TO: Members of the Board of Trustees
FROM: President Sabah Randhawa by Donna Gibbs, V.P. for University Relations & Marketing
DATE: August 18, 2022
SUBJECT: University Relations and Marketing Report
PURPOSE: Information Item

Purpose of Submittal:

A written report is provided on the recent activities of University Relations and Marketing.

Supporting Information:

Report Attached
This month we are happy to welcome two new highly accomplished leaders to the URM team: Jonathan Higgins, director of University Communications, and Elizabeth Lambert, director of University Marketing & Brand Strategy.

Jonathan comes to WWU from his previous post as Vice President of Marketing & Communications at Cognite, a billion-dollar global industrial data operations company in Oslo, Norway where he was responsible for overall brand and communications strategy and execution. Before that, Jonathan served as Communications Director for Telenor Group, a leading telecommunications company in Bangkok and Singapore. Prior to his corporate communications work, he served as Account Director for Hill+Knowlton Strategies, one of the world's leading public relations and communications strategy agencies, in Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore, where he managed global accounts including Coca-Cola, Ford Motor Company and Microsoft. After earning a B.A. in Communications at University of Washington, Jonathan served as a senior communications officer for the Washington State Department of Transportation, and he began his career abroad at the University of Duisberg in Essen, Germany, where he used his fluent German language skill as Education Policy Editor for faculty in Natural Sciences. His move to WWU represents a homecoming of sorts to be closer to family who live in the Bellingham area.

Elizabeth comes to WWU from her previous position as Senior Director of External Relations & Strategic Communications at University of California, Davis where she led strategic communications and outreach for Graduate Studies. Prior to that she served as Director of Marketing & Communications for Graduate Studies. Among her accomplishments over the past five years at UC Davis, she served as project lead on the successful launch of a new admissions customer relationship management (CRM) system from Slate, the same system used by WWU's undergraduate Admissions team. Prior to UC Davis, Elizabeth was Director of Enrollment Management Marketing at University of the Pacific and Director of Marketing & Recruitment at Drexel University Sacramento. Elizabeth holds a B.S. in Communication from Southern Oregon University and a M.S. in Higher Education from Drexel University.

The Vice President has been busy chairing the search for the next Chief of Staff in the President's Office. We have a slate of seven promising candidates and we look forward to hosting finalist visits on campus in early September.
University Communications is in the process of implementing a new editorial system designed to provide more access to Western's faculty and student research by working journalists. This new system involves a team-based approach to story creation, editing, and dispersal via both press releases and individual pitches. The new system, which implements a beat structure across campus, will also track stories based on readership in Western Today, Gaia (the University’s research-focused blog on Medium.com), and social media, as well as via contextual points such as strategic plan pillars, by college, and of course by the final desired goal of the generation of more earned media. The implementation of the new system will begin this summer and gain speed through the beginning of the fall, with the first academic year's content being used to establish a baseline for the gathered metrics.

Social media coordinator Zoe Fraley spent May and June supporting and celebrating commencement, Celebration of Excellence, Alumni Awards, Give Day, and our Presidential Scholars on social media. May was also Mental Health Month, so we focused on sharing a steady stream of events and resources from the Counseling & Wellness Center, including co-hosting a live Q&A on Instagram with the BeWellWWU account and hosting a Wellness Advocate takeover in our Instagram Stories. We capped off a busy spring quarter with live coverage from the first in-person June Commencement ceremonies in two years, with lots of engagement as we posted photos to our feeds and shared user-generated grad photos to our Stories throughout the weekend.

Publications Editor Mary Gallagher oversaw the creation of 57 individual graphics with photos and biographical information about our Presidential Scholars and Outstanding Graduates. Those graphics have been running on Western’s social media channels since before Spring Commencement, providing dozens of examples of student success at Western. Publications is also working on producing the next edition of Window magazine, to be delivered in mid-October and featuring stories about the Honors College multidisciplinary trip to Ecuador and the Galapagos (which will also feature a new website done in collaboration with WebTech to showcase the imagery and storytelling gathered by URM staff during the program), Western’s cutting-edge Cybersecurity Program, and the newly-installed solar windows in the Western Gallery powered by quantum dot technology developed by WWU students and faculty and licensed by New Mexico start-up UbiQD, where a Western graduate, who worked on the research while getting both his B.S. and master’s degrees in Chemistry, is now employed.

