The mission of University Advancement is to build relationships through meaningful engagements that foster pride, encourage advocacy, and promote private support for Western Washington University.
Capital Campaign Update

We are pleased to report that our $53 million request to the state legislature was funded in the 2021-2023 capital budget, and the foundation has raised nearly $15 million toward the $20 million campaign goal.

This $72 million project includes renovations to an existing facility and the construction of a new building, Kaiser Borsari Hall, which will be prominently located along East College Way.

Kaiser Borsari Hall will feature forward-thinking design elements that boost energy efficiency and support interdisciplinary study and research. As a “smart building,” Kaiser Borsari Hall will advance Western’s vision to become the region’s first carbon-neutral university campus. The new building will exceed LEED standards for energy use, carbon, and other environmental indicators, and Western will pursue certification through the International Living Futures Institute/Living Building Challenge. When complete, Kaiser Borsari Hall will be the only carbon-neutral higher education academic facility in the region, and among only a handful in the nation.

Western has secured Mortenson Construction as the General Contractor and Construction Manager for the project. The construction firm joins a team including Perkins + Will architects and McLennan Design to ensure Kaiser Borsari Hall will set a new standard for sustainability in higher education facilities.

Every day, we are in conversations with donors who share our vision for a sustainable future and a belief in the power of education. One of those donors, Paul Razore, owner of Sanitary Service Company, has a long-standing commitment to sustainability and education. He was a major sponsor of Western’s student-led initiative to design and build a net zero energy tiny house as a demonstration project. Earlier this year, Sanitary Service Company made a gift of $100,000 to the capital campaign which was inspired by the project’s sustainable design.
Stephanie Bowers Endowed Recruitment and Retention Scholarship Reaches Nearly $100K

In recognition of a leader who has dedicated her career to helping Western students and to making a positive impact on society, this endowed scholarship will make the dream of a college education possible for many promising young students. The scholarship is intended for high-need students with an emphasis on women, and presents an opportunity to provide an affordable education to deserving recipients while establishing an enduring stream of support.

President Emerita Karen Morse made the first gift, donating $10K to the endowment.

“Stephanie has been an incredible asset to WWU,” said Morse. “Her understanding of the infrastructure and approach needed for successful fundraising and friendraising, combined with tireless efforts, gifted interpersonal skills, and a standard of excellence in step with a genuine commitment to Western’s ideals, have provided resources to the university that have greatly elevated its efforts in serving the state and nation. I’m extremely proud of the success that she has had as a leader and a friend of WWU.”

Many thoughtful donors have currently given enough to reach the required endowment level, allowing for the allocation of scholarship awards to deserving Western students in perpetuity.

Bowers has long been committed to advancing inclusive student success. During her 20 year tenure, the University Advancement team has added nearly 1,000 new Western scholarships. Current year scholarship awards total $2.8 million in financial support to students.
Salish Sea Institute Releases Major Report Funded by Foundation Gift

A major gift to the WWU Foundation funded a landmark report released on May 24 by Western’s Salish Sea Institute. The “State of the Salish Sea” report is the first comprehensive report since the 1994 “Shared Waters Report,” which was an outcome of a formal agreement between Governor Booth Gardner and Premier Mike Harcourt.

The report illustrates the Salish Sea is under relentless pressure from an accelerating convergence of global and local environmental stressors and the cumulative impacts of 150 years of development and alteration of watersheds and seascape.

According to Ian Perry, Emeritus scientist, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the report is “…exceptional and unique (and) represents a landmark effort to understand how the Salish Sea social-ecological system works, what is causing it to change, and what we can do about it. The report will be essential reading for scientists, marine managers, industry, and civic leaders, and everyone interested in the health of the marine environment of this place that we call home.”

The report was announced via a press release and a symposium hosted by the Western Engaged program. Nearly 1,000 people registered for the event and the impact of the report rippled rapidly throughout the region. The symposium prompted an interview with Ginny Broadhurst, director of the Institute, which aired on KING 5 evening news and can be viewed [here](#).

The lead author of the report is WWU Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies Kathryn Sobocinski. The report features more than 20 guest authors and includes contributions from Broadhurst and others affiliated with Western. The “State of the Salish Sea” places Western squarely at the center of dialog about the Salish Sea, and highlights the important role the university has played in galvanizing community awareness and response.

The activities of the Institute, which include the report, a speaker series, a new minor in Salish Sea Studies, and its “Critical Conversations” and “Hope for the Salish Sea” programs, have been primarily funded through philanthropic support secured through University Advancement.
Foundation Reaches Critical Milestone

The Foundation is pleased to report that total assets under management have exceeded $140.0 million for the first time in Foundation history. A continued interest from donors in establishing a legacy through endowments, coupled with a robust stock market, has helped the Foundation reach this important milestone.

During this academic year, the Foundation has distributed over $2.8 million to students through scholarships and over $128,000 in emergency funding for students caught in the economic peril of the pandemic.

Western’s Sixth Annual Give Day Breaks Record

On May 27th we celebrated our sixth annual WWU Give Day. This year’s give day was all about promise—a promise to our donors that each gift they make will help students succeed, and a promise to our students that we will ensure their financial needs are met through emergency funds and scholarships while investing in their untold potential by providing transformational learning experiences in the classroom and beyond.

