

## WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY ITEM SUBMITTED TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**TO:** Members of the Board of Trustees

**FROM:** President Sabah Randhawa on behalf of Nora Selander, Director of Government Relations

**DATE:** April 10, 2026

**PURPOSE:** Discussion Item

**SUBJECT:** 2026 Legislative Session Update

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### **Purpose of Submittal:**

For this agenda item, Nora Selander, Director of Government Relations, will provide a brief update on the 2026 Legislative Session and answer any questions the Trustees may have.

### **Background:**

The 60-day, 2026 Legislative Session began on January 12<sup>th</sup> and ended on March 12<sup>th</sup>. WWU's legislative priorities this session included:

- Avoiding further budget reductions to higher education institutions;
- Preserving financial aid investments; and
- Minor works preservation funding.

### **Policy:**

Legislation WWU closely tracked in the 2026 session is listed below.

#### Passed

House Bill 1570 – Collective bargaining for employees enrolled in academic programs.

- Provides a legal framework for operational student employees at WWU to exercise their collective bargaining rights, if they so choose.

Senate Bill 5963 – Passport to Careers

- Ensures all students who qualify for the Passport to Careers program qualify for the Washington College Grant.

#### Failed

House Bill 2070 – Concerning per student funding at Western Washington University.

- Directs resources to WWU to fix historical funding disparities.

#### Senate Bill 6052 – Digital transcript environment

- Establishes a framework for K-12 and public higher education to create an environment that would facilitate digital transmission of transcripts.

#### Senate Bill 5978 – Washington Guaranteed Admissions Program

- Codifies the WAGAP program and provides a roadmap to full statewide expansion.

#### House Bill 2617 / Senate Bill 6325 – Enhancing higher education procedures

- Proposes eliminating the fund split via full funding of compensation increases at public institutions of higher education.

### **Budget:**

At the time these materials were produced, the Governor had yet to sign the capital and operating budgets into law. Information about the status of the budget and any line-item vetoes may be available by the time of the Board meeting.

#### Operating Budget

The legislature avoided deep cuts to higher education institutions by utilizing a multi-step fund swap to effectively replace state general fund appropriations with state-issued bonds on a one-time basis.

Instead of major budget reductions as proposed in Governor Ferguson's budget, the supplemental budget includes a \$175,000 reduction.

#### Capital Budget

The capital budget included \$2.15 million in additional funding for Minor Works Preservation, increasing from \$6 million to \$8.15 million for the biennium. Preventative Facility Maintenance and Building Systems Repairs also saw an increase of \$500,000, from \$3.614 million to \$4.114 million for the biennium.

# Legislative Session Update 2026

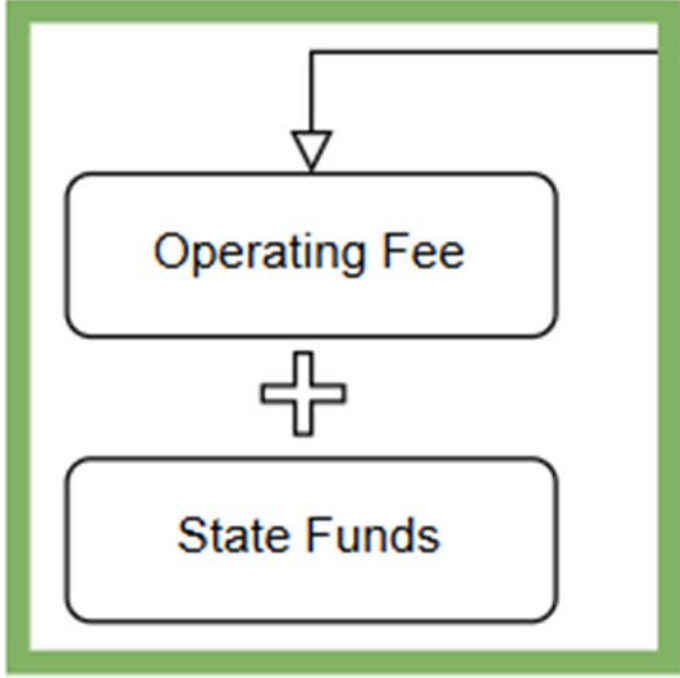
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Nora Selander, Director of Government Relations