Western's "breadcrumbing" of stories (publishing our own content to make a source or expert easy to find by media members writing on a given topic) about faculty research, grants, and expertise, continues to bear fruit. One recent example is this story in Crosscut featuring the College of the Environment's Marco Hatch and his research on the use of clam gardens by the Indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest coast.

Lastly, the office continues to serve in its media liaison role, assisting administrative offices in a number of media inquiries from outlets such as the Cascadia Daily News and an op-ed in the Spokane Spokesman-Review on the University's heating conversion study.
WESTERN TODAY

Total Sessions
May  34,141
June  30,121

Top Stories
- COVID is making flu, other common viruses act in unfamiliar ways – [Link]
- Meet the 2022 Presidential Scholars – [Link]
- La Niña could enter rare third straight year. Here’s what that means – [Link]

* Due to a software upgrade, session statistics are unavailable for February and March.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Twitter
Facebook
Instagram

STATISTICS AT A GLANCE

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Twitter</th>
<th>Facebook</th>
<th>Instagram</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total followers</td>
<td>22,577</td>
<td>51,410</td>
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<tr>
<td>New followers</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>143</td>
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<tr>
<td>% gained</td>
<td>.1%</td>
<td>.6%</td>
<td>.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engagements</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>4,903</td>
<td>36,459</td>
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External Media

Total Stories
1,598

Top Stories
- Downtown Seattle considers a future with lots of tourists and a few office workers – [Sacramento Bee]
- Indigenous oyster fisheries persisted for millennia and should inform future management– [Nature]
Boston takes rare step of apologizing for its role in slavery and its lasting harm—NPR

FAMILY CONNECTION NEWSLETTER

Audience: 8,587
Opened: 37.3%
Clicked: 5.1%

Top Content: June Commencement, Bellingham Tourism Info, Student Jobs, Summer Session, Checking Out of University Housing.

Window.wwu.edu

May 1-June 30, 2022
Page Views: 2,163
First-Time Visitors: 1,558

Top Content
Spring 2022 Home page, Reforesting the West, Look Up, Class Notes, WWU Alumni Awards
Beginning September 2021, URM launched the 2021-22 undergraduate digital campaign in partnership with Admissions as the primary enrollment and brand awareness campaign for WWU. This campaign includes display advertising, display retargeting, Snapchat, YouTube, pay-per-click, Audience Select (list targeting), and Facebook/Instagram advertising which runs for a six to nine-month cycle, depending on the platform. This year we also included a transfer campaign (launched November 2021); a geo-targeted graduate school campaign test (launched October 2021) focused on general awareness, plus Weekend MBA and Rehabilitation Counseling (OCE-supported programs). And after our success last year, we also included a financial aid focused and FAFSA filing deadline campaign running December 2021 to February 2022, targeting parents. The yield campaign began March 2022 and included IP targeting and Snapchat for students who have applied but have not yet confirmed enrollment.

As we work to achieve our number-one priority of advancing inclusive student success, one of the most gratifying outcomes of our recruitment outreach work this year is the fact that a stunning 80% of our new first-year students completed a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the Washington state equivalent, the Washington Application for State Financial Aid. That compares to about 52% of students nationally and less than 47% for Washington state overall.

At-a-Glance Lifetime Performance (June 2021 - June 2022) Undergraduate Campaign
Collateral Creation (Graphic Design)

In May and June, the designers collectively worked on 130 projects and produced 374 individual assets.