Give Day was another record-breaking success. We are still adding offline gifts, but our initial results indicate that more than 2,300 donors donated over $960,000. This represents a 23% increase in dollars raised compared to our previous Give Day record. In addition to the Student Emergency Fund, the areas that generated the most donors are:

1) Men’s Rowing (118 donors)
2) Ice Hockey (116 donors)
3) Chess Club (113 donors)
4) Women’s Volleyball (103 donors)
5) Marketing (76 donors)

Volunteers and community partners helped propel Give Day to new heights this year. Members of the President’s Society committee—a peer-to-peer fundraising initiative launched this year—connected with some of Western’s most generous donors leading up to Give Day to ask for their support. The committee celebrated surpassing its fundraising goal of $50,000 on Give Day and plans to continue engaging with donors moving forward.

Thanks to the incredible generosity of Western’s philanthropic leaders, over 150 donors made gifts totaling $1,000 or more during Give Day for a combined total of $502,000. This represents an 11% increase in donors giving at the $1,000+ level and a 39% increase in dollars given by these donors during Give Day.

We leveraged a variety of digital and print platforms to spread the word about Give Day and to engage audiences to give.

During a time when many students are struggling to afford college, we are grateful to our exceptionally generous community for safeguarding their dreams, helping to secure their futures, and helping them realize their promise.
Jeniene Bengtsson Earns Two of Western’s Most Prestigious Awards

This spring, Associate Director of Alumni and Constituent Engagement and Western Engaged, Jeniene Bengtsson earned not one, but two of the university’s highest commendations: the President’s Exceptional Effort Award and the Professional Staff Award for Excellence.

Due to her exceptional level of integrity, professionalism, and job performance, Bengtsson has moved from a program support supervisor to increasingly complex and higher levels of responsibility as associate director.

"Jeniene exceeds each of the performance attributes outlined in the award criteria," said Assistant VP for Alumni, Annual Giving and Advancement Communications; and, Executive Director of the WWU Alumni Association, Deborah DeWees. “She has used innovation to rework the structure, focus, and foundational elements of alumni engagement through the launch of the Western Engaged program.”

Western Engaged is an affinity-based alumni engagement pipeline program with an emphasis on alumni relationships with their former Western faculty members and their academic degree programs. The five-year goal of Western Engaged is to double the level of alumni engagement university-wide from 3.6% (FY17) to 10% by FY23. Engagement is measured by attending an event, volunteering, becoming an alumni member, philanthropy, and social media engagement.

During her first year, total alumni engagement grew to 6.9%, nearly a 90% increase. She coordinated 34 alumni events and reunions which were attended by more than 374 alumni, generating $2,700 in donations for various departments.

Over the past 15 months, Bengtsson pivoted to a virtual environment, providing dozens of Western Insights (CBE), CFPA, Huxley, and CHSS webinars. These informative events have attracted thousands of people and helped them to understand and appreciate Western’s mission of excellence. Under her management, this program has also raised considerable support for BIPOC student scholarships in each college, the Racial and Equity Fund, and the Student Emergency Fund. This program serves as a national model for other universities.

This exceptional leader also developed and expanded the Western Wednesday and Get Your Blue On programs. These programs have contributed to a steady increase in faculty and staff giving, and alumni membership. Likewise, her Stoles of Gratitude graduation program has generated great pride among graduates and increased revenue for alumni programs.

“Throughout her 14 years at the university, Jeniene has consistently demonstrated a high degree of professionalism coupled with a passion to advance Western’s visibility through events and engagement opportunities,” said Mark Brovak, senior director, and COO of the WWU Foundation. “Jeniene is willing to take on initiatives that are new and untested. Yet, she approaches these opportunities with a pragmatism that manages the risk and ensures the organization is not put at undue risk.”
A Future of Service: Zoe Evans-Agnew

By Frances Badgett

Zoe Evans-Agnew (‘21), Outstanding Graduate in Honors and behavioral neuroscience major, came to Western for the diversity of perspectives and experiences. Community-minded, she was seeking a college experience that reflected her values.

“Western is a leader in making social change,” says Evans-Agnew.

The Vashon Island native was drawn to behavioral neuroscience for the ways in which the field addresses mental health issues and explores possible solutions.

“I considered so many majors—law, economics, sociology, theater—but I wanted to work in mental health,” says Evans-Agnew.

Her capstone Honors project is an exploration of sexual assault and sexual health among students at Western. More than 1,000 students responded to her survey for the project. The questions covered everything from attitudes about sex to sexual assault. She found that rates of sexual violence at Western reflected the national statistics (one in five people will be victims of sexual violence).

“In my presentation for my capstone, I will explain that although Western lacks the structural factors that lead to sexual assault like the Greek system and a major sports culture, our rates of sexual violence are still in line with the national average,” says Evans-Agnew.

After graduation, she will attend Seattle University to pursue a doctorate in nursing practice. She hopes to become a nurse practitioner someday, and wishes to work with underrepresented and homeless populations.

“I promise to continue to live a life in service to others and continually trying to give back to my community that has always given so much to me,” she says.

Zoe has received the Presidential Scholarship, the Behavioral Neuroscience scholarship, and the Honors Project scholarship.

The senior says of the generous support she has received, “Without these scholarships, I wouldn’t have been able to attend Western and make the connections that I did. I wouldn’t have been able to participate in the activities I did, like lab, and the book clubs I’ve been a part of, and I wouldn’t have met the amazing faculty who have mentored and guided me through this process. Thank you, thank you, so much.”