

WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY ITEM SUBMITTED TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

TO: Members of the Board of Trustees
FROM: President Sabah Randhawa on behalf of Provost and Executive Vice
President Brad Johnson
DATE: April 10, 2026
PURPOSE: Discussion Item
SUBJECT: College of Business and Economics 50th Anniversary: Past, Present, Future

Purpose of Submittal:

A presentation by the Dean of the College of Business and Economics, Dr. Deanna Kennedy, looking into the past history of the college, where we are currently, and goals for the future. The presentation includes:

- (1) An overview of the history and highlights of CBE's past
- (2) An update on the 50th Anniversary celebration events for CBE
- (3) A presentation of future plans and visions for CBE

Background

The College of Business and Economics (CBE) is a student focused school of business and economics engaged in scholarly and professional activities that contribute to the well-being of society. CBE faculty approach business in a way that will benefit people, the planet, and profits. Students develop people and analytical skills with an emphasis on sustainability. CBE's programs are accredited by AACSB, assuring students, parents, and organizations that the College provides a quality education led by faculty who are experts in their fields.

Western Washington University's Board of Trustees established the College of Business and Economics (CBE) in 1976. For five decades, students have come to CBE eager to build their futures. By graduation, they leave with greater confidence, clarity of purpose, and the skills to thrive. During 2026 the college is reflecting on its past, highlighting alumni journeys, celebrating growth, and making plans for the future.

Presenter Biographies

Deanna M. Kennedy is the Dean of the College of Business and Economics. She joined Western in 2023. Since joining WWU she has successfully led the college through budget reductions, strategic planning, prioritized enrollment growth and resourced research and innovation opportunities. Dr. Kennedy came to Western from the University of Washington-

Bothell School of Business where she served as Associate Dean for Academics, Area Coordinator for the Operations Management and Information Systems area, and faculty director of the Chancellor's Community Engagement Council. Dr. Kennedy earned her PhD from the Isenberg School of Management, University of Massachusetts Amherst, her MBA from Golden Gate University, and her BS from the University of California Davis.

Strategic Questions

1. Are there any broader visions for WWU that CBE should consider in planning for the future?
2. What connections to other programs, colleges, partners can you see being relevant and important for CBE?
3. Are there additional ways that CBE should communicate about activities and opportunities to the Board in order to gather feedback?

Attachments

PowerPoint

College of Business and Economics: Past, Present, and Future

A decorative graphic consisting of two overlapping, wavy, light blue shapes that resemble waves or stylized hills, positioned to the left of the main title.

Board of Trustees Meeting, Spring 2026

CBE's 50th Anniversary

<https://cbe.wvu.edu/cbes-50th-anniversary>



History

50s
Economics and
Business debut
at WWU

1976
Lauch of College of
Business and
Economics
Departments
Accounting, Business
Administration,
Business Education
and Office Admin.,
and Economics

1990
CBE Receives first
AACSB
Accreditation

Only 255 of 1200 UG
programs in US were
accredited

2013
Pledge from Moss
Adams for
professional
readiness leads to
establishment of the
CBE Student Success
Center

60s
Department of
Economics, Business
& Government
started in the
College of Arts a&
Sciences

Gov't split off to
become Pol Sci

80s
Business
Administration
department split into
Management (MGMT)
and
Finance, Marketing,
and Decision
Sciences (FMDS)

