WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
ITEM SUBMITTED TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

TO: Members of the Board of Trustees
FROM: President Sabah Randhawa on behalf of Becca Kenna-Schenk, Executive Director of Government Relations
DATE: February 14, 2020
SUBJECT: Legislative Update

PURPOSE: Discussion Item

Purpose of Submittal:
For this agenda item, Becca Kenna-Schenk, Executive Director of Government Relations, will provide a brief update on the 2020 Legislative Session and answer any questions the Trustees may have.

Background:
The 60-day, 2020 Legislative Session began on January 13th and is scheduled to end on March 12th.

WWU’s supplemental operating budget request seeks to improve access for current and future students attending Western on the Peninsulas (WOtP) by transitioning degree programs from a tuition or self-supported funding model to a state-supported model. If the proposal is funded, tuition rates for most WOtP degree programs would be reduced and all WOtP resident undergraduate students would begin paying the same tuition rate as WWU resident undergraduate students in Bellingham and Everett. The request would also enable WWU to improve four-year degree pathways for the residents of the Kitsap and Olympic Peninsulas through targeted recruitment and student support strategies.

Western’s policy priorities in the 2020 legislative session include passage of House Bill 1755, authorizing WWU to offer applied doctorate degrees in education (EdDs), and passage of Senate Bill 6139/House Bill 2721, legislation to reauthorize the state’s Joint Center for Aerospace Technology Innovation, a public-private partnership that has supported at least $750,000 in research grants between WWU’s Plastics and Composites Engineering program and regional aerospace industry partners. WWU and other higher education partners are also supporting Senate Bill 6492, legislation that would modify the revenue source for the Workforce Education Investment Account, the dedicated fund for higher education investments that was created during the 2019 legislative session.

Strategic Questions:
1. How was the 2020 Regents & Trustees Day in Olympia?
2. What is the current status of WWU’s supplemental operating budget request?