TO: Members of the Board of Trustees

FROM: President Sabah Randhawa on behalf of Brent Carbajal, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Richard Van Den Hul, Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs

DATE: February 8, 2019

SUBJECT: WWU on the Peninsulas Expansion Feasibility Study: Next Steps

PURPOSE: Discussion Item

Purpose of Submittal:

Brent Carbajal, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Richard Van Den Hul, Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs, will provide an overview of next steps to be taken in examining the feasibility of expanding Western Washington University’s presence on the Kitsap and Olympic Peninsulas.

Background:

In the 2018 supplemental operating budget, the Washington State Legislature appropriated one-time funding for Western Washington University to conduct a study examining the feasibility of expanding educational options on the Kitsap and Olympic Peninsulas. To assist in this process Western retained the services of MGT Consulting Group in May 2018 to document current and future higher educational and workforce needs in the region, and assist in exploring the feasibility of several higher education expansion options. This includes capital investment toward the creation of a four year campus, as well as expansion of current baccalaureate degree programs and successful 2+2 partnerships with local community and technical colleges, offering upper division courses toward the completion of four year degrees.

At the October 11, 2018 meeting of the Board of Trustees, MGT Consulting Group’s Vice President Ray Thompson, provided a progress report on the feasibility study. On January 4, 2019, Western submitted the final feasibility report, executive summary, and cover letter to Governor Inslee and the appropriate committees of the Legislature (available online at: https://provost.wwu.edu/wwu-peninsulas-feasibility-study).

The MGT Consulting Group study confirmed many of the themes established through Western’s experience providing higher education for over two decades on the Peninsulas:

1. There is significant interest and support from regional stakeholders for an expanded WWU presence, particularly in the Poulsbo area.
2. Both Olympic and Peninsula Colleges are strongly supportive of continued and expanded partnership with WWU.

3. While the current WWU service locations on the Peninsulas are appropriate for the various population centers across the four county area, there are unmet educational access needs in areas with relatively small populations where establishing a physical presence would be prohibitively expensive. Consequently, creative delivery solutions leveraging partnerships with local entities will need to be developed to serve these populations.

4. WWU expansion across the peninsulas will require a gradual build-up relative to program mix, enrollment targets, staffing levels, space needs, and capacity, as well as continued partnership with Olympic and Peninsula Colleges.

Growing Western’s impact in the State of Washington is a core theme of the new strategic plan, and that commitment, coupled with Western’s strengths and existing Peninsulas investments, make us uniquely qualified to lead expanded higher education in the region.

However, significant work remains to be done in developing an intentional, fiscally sustainable, and contextually sensitive vision of higher education expansion in order to best serve residents on the Peninsulas. Using the data and recommendations from the MGT report, Western is extending the feasibility study to develop a resource model on operational expenses for program expansion, a process which will include further engagement with regional stakeholders.

**Strategic Questions:**

1. Do the Trustees have any suggestions about particularly important or effective ways to engage regional partners, or the Legislature, during these next steps in the feasibility analysis?

2. What do the Trustees see as the primary barriers to higher education access on the peninsulas?

3. In terms of vision, what do the Trustees see as characteristics that might describe WWU’s presence on the peninsulas five years out and ten years out?