2001
Manufacturing &
Supply Chain
Management (MSCM)
Program Launches

2002
Decision Sciences
becomes its own
department

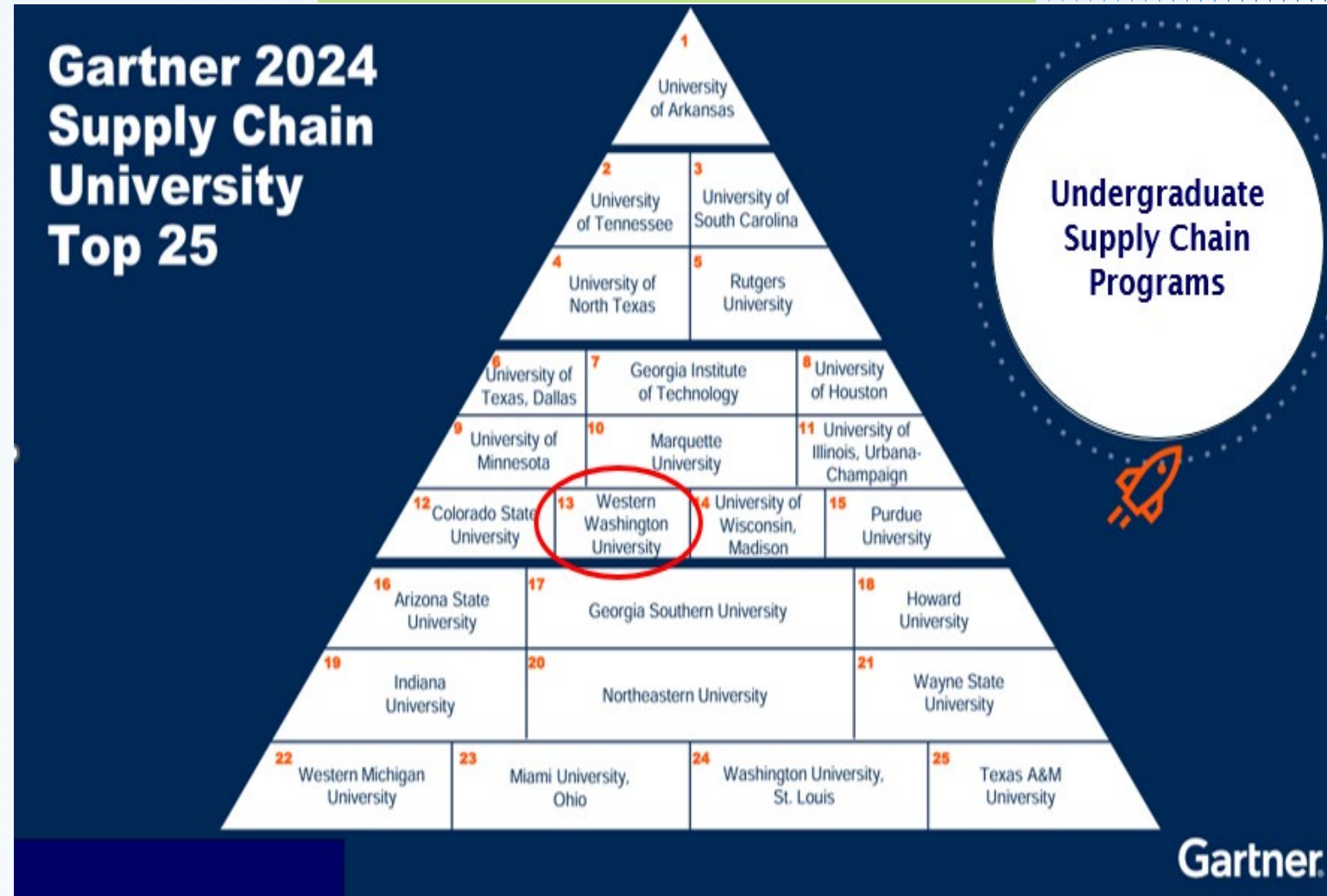
2022
MSCM program
ranked 18th in
Gartner Top 25
Undergraduate
Supply Chain
Programs

2024

Pledge from Paul Merriman establishes the Merriman Financial Literacy Program



MSCM program 13th in Gartner Top 25 Undergraduate Supply Chain Programs



2025

Entrepreneurship & Innovation program transferred to CBE, E&I minor relaunches

Entrepreneurship Commons & Founder Fellowship Program
WWU Founder Fellowship provides stipends (\$1,500-\$2,000) and mentorship support for entrepreneurship students who are actively building ventures or testing new ideas.

E&I programming proposed to support NSF Grant Application: **Accelerating Research Translation**
E&I curriculum provides fundamentals and creative activities that build critical thinking, innovation, and entrepreneurial curiosity

College approves updated CBE Strategic Priorities and Initiatives including new Strategic Initiative 2.3 to hire, retain, and develop staff.