Notable Projects
- Window Magazine
- Campus Map building addition
- Brand Articulation/Ideation for 22-23 Campaign
- Digital campaign ads
- Western Sculpture Collection brochure
- New Student and Family Resource Guides
- WWU Family Calendar
- Washington Campus Coalition for the Public Good logo and style guide
- Bias Response Team annual report

Brand Management

The creative team works with partners across campus to manage Western Washington University’s brand. This includes the development of design elements and assuring adherence to Western’s brand standards.
In May and June, the Creative Team completed brand identity work for:

- Washington Campus Coalition for the Public Good (formerly known as the Washington Campus Compact)
- Viking Union
- Veteran Services Office
- Office of Student Life
- Disability Access Center

Started and still working on brand identity work for:

- Child Development Center
- Institute for Critical Disability Studies
COMMUNITY RELATIONS

2022 June Commencement Ceremonies

The director of Community Relations worked with a team of University event specialists to coordinate WWU’s eight June commencement ceremonies from June 10-12, 2022, which included a refresh of multiple facets of the event, including removing the graduates’ guest limit, to make it more celebratory and enjoyable for guests and graduates. Feedback from graduates and attendees has been extremely positive. Some of the many improvements included:

- Shortening and restructuring the ceremony
- Improvement of lighting and staging
- A more streamlined procession and recession
- Music improvements including the addition of “Pomp and Circumstance” while keeping the tradition of live bagpipes
- Enhanced Livestream and video coverage
- Shortening and improving the printed commencement program
- An improved guest experience with intentional care and touches given to attendees
- An inclusive, fun, and rewarding employee work experience
- Thoughtful care given to supporting contractors resulting in 100% contractor satisfaction

Juneteenth Celebration

Community Relations coordinated the 2022 Juneteenth Flag Raising Ceremony and Celebration on Friday, June 17. 150 faculty and staff attended the event in WWU’s Flag Plaza during the normally quiet intersession between spring quarter and summer session. The event featured a live performance of “Lift Every Voice and Sing” by WWU Admissions Counselor Nathaniel Gaines and inspiring speeches were offered by WWU employees Nia Gipson and Amy Westmoreland. After the ceremony and flag raising, guests stayed for food and fellowship. Food at the event was purchased from two local, Black-owned businesses Guud Bowls and Ambo Ethiopian Cuisine.

[www.wwu.edu/juneteenth](http://www.wwu.edu/juneteenth)

What does Peace Mean to You Bench Project

WWU is one of 10 Whatcom County organizations displaying benches painted by local artists as a part of Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center’s “What Does Peace Mean To You” campaign. The bench provided to Western was painted by Lummi artist Jason LaClair and will be on display in the lobby of the Viking Union until the bench is auctioned off at the Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center’s annual Peace Builder Awards event in October.

Western Washington University Day at the NW Washington Fair

August 18, 2022, is Western Washington University Day at the Northwest Washington Fair. For the first time, WWU is partnering with the Fair to boost Western’s visibility in rural Whatcom County and beyond. This sponsorship includes two WWU videos that will play on the fair’s jumbotron prior to main stage performances which include Flo Rida, Pat Benatar, Big & Rich, and For King and Country. On August 18, WWU banners will be hung at all entrances, reentry handstamps will showcase WWU’s logo and Western will have a 10’x30’ space near the main entrance where attendees will be given free WWU-branded reusable shopping bags and information cards. Western’s space will also include gifts and clothing sold by the AS Bookstore and Western’s mascot Victor E. Viking will be present to take photos with fairgoers. The Northwest Washington fair is Whatcom County’s largest multi-day event, with about 20,000 attendees per day over 10 days, and was founded in 1911.
TRIBAL LIAISON

Planning

Planning continues for the longhouse project as the WWU Longhouse Steering Committee and the Tribal Relations Longhouse Planning and Elders committees have met with Wellman & Zuck, Jones & Jones Architects, and Rolluda Architects. The first meeting was a “meet and greet” opportunity for all the committee members to meet the design/build team. The July meeting was a work session to begin the visioning process on features and programming in the longhouse structure. This group is expected to meet monthly to accommodate several more work sessions for the longhouse planning process.

