TO: Members of the Board of Trustees

FROM: President Sabah Randhawa on behalf of Becca Kenna-Schenk, Executive Director of Government Relations

DATE: April 5, 2019

SUBJECT: Olympia 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 2019 Legislative Session and answer any questions the Trustees may have.

Background:

The 105-day, 2019 Legislative Session began on January 14, 2019 and is scheduled to end on April 28, 2019.

To date, Western has testified 20 times before legislative committees this session. Additionally, Western is tracking 239 bills and has submitted at least 90 fiscal notes this session. Western has also requested legislation this session—HB 1755, which would authorize the boards of trustees at WWU, CWU and EWU to approve applied doctorate degrees in education (Ed.Ds). The bill has passed the House of Representatives and is currently moving through the Senate.

Many of Western’s 2019-21 operating and capital budget requests, as approved by the Board of Trustees, have been included in the House and Senate budget proposals. See attachment for a comparison of the budget proposals from the Governor, House and Senate. Additionally, higher education leaders in the House of Representatives introduced the Workforce Education Investment Act (HB 2158), which would create a new dedicated state fund for higher education investments. The fund would be supported by a targeted tax rate increase for certain businesses. For the 2019-21 budget cycle, funding generated under the proposal would go toward financial aid, expansion of STEM degree programs and student support services at the state public colleges and universities, including WWU.

Strategic Questions:

1. How can the Board of Trustees support WWU’s legislative priorities at this point in the legislative session?