2025 Staff Excellence Award Winners!



Enrollments

CBE Programming

- 14 UG degrees and 26 pathways
- 2 GR degrees

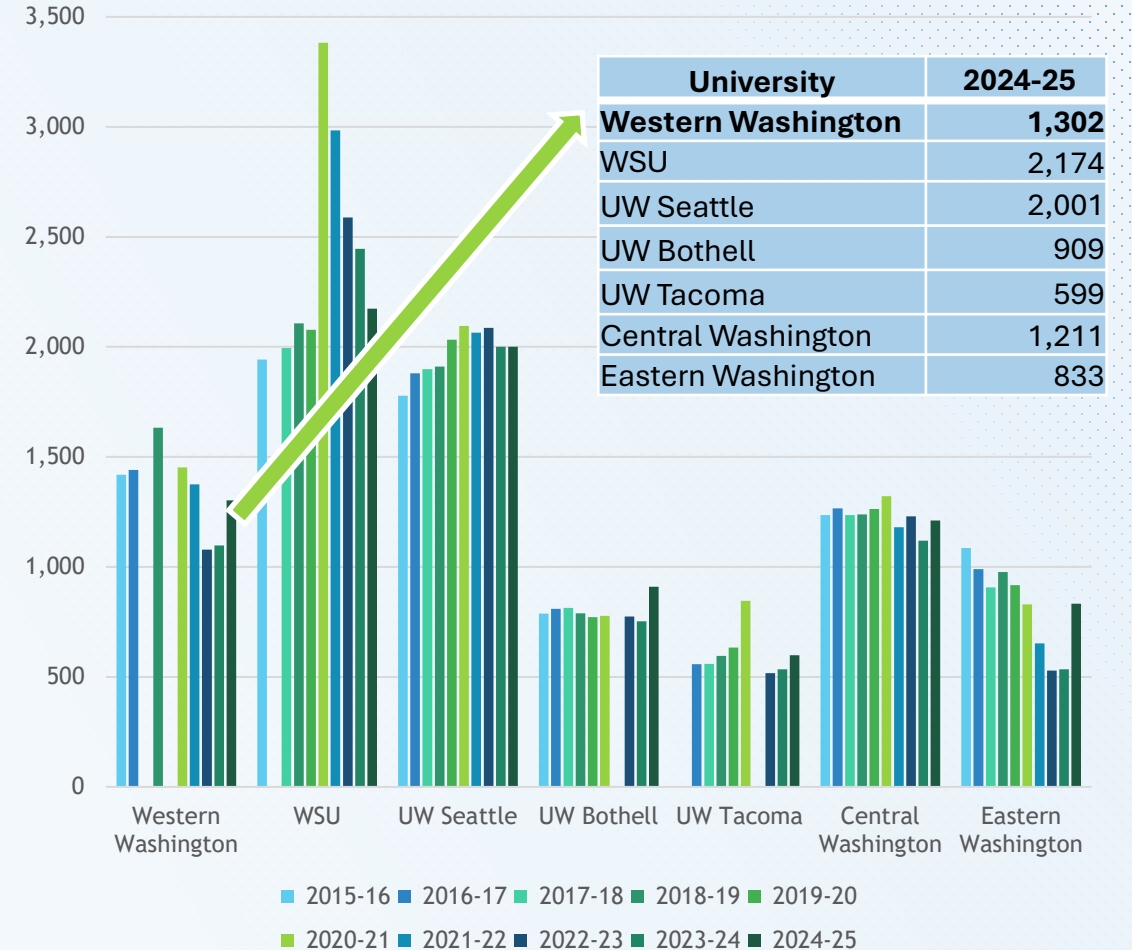
Student Scholarships

2024 \$258,000 Awarded
 2025 \$263,848 Awarded
 2026 \$266,000 (Projected)

Highlights

- Marketing major - the 4th largest major at WWU
- CBE - third largest business school among public 4-years in Washington - recaptured!

Enrollment



Dataset from AACSB Data Direct

Wow Stats – last 50 years

Degree's Awarded by the College of Business

20,774 unique students

21,241 total awarded

Students taking College of Business course since who have registered for a CBE course that led to Banner retaining their record.

