

Legislative Priorities

2018



Pass the compromise 2017-19 Capital Budget

Western strongly urges the Legislature to adopt the previously agreed-upon 2017-19 capital budget as early in the 2018 Legislative Session as possible. The budget proposals include critical funding to address WWU's growing capacity constraints and preservation and maintenance needs, including design funding for a new interdisciplinary STEM building that will address major space limitations in a variety of STEM programs and funding to improve outdated safety and accessibility infrastructure needs across Western's campus.

Support All Washington Students

Western strongly supports programs that ensure all Washington students have access to quality postsecondary opportunities. This includes support for proposals to fully fund the State Need Grant, as well as state and federal efforts to protect and support our DACA and undocumented students.

Reduce Bottlenecks in STEM Degree Programs

(\$1.2 million per year + \$300k in one-time costs)

STEM majors at Western have more than doubled since 2005, and the university requests \$1.2 million per year to help meet growing student demand and address bottlenecks in STEM degree programs. This plan will increase capacity in entry-level courses in Math, Physics and Chemistry that are required for STEM majors, and accommodate an additional 100 STEM students per year. This investment will also reduce time to degree by an average of two academic quarters—saving students and families thousands in tuition costs.

Marine, Coastal and Watershed Sciences Degree

(\$1 million per year + \$300k in one-time costs)

Western requests funding to establish a new interdisciplinary STEM degree program designed to meet student and employer demand and help address Washington's emerging challenges associated with climate change, resource management, and the growing fields of coastal science and policy. The focus of the Marine, Coastal, and Watershed Sciences program would be unique in its coastal sea-and-land emphasis, which requires a multidisciplinary approach to solving challenges related to coastal and estuary pollution, erosion, flooding, sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, ocean acidification, sustainable energy, and changing hydrologic cycles. The new degree program would leverage Western's existing areas of expertise in oceanographic, aquatic, and environmental sciences, and expand student access to Western's existing Shannon Point Marine Center in Anacortes.

- 15,915 students
- 95% are undergraduates
- 87% are residents of Washington
- 99% of classes are taught by faculty, not graduate assistants
- 34% of degrees are awarded in STEM/high demand areas
- 33% of students are first generation students
- 70% graduation rate (over 80 percent of students who start at WWU graduate at WWU or elsewhere)
- 4.3 years is the average time to degree