The negotiations between state land use attorneys and the City of Bellingham on a ground lease for the Sehome Arboretum parcel continue to move forward. We have completed an entry-upon-land agreement with the City that allows us to access the site to perform items like utility locates, surveying, soils investigation, archeological investigation, and hazmat determinations to assess what can be done with the site. Before finishing the lease agreement, we need further programming and schematic design from our design-build team with input from the Elders and Planning committees. We anticipate that work to occur this fall and for the lease agreement to be completed by end of calendar year 2022.

Events

The Tribal Liaison continues to contact tribal leaders and schedule opportunities to present to their tribal councils to gather financial support for the longhouse. The Tribal Liaison has visited with the Swinomish Tribal Senate and the Suquamish Tribal Council and both tribes gave favorable responses in favor of support to aid with our fundraising for the longhouse project.

The Tribal Liaison has begun planning for another successful Indigenous Peoples’ Day event scheduled in October. This event will again be a collaborative effort with Northwest Indian College, Whatcom Community College, Bellingham Technical College, and the Bellingham School District. More information will be shared as the event planning evolves.

Training

The Tribal Liaison maintains a monthly meeting with Human Resources to inform new Western employees regarding the operations of the Tribal Relations Office. This practice facilitates informing the university community of the current activities and functions of the Tribal Relations Department.

Advisory Functions

The Tribal Liaison attended the 7/12/22 Council of Deans meeting to engage in a discussion around a more thoughtful approach to curriculum development, grant proposal, and government-to-government training regarding work with tribal nations.

The Tribal Liaison has recently engaged with the Swinomish School Partnership meeting group along with Jessica Ferreras-Stone, Associate Professor of Elementary Education. This collaboration is intended to involve a long-term and beneficial relationship between the Swinomish Tribal Community and Mount Vernon School District with the inclusion of the Since Time Immemorial curriculum for public schools.

The Tribal Liaison was invited to serve as a panelist for “The Indigenous Speaker Series – a Platform Promoting Place-based Knowledge, Indigenized Research, and Future Generations” on
June 14, 2022 in New Zealand. This was an opportunity to share experience with Native students in higher education as a presenter and a graduate student working with Maori University, New Zealand.

**Relationship-Building**

The Tribal Liaison continues to serve on the Northwest Indian College Board of Trustees. In July she attended the summer conference for American Indian Higher Education Consortium with NWIC President Justin Guillory along with tribal college presidents from other institutions.

The Tribal Liaison maintains a consistent affiliation with the Tribal Leaders Congress on Education through attendance at quarterly meetings. This group provides a forum for tribal leaders to work in collaboration with state agencies. Institutions and organizations work together to advocate for legislative, policy, and research efforts that increase educational opportunities for Native people in Washington State.
SBDC Bellingham Q2 Highlights

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<th>Businesses Served</th>
<th>Q2 2022</th>
<th>Q2 2021</th>
<th>YTD 2022</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business Counseling Received</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>253</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBDC Sponsored Training Participants</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research or Students Projects</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information or Resources Provided</td>
<td>59</td>
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<td>103</td>
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<th>Clients’ Economic Impacts</th>
<th>Q2 2022</th>
<th>Q2 2021</th>
<th>YTD 2022</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capital Formation</td>
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<td>$2.5M</td>
<td>$6.5M</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business Starts</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jobs Created or Retained</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>293</td>
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Top Areas of Counseling

- Buy/Sell Business, Financing/Capital, Managing a Business, Start-up Assistance, Business Accounting/Budget
- 

Rolling 12-month Demographics

Top Industries

- Retail, Service Establishment, Accommodation & Food Services, Health Care & Social Assistance, Manufacturing
- 

Annualized Sales

$243.3M

Jobs Supported

2,359

Additional Highlights

SBDC Office Relocation

Unity Care expanded and needed the space formally occupied by the SBDC office in downtown Bellingham, on Cornwall Ave. The SBDC office has been relocated to the Barkley Village area, providing County-wide clients with easier access and free parking for face-to-face meetings.

Evolving COVID Impacts

With COVID restrictions lessening on the Canadian border, tourism has increased. At the same time, Whatcom’s COVID community level has fluctuated greatly during the quarter, with mixed revenue results for many businesses.