58,086 unique students

Faculty that taught the most classes:

541 classes by Lee McClain (DSCI/FINMKT)

248 classes by Mark Springer (DSCI)

246 classes by Pamela LaBorde (FINMKT)

Faculty that taught the most unique students:

13060 students, Lee McClain (DSCI/FINMKT)

7957 students, George Zhang (DSCI)

6861 students, Ronald Oertel (ECON)

Centers

Center for Economic and Financial Education

Director: Adam Wright

Washington Economics Symposium

46 registrants and about 40 attendees, including 14 (non-WWU) educators

Attendees: WCC, Kalama Middle School, PSD 401, WSU, Island County Juvenile Detention, Coupeville Open Academy, Fairhaven Middle School, Skagit Valley College, Bellingham High School, Sedro Woolley SD, Sumner-Bonney Lake SD, and Concrete High School

Center for Economic and Business Research

Directors: James McCafferty & Hart Hodges

Hosts: *Puget Sound Economic Forecaster*—quarterly forecasts for King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish

Consulting projects throughout the state and beyond

Recent presentations to Pacific Northwest Ports Association, Kitsap Economic Development Association, Snohomish Economic Development Association

Center for Economic Operations Research and Management Science

Director: George Zhang

Bellingham Symposium on Modeling and Data Analytics

Co-Host peer-reviewed journal *Queueing Models and Service Management*

Developing collaborative relationships with European institutions: University of Hamburg, Technical University of Munich; University of Southampton, Durham University, Kent University; and universities in Italy, Switzerland, Denmark, and Spain.

Center for Innovation and Education

Director: Assoc. Dean Steve Smith

Awards: Allette and Cayden Franklin Excellence in Teaching Award

For development of learning materials, innovative teaching methods, and other teaching-related initiatives.

Charged with managing innovations in education through externally funded opportunities (e.g., NSF Translational Research Submission)

Research

A* Research Papers

ACCT: Liu, Z. (2025). Evaluating environmental policy effectiveness on power structure: Insights from China's power sector regulations. *Energy Economics*, 152.

FIN: Wehrly, E., Karpoff, J. M., Schonlau, R. (2022). Which antitakeover provisions deter takeovers? *Journal of Corporate Finance*, 75.

ACCT: Cheng, C.S. Agnes, Li, S., Zhang, E. X. (2020). Operating Cash Flow Opacity and Stock Price Crash Risk. *Journal of Accounting and Public Policy*, 39(3).

Peer Journal Ranking	Count of Publications 2016-2026
A*	17
A	49
B	37
C	16

A* Research Papers

OPS: Zhang, Z., Chien, Y., Yin, X. (2019). On optimal preventive-maintenance policy for generalized Polya process repairable products under free-repair warranty. *European Journal of Operational Research*, 279(1), 68-78.

MIS: Chen, X., Wu, D., Chen, L. (2018). Sanction Severity and Employees' Information Security Policy Compliance: Investigating mediating, moderating, and control variables. *Information & Management*.

MGMT: Warren, M. A., Donaldson, S. I., Lee, J. Y., Donaldson, S. I. (2019). Reinvigorating research on gender in the workplace using a positive work and organizations perspective. *International Journal of Management Reviews*.

MKT: Mu, J., Bao, Y., **Sekhon, T.,** Qi, J., **Love, E.** (2018). Outside-in marketing capability and firm performance. *Industrial Marketing Management*.

MGMT: Thomas, N., Rochford, K., Keimei, S., Stephens, J. P., **Kanov, J.** (2018). Experiential Organizing: Pursuing Relational and Bureaucratic Goals Through Symbolically and Experientially Oriented Work. *Academy of Management Review*, 43(4), 749-771.

MIS: Li, J., Li, X., Zhu, B. (2016). User opinion classification in social media: A global consistency maximization approach. *Information & Management*, 53(8), 987-996.

Faculty Highlights



Associate professor of Economics Jason Query spent his Fulbright year teaching at Kwansai Gakuin University and Kobe Women's University in the Kansai Region of Honshu, Japan's largest island. Jason's research focuses on the infrastructure of trade, and he teaches microeconomics, international economics, international trade and sports economics.

Professor Meg Warren selected for the Fulbright Specialist Roster. Meg's three-year appointment to this competitive program makes her eligible to collaborate with institutions around the world. She is a positive organizational psychologist specializing in allyship and well-being across cultures.



