space should also be available in the wings off the front of the room to accommodate various needs. In addition, the Auditorium's functionality could be maximized by connecting to the lobby and/or Great Hall.

Engagement Spaces:

These flexible areas would be designed to host multiple types of activities, including classroom instruction, innovation labs, incubators, learning commons for collaborative studies, community research, and events. The spaces should foster interdisciplinary learning and be a physical and virtual catalyst where inquiry, imagination, discovery, and creativity come alive and become central to growth — personal, academic, social and cultural.

These spaces should have flexible design with flexible equipment and instructional services in open areas that are possibly transparent to emulate the concept of “looking in on innovation, experimentation, and learning.” Equipment in these areas, especially tables and whiteboards, should be on wheels and able to be configured by teams as needed to create collaboration spaces, working studios and lecture spaces. The Engagement Spaces should also be equipped with a shared technology infrastructure and possibly have tools, equipment, and/or publishing services available for borrowing or use.

The [Impact HUB](#) in downtown Seattle is a prime example of an Engagement Space. Impact HUB describes their space as a “co-working space, events space, and launch pad for purpose-driven ventures.” Another example is the [FabLab](#) in Tacoma, which strives “to provide easy and open access to cutting-edge design and prototyping equipment, and to bring educational opportunities and a supportive community for students, inventors, artists, and DIY enthusiasts.”

Great Hall Conferencing Space:

Multi-purpose space that can host conferences is severely lacking on Western's campus. The Great Hall should provide a venue for large and small conferences, special events, visual arts displays, workshops, and general meeting space. A significant challenge that Western has faced for decades is the ability to attract and host conferences and meetings that bring together scholars, students and community members. Existing campus facilities, including the Viking Union and academic buildings, are small in nature and are in high-demand by the campus community to meet day-to-day operational needs. Western's parking facilities are also limited in size, not readily accessible to existing meeting spaces, and are highly used during most days and evenings. The Great Hall conferencing space would address each of those concerns.

Specifically, the Great Hall facility should offer the following:

- Theatre seating for up to 1,200 people;
- Conference-style table seating for up to 750 people;
- Ability to divide space into smaller meeting rooms with sound proof walls for privacy;
- Be designed with glass doors and outer walls for maximum view of the waterfront;
- Ability to open doors to expand Great Hall space onto exterior space;
- 10-15 rooms that each seat 10-60 people for classes, workshops, meetings and seminars, including a teleconference room and a computer lab/business center; and
- Be fully environmentally mediated.

Interior Space:

The interior space of the CCEI should be open and include a registration/reception area along with a small food service area to include local retail such as a coffee provider.

Kitchen Facilities:

The CCEI should include a full-service kitchen to be available for catered events.

Office Space:

In keeping with the vision for the waterfront facilities, offices should be open spaces with additional small fixed spaces available for private consultation. A philosophy of promoting sharing of staff among program entities should be encouraged via the physical layout of the space and the use of mobile furnishings in the office spaces. The amount of fixed and flexible office space will be driven by decisions on what program(s) will be located in the CCEI. Team work space would also be an asset, as would dedicated workroom space that is equipped with support technology for software, hardware, printing and 3D-printing.

On-site storage:

Because of the multi-purpose use envisioned for spaces in the CCEI, it will be critical to have ample storage space available on-site.

Outdoor Engagement Space:

To promote collaboration and personal interaction in operational and conferencing settings, exterior patios, balconies, and/or a covered terrace space with a glass ceiling or retractable awning should be a component of the CCEI facility.

Additional Resources and Information about CCEI-type Venues:

- Oregon State University's [CH2M Hill Alumni Center](#)
- Clemson University's [Madren Conference Center](#)
- City of Spokane Valley's [CenterPlace Regional Event Center](#)
- Harvard Medical School's [Joseph B. Martin Conference Center](#)
- University of Georgia's [Center for Continuing Education](#)
- [Bell Harbor International Conference Center](#) in Seattle is one of only two IACC certified conference centers in Washington State