Honors

SBDC Director CJ Seitz was awarded the WWU President’s Exceptional Effort Award for her leadership on response and recovery during the historic Whatcom County flooding in 2021.

Partnering with the WWU MBA Program
Our current MBA graduate assistant, Sean Wu, saw an opportunity to connect WWU MBA interns with current SBDC clients. By introducing the MBA intern pool to our clients, the SBDC facilitated a mutually beneficial service for students needing internship experiences and local businesses searching for talented employees.

**Supporting New Entrepreneurs**

- 27 - number of Buy/Sell business clients served
- 51 - number of Start-up clients served
VISUAL MEDIA PRODUCTION

WWU Honors Ecuador & Galapagos Program

The Director of Visual Media Production and the Assistant Director of University Communications joined a study abroad experience sponsored by the Honors College. More than 23,000 images and video clips were captured through the 19-day program. Material captured included students learning about cultural sites around the region, climbing volcanoes, geology field trips at national parks above 15,000 ft, canoeing through portions of the Amazon Basin, trekking through the jungle, meeting indigenous community members, and much more. This whole program will be shared with the public via an upcoming feature in Window, an interactive website dedicated to the program, and video vignettes for use in a future recruitment advertising campaign.

File Organization

Thousands of previously created video assets were organized by team members that have since left the university and were located on many physical drives. An effort was made to organize and tag the projects before the new director and visual journalist staff member arrived, but the workflow is now in much better shape due to workflow optimization, implementing file name conventions, and reducing the number of identical files living in multiple places within the ecosystem. This work has since reached the first level of completion, as the workflows we have enacted have greatly increased our location and use of previously produced content. We will continue iterating on this system as new content continues to be generated.

Optimizing and Facilitating Efficiencies

In an effort to more easily share multimedia assets with campus partners for social media, Window Magazine, etc, we now have a workflow taking shape on reducing the amount of effort to share such things. This system and workflow have now been used to share dozens of custom images and video clips for social media content and assets for partners. Recently, we have shot about ten events on campus and have been able to share print-quality imagery with partners on campus within an hour of the shots being taken. We used a novel workflow of WWU OneDrive for sharing near synchronous material from over a dozen locations within Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands to WWU social media channels and Western Today for daily updates on the nearly three-week program.

Equipment Organization, Itemizing, and Inventory

Every single asset purchased by URM for Media Production use is now in an inventory that previously did not exist. All items are also physically tagged, so if misplaced, a number can be called to arrange a return. This has now been fully implemented and can now lead to a quicker turnaround of content creation.

Building an Old Main 370 interview studio is an idea that recently emerged for creating rapidly made material. The space will be flexible and have many uses, for both still photography, interview capture, and audio/podcast capture. It will use quite a few pre-existing resources as well, mitigating the financial impact significantly of building a ground-up, custom-made studio space.

We are also implementing a new project to capture general footage and imagery of all buildings on campus as a repository and resource for the WWU community. We have begun shooting imagery for all four seasons for each building and campus location. The creation of the libraries themselves was an undertaking, as almost 200 folders were created that needed to be highly organized.
Projects Recently Completed

- ISB Walkthrough Tour with Brad Johnson
- Meet the Provost with Brad Johnson
- Student Move Out Tips & Tricks
- Pride Month Celebration Vignette
- Juneteenth Flag Raising Ceremony Vignette
- Capturing Commencement Weekend

Projects in Postproduction

- Student-Athlete Spotlight: Dani Iwami
- First Gen Student Spotlight: Sealey Raymond
- Solar Window Campus Install Vignette
- WWU Honors Ecuador & Galapagos Program

Projects in Production

- Title IX 50 Years Later Retrospective and Future
- "Less than :60: Light, fun social media content series pilot (interesting, notable, novel short videos about a range of things happening all over campus)
- Summer Course Field Work Asset Creation / Capture (Geology, 8MM Filmmaking, Glaciology, Flyfishing, Marine Biology)
- WWU Rock Climbing Contest
  WWU Building Repository

Views From Ecuador
Rebranding: As of July 1, 2022, Washington Campus Compact has changed its name to Washington Campus Coalition for the Public Good. We are very grateful to the URM Creative Services team for their help with the rebranding process. We have received very positive feedback from statewide stakeholders. Here is the new logo:

![New Logo](image)

The new website is [www.wacampuscoalition.org](http://www.wacampuscoalition.org) and has been rebranded and updated.