Hart Hodges, associate professor of Economics and director of WWU's Center for Economic & Business Research, has been appointed by Governor Bob Ferguson to the Washington State Health Care Authority's Health Care Cost Transparency Board. This volunteer board brings together experts from across the state to improve transparency in health care spending.

Alumni Highlights

WWU, MBA alumna and cofounder of Goodwinds Composites, Amelia Cook, recognized for her entrepreneurship, service and leadership! Awarded Enterprising Woman of the Year from Enterprising Women, for her leadership and innovation.



CBE Community Lecture welcomes Stephan Aarstol, founder of Tower Paddle Boards and author of “The Five-Hour Workday” and Kelly Andrews, founder of Fairhaven Health and majority owner of Chuckanut Bay Distillery for an engaging discussion on entrepreneurship, innovation, and community impact on Wednesday, April 22nd.

John Vlastelica, 1992 Business Administration alumni, leveraged his passion for entrepreneurship and business to start his own training company which has allowed him to travel to 30 countries and work with hundreds of amazing companies including Google, PepsiCo, Disney, Uber, Target, Starbucks and Amazon just to name a few.



Student Highlights



Students in an experiential marketing class planned and participated in a handful of networking-style events designed to connect Western alumni with current Finance and Marketing students.



Team "Phantom Workers" won first place in the 2025 Boeing Northwest Case Competition!"
"Boeing made a point of telling us that the overall average quality of work coming from our teams was the highest all around."

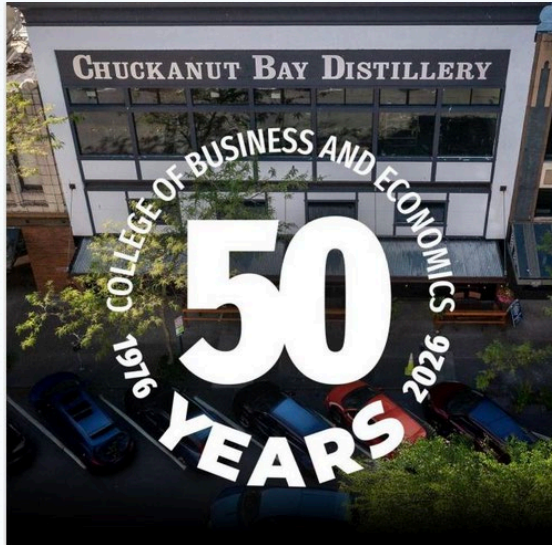


Western Washington University's DECA students achieved outstanding results at the Washington State Collegiate DECA Competition, held at Columbia Basin College in Pasco on March 7.

Challenges / Threats

- Competitive landscape for recruiting students
- Resource reductions
- It's difficult to be nimble as a public institution
- External landscape and forces
- Fundraising

**Now is the time to form new and renew
existing connections to kick-off the next 50
years!**



**A
Conversation
with Alumni
Entrepreneurs**

Celebrating CBE's 50th *with Community*

Engaging community and regional partners to say thanks!

Celebrating CBE's 50th *with Partners*

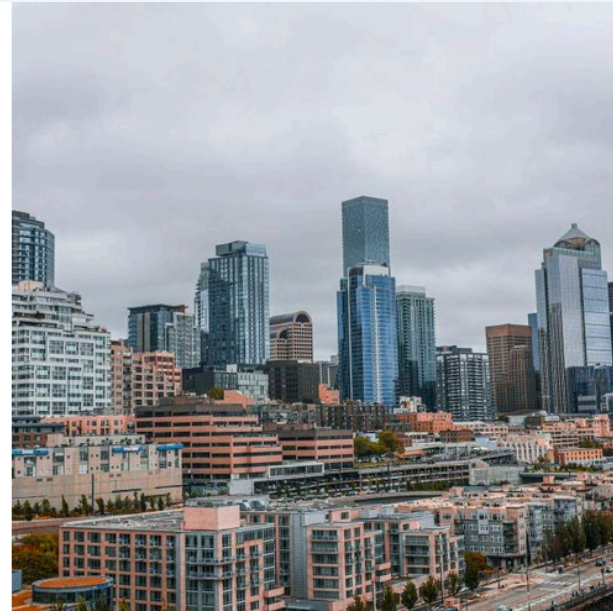
Having fun and raising scholarship funds.