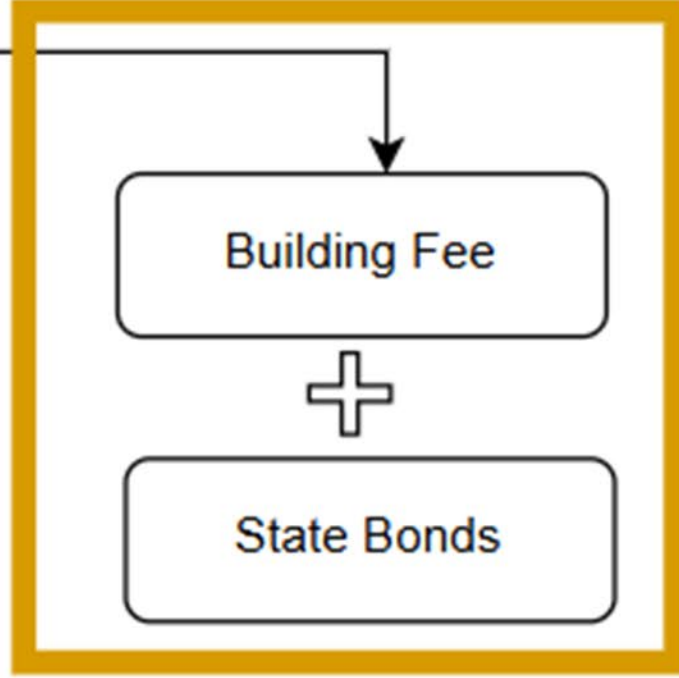


Tuition

Operating Budget

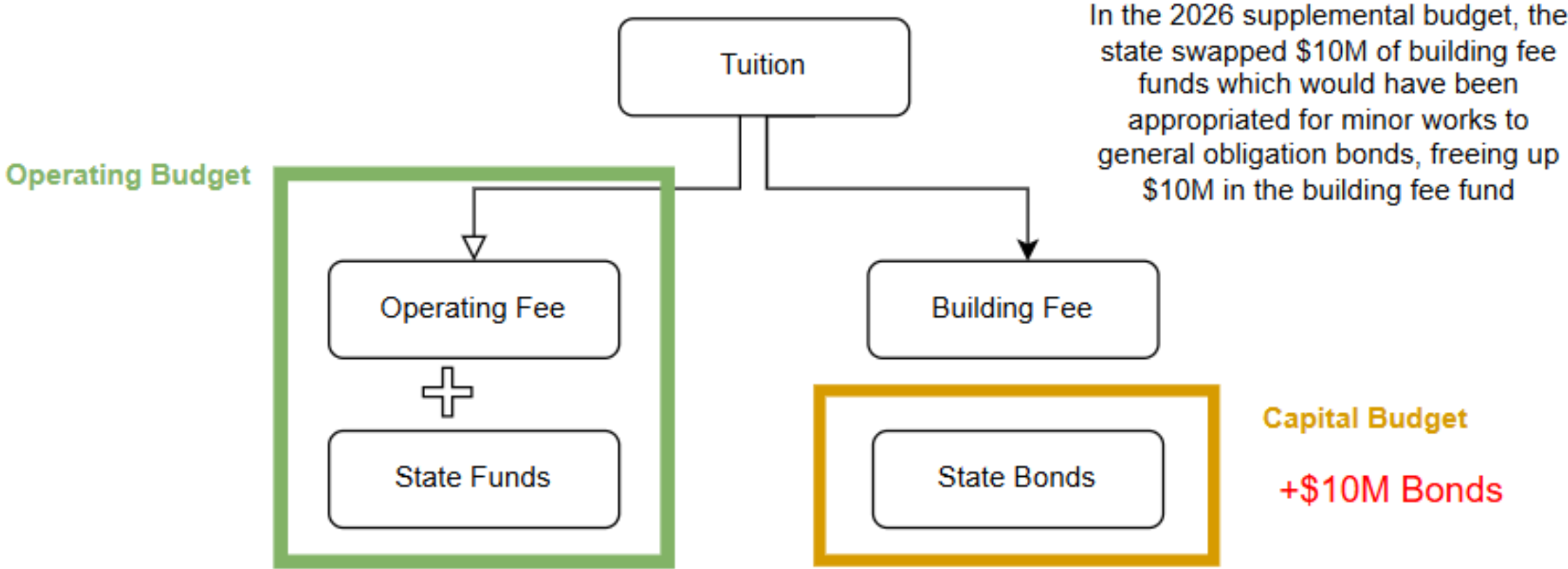


Capital Budget



Typically, the WWU operating budget consists of tuition dollars and state funds.

Typically, the WWU capital budget consists of the tuition building fee (local funds) and state general obligation bonds.



The building fee dollars were moved to the operating fee account, replacing \$10M in state funding, keeping WWU mostly whole in the 2026 supplemental budget