Grant Monitoring and Internal Audit Process: The federal agency, AmeriCorps, has been conducting an extensive monitoring review process of one of WACC’s previous AmeriCorps grants particularly focused on compliance with National Service Criminal History Checks (NSCHC). A small number of non-compliant checks were identified during the review process. These were attributed to decreased staff capacity and turnover in 2020 during the COVID-19 crisis, as well as the pivot to remote work. During this period some paper documents were misplaced resulting in the inability to demonstrate compliant procedures and documentation. The policies and procedures have been updated and NSCHC is now conducted through AmeriCorps-approved vendors to further mitigate the risk of errors and enable fully remote adjudication.

As a follow-up, AmeriCorps asked Serve Washington and Western Washington University to review NSCHC conducted by WACC staff for one completed grant (funded through Serve Washington) and our current AmeriCorps grant (national direct from AmeriCorps). Serve Washington reviewed 80 member files from the 2020-21 program year and found none to be out of compliance.

In July 2022, Western’s internal audit team reviewed 172 staff and member files. They identified seven files that did not meet 100% of the criteria for compliance. All background checks were completed and cleared but the errors were primarily due to a new staff member missing a final step in the adjudication process (clicking a final button on the software). Research and Sponsored Programs reported these findings to AmeriCorps and there may be financial disallowances applied to the program because of these errors. The Office of Internal Audit will complete a full report to provide feedback and make recommendations for implementing best practices to improve program and grant management policies and procedures moving forward. Of note, all compliance errors had been identified and corrected internally by program staff through a mid-year review and training process. Zero compliance issues were identified since that mid-year process.
WebTech was very pleased to collaborate with University Communications to develop the digital version of Window magazine. The new platform supports animations, rich photography and videography, and the possibility of creating unique storytelling formats. We will be continuing to work with University Communications on this project to bring new ways for students, staff, and alumni to engage between issues.

The website for students engaging in their first year at Western, including First Year Interest Groups (FIGs), Viking Launch, New Student Experience Seminars, and Year-long Strands, received a revamp. This was both to align more strongly with the Western brand and to empower the office running these programs to be as nimble as needed.

The Western Washington University Retirement Association has a new website with a concerted focus on increasing the accessibility of the book reviews, health notes, and newsletters. It also features vibrant photography and an event calendar.
Financial Aid partnered with WebTech to roll out what are termed web components for their website top and bottom sections. This aligns their websites with other sites that students interact with throughout their experience at Western.

August brings the end of a long-standing campus service named the U drive. WebTech has been working with Information Technology Services to migrate faculty websites to other services and that has gone very well.

**Web Traffic Analysis**

Our targeted digital recruitment advertising campaigns continue to drive traffic to the campaign landing pages as well as the primary institutional website homepage and majors pages. Campaigns accounted for 22.2% of the traffic between May 20-July 31. Perhaps not surprising given the robust hiring market, the redesigned jobs page at Western, [https://www.wwu.edu/workatwestern](https://www.wwu.edu/workatwestern) ranked third in traffic with nearly 16,000 views.

Top viewed pages include Home, Careers, Majors, and Commencement Information. Other notable stats: Google drove 47.7% of the traffic; 130 new YouTube subscriptions added; and the Campus Tour was viewed 1,463 times and shared 22 times from May 20-July 31.

Thankfully the workload has continued to normalize as Western adapts to living with COVID over the summer quarter which has allowed WebTech to move more toward the ideal state of an even number of created versus resolved issues. 422 web help emails were received which is similar to the prior reporting period. We have seen a lot of new personnel on campus being asked to handle website content updates and many of the emails require straightforward assistance on how to do a task.