**CBE Viking
Classic Golf
Tournament:
Oct. 2, 2026**

Celebrating our 50th *with Alumni & Industry*

The culminating event that showcases CBE expertise and opportunities with a mini-conference agenda and alumni keynote speaker.



**Fall Summit
in Seattle**

The Next 50

In the Works

New Programming and Student Services

First mover in AI Education and Skill Development

Upcoming

Value Oriented Programming

Be Recognized as a Business Incubator

Long-term

Leader in AI Education and Skill Development

The Best Business & Economics Career Services in the Pacific Northwest

Partner and Economic Facilitator of Small Business & Entrepreneurship for the Region

Largest 4-year Public Business School in Washington State

New Programming and Student Services

2026

Expanding Student Success Center Engagement
Finance Department and Marketing Department
Direct-Admit-to-Major for Fall admitted students
Embracing CBE Freshman (Honors College model)

Applied Career Service Student Fee
Applied NSF Advancing Translational Research

Supporting Development of Woodring's Educational Leadership
Program with Muckleshoot Tribal College

On the Horizon in CBE
Moving from Concentrations → Majors



SSC HIGHLIGHTS FALL 2025

15,000+ Individual visits to the
SSC during fall quarter

85.7%
of students agree
they feel a sense of
belonging in the CBE
because of the SSC.



CONFIDENCE AT THE CAREER FAIR OVER 50 CBE STUDENTS ATTENDED

CBE students made up over one third of the attendance at this quarter's career fair. Many utilized professional clothing from the career closet rack provided outside the SSC in preparation for the fair.

PEER MENTORS

20 MENTEE - MENTOR PARTNERSHIPS
Thanks to Accounting for Funding our 2nd annual Peer
Mentor Program



**CBE TABLING
AT WOMEN'S
VOLLEYBALL
GAME**
\$100 raised towards
the SSC Food
Pantry

**LUNCH WITH
YOUR DEANS** **40+ Students**
RECORD BREAKING
ATTENDANCE THIS QUARTER

**DEGREE
MAPS**
Standardized
degree maps for
each CBE major,
readily accessible
for students.



AI-Related Events @CBE

IT Leadership (ITL) & Center for Economics & Financial Education (CEFE)

SEMINAR: AI IN HIGHER EDUCATION – INNOVATION & INTEGRITY

FRIDAY, MAY 24TH | 12:30 – 2:00 PM | PH 447

AGENDA & HIGHLIGHTS

EXPERT PRESENTATIONS & PANEL DISCUSSION: Featuring Dr. Bedl and Dr. U. followed by an open Q&A.

HOSTED BY ITL & FREE PIZZA: Organized by the IT Leadership Program in the DSCI Department.



INNOVATION & OPPORTUNITIES

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENHANCED LEARNING: Exploring how Generative AI can transform teaching and educational practices.

ASSESSING AI'S CAPABILITY: Analyzing how AI performs within specific undergraduate coursework.



INTEGRITY & ASSESSMENT CHALLENGES

INTEGRITY & ASSESSMENT CHALLENGES: Addressing concerns regarding traditional assessments and academic honesty.

May 24, 2024

Nov 18, 2025

THRIVING IN THE AI ERA

SKILLS FOR TODAY'S JOB MARKET

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 18TH
4:00-5:30pm Miller Hall 138

Moderator - Dr. Adam Wright, CEFE Director and Associate Professor of Economics

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JOIN WWU ALUMNI AND INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS AS THEY SHARE:

- How AI is transforming work
- Skills most valued by employers
- How to leverage AI as a tool

MILLER HALL 138
Panel Discussion
4:00-5:30pm

MILLER HALL COLLABORATIVE SPACE
Refreshments 5:30-6:00pm
Networking 6:30-8:00pm

Feb 12, 2026

ZERO TO APP

AI INNOVATION PRINCIPLES IN ACTION WITH SOREN KAPLAN

DATE
Thursday
February, 12th

TIME
4:00-5:00 pm

LOCATION
Academic West
210

SOREN KAPLAN
AI ENTREPRENEUR, FOUNDER OF INNOVATIONPOINT AND AUTHOR OF EXPERIENTIAL INTELLIGENCE

JOIN AI ENTREPRENEUR SOREN KAPLAN FOR A TALK ON FUTURE SKILLS AND A LIVE DEMONSTRATION OF BUILDING AN AI APPLICATION FROM SCRATCH

- DEVELOP YOUR EXPERIENTIAL INTELLIGENCE (XQ), AND SET YOURSELF APART IN TODAY'S JOB MARKET
- EXPAND YOUR PRACTICAL AI FLUENCY WITH A REAL-TIME APP CREATION DEMONSTRATION IN REPLIT
- LEARN HOW TO LEVERAGE YOUR HUMAN EXPERIENCES AND AI KNOWLEDGE TO BECOME AN ENTREPRENEUR

Feb 12, 2026

ITL WORKSHOP SERIES ON PRACTICAL AI IN BUSINESS

WORKSHOP 1: AGENTIC AI

EARN A CBE BADGE!

- Welcome to all CBE students and faculty
- Learn about agentic AI.
- Demo of AI agents for practical use.
- Hands-on tutorial of building Gemini Gems.

Parks Hall 210
February 12th, 2026
5:00-6:30 pm
FREE FOOD!

Limited Seats Available (ED ONLY)! Register ASAP to save a seat!

Mar 12, 2026

What AI Is (and What It Isn't) Between Hype and Fear

THURSDAY, MARCH 12
4PM-5PM

AW 210

Explore AI not as magic or apocalypse, but as a socio-technical system shaped by **data, governance, and culture**. Through **clear technical insights and live demos**—from large language models to agentic workflows—this keynote re-frames the real question: **Not "Will AI replace us?" but, "What institutions will we build around AI—and who decides what "good" looks like?"**

SPEAKER

MAX BARANONA
WWU Visiting Professor and Consultant

Professor of Digital Transformation & AI Integration, International Business and Marketing, and Intercultural Communication and Management at Western Washington University in the U.S. and Université de Montpellier (UM-IAE) and Montpellier Business School (MBS), in France.

Moving forward

Decision Sciences

MIS 201 – Intro to AI in Business: AI Literacy

MIS 433 – Programming Skills for Business Analytics

MIS 434 – Applied Text Analytics for Business

MIS 432 – AI in Business: Understanding and Building AI Systems for Business Value

Management

ENTR 474 / MGMT 474 – Adaptive Leadership and Innovation Skills in the Age of AI

Marketing

MKTG 488 – Topics in Marketing: AI in Marketing

MBA

MBA 534 – Seminar in Marketing: Intro to AI

WWU Honors Seminar

What AI Is (And What It Isn't): Between Hype and Fear

In the Works / Future

- Motivation - CBE Strategic Priority 1, Initiative 1: Career readiness and Initiative 4: State of the Art Curriculum
- Recently applied for Department of Education Grant Artificial Intelligence Education and Innovation Center (AIEIC)
- Initiated CBE AI and Digital Skills Taskforce to evaluate the skills that graduates need to get jobs and assess what we are offering.
- **Looking for funding/pathways in which we can offer consistent, robust programming that has the experiential elements to prepare students and make a positive impact on society.**

In the Near Term

Upcoming

Value Oriented Programming

- ❖ Strategically manage our partnerships for programs, research, teaching, and outcomes
- ❖ Elevate our centers, programs and identity

Be Recognized as a Business Incubator for our Region (e.g., Kitsap, Whatcom, Skagit)

- ❖ Seeking opportunities such the NSF Translational Research grant to expand our entrepreneurship programming for the college and university
- ❖ In development, work on a business incubator on campus, with potential to support and collaborate with faculty and researchers at other colleges

Long Term Vision

Long-term

Bethe largest 4-year Public Business School in Washington State

We need:

- ❖ Scholarships for Direct-Admit through Graduation (Comprehensive 4-year scholarship funding)
- ❖ Named professorships in departments (Economics, Finance, Marketing, Decision Sciences) to champion research and outreach
- ❖ Replacement faculty to add capacity and extend our state-of-the art curriculum
- ❖ Named college that provides recognition and provides a distinguishing reputational signal that differentiates us