

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

TO: Members of the Board of Trustees

FROM: President Sabah Randhawa on behalf of Donna Gibbs, VP University Relations & Marketing

DATE: April 11, 2024

SUBJECT: **Community Engagement Plan**

PURPOSE: Discussion Item

Purpose of Submittal and Background:

In this session, Donna Gibbs will provide an update on all the ways that the University currently engages and serves multiple constituencies in Bellingham and Whatcom County, and new ideas for the 2024-25 academic year and beyond.

Strategic Questions:

1. How can Trustees appropriately serve as ambassadors in the communities that WWU serves?
2. What are some practical ways that Trustees can support the University's community engagement goals?
3. What other ideas do the Trustees have for increasing engagement between Western and the communities that it serves?

Community Engagement

Bellingham and Whatcom County



A Commitment to Advancing a Deeper Understanding of and Engagement with Place

- Support teaching, learning, research, scholarship, creative activity and programming that engages with place in a respectful way
- Support experiences inside and outside the classroom that help develop an understanding of the region and its communities
- Recognize, honor and respect the cultures, traditions, languages, rights and knowledge of the Indigenous and Native nations in the region
- Increase engagement between Western and local communities

Our Constituencies

- City and County Officials
- Local and Regional Industries & Businesses
- Economic Development Agencies
- Non-Profit Community Organizations
- K-12 and Community & Technical College Partners
- Regional Tribal Nations
- Whatcom County Alumni
- Regional News Media

Our Economic Impact

Bellingham MSA: \$ 549,583,707
Washington State: \$ 1,236,707,200



- Based on expenditure data for FY 2022
- Last economic report conducted in 2018
- Includes capital and student expenditures, tourism, payroll, impact outcomes of SBDC and recent graduate salaries
- Does not quantify technology transfer, support of the surrounding community, and the promotion of an educated workforce

Where We Serve

- Vice Chair, Bellingham Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Board member, Economic Alliance of Snohomish County
- Member, Economic Development Alliance of Skagit County
- Board member, Downtown Bellingham Partnership
- Program Committee, Bellingham City Club
- Board member, Bellingham Whatcom County Tourism
- Representative, Bellingham Restaurant & Bar Association
- Member, Mayor's Neighborhood Advisory Commission
- Chair, Bellingham Whatcom County Commission Against Domestic Violence
- Founding member, Whatcom County Business and Commerce Advisory Committee
- Impact Investing Committee, Whatcom Community Foundation
- Member, Team Whatcom
- Associate member, Small Cities Caucus
- Leadership member, Latino Advocacy & Leadership Association
- Board member, Chuckanut Health Foundation
- Ex-officio board member, Bellingham Festival of Music
- Education Committee, Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians

Strengthening City & County Relations



Monthly meetings and social gatherings with the President, Bellingham Mayor and Whatcom County Executive

Annual update presentations with Bellingham City Council, Whatcom County Council and Small City Mayors Caucus

Collaborate with the COB on the House of Healing Longhouse

Mayor's Neighborhood Advisory Commission and surrounding neighborhood associations

Bellingham City Club program committee

Collaborate with COB on important communications and sensitive issues

Successful Collaborations with the Downtown Bellingham Partnership



Increasing Access, Expanding Economic Opportunity and Success



Expand the SBDC multilingual advising service



Continue to partner with Washington APEX Accelerator to host monthly clinics for small businesses interested in government contracting



SBDC and WWU Business Services continue to collaborate on bringing more local vendors to WWU



Chair the Bellingham Whatcom County Commission Against Domestic Violence

Increasing Collaborations with K-12 and CTC Partners

- Collaborate on funding and presentation of community-wide cultural celebrations
- Connect local CTC partners with WWU Multicultural Center events opening a pathway to future partnerships and student recruitment



Strengthening Whatcom County Alumni and Donor Engagement

- Continue existing engagement events:
 - Western Engaged webinars
 - Scholarship Award dinners and Salmon BBQs
 - Northwest Washington Fair
 - Night at the Bellingham Bells
 - Bellingham Festival of Music
 - Cascadia International Women's Film Festival
- Alumni events in conjunction with Athletics
- Utilize new software to encourage alumni to offer career advice and mentoring to students

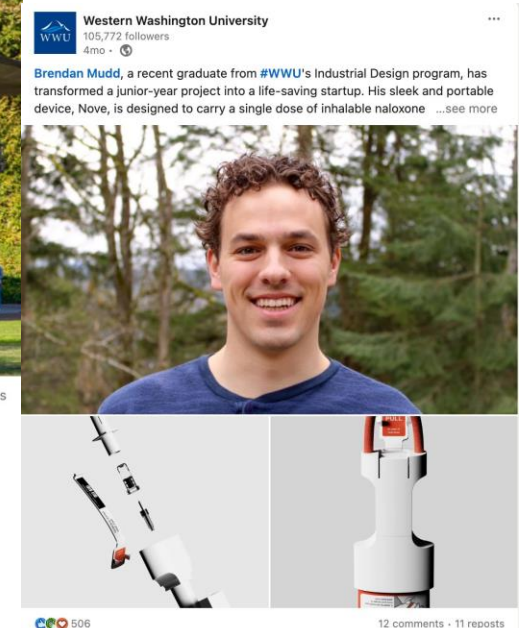
Supporting Community Engagement Through Proactive Media Outreach

- Local coverage: >10 stories secured per quarter
- 2-3 news releases distributed per month
- Grow LinkedIn organic impressions to 2.0 million (18%+ YOY)
- FB/Instagram organic impressions to 9.5 million (10%+ YOY)
- Explore more strategic boosting (paid) efforts on social channels



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#WWU has been named a Fulbright Top Producing Institution by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, with Western sitting atop the national list for Fulbright Scholars – faculty member: ...see more



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Brendan Mudd, a recent graduate from #WWU's Industrial Design program, has transformed a junior-year project into a life-saving startup. His sleek and portable device, Nove, is designed to carry a single dose of inhalable naloxone ...see more

506
12 comments · 11 reposts

Supporting Regional Disaster Recovery Efforts

- COVID-19 response in 2020-21
- 2021 Nooksack River flood response
- Advocated for > \$10M in business recovery funding from the state legislature, resulting in 78 grants to Whatcom Co and Lummi Nation businesses
- Partnered with the Whatcom County Sheriff's Office Division of Emergency Management, Whatcom Community Foundation and Port to support businesses impacted by the 2023 Sourdough fire



2024-2025



Expanding Partnerships with Business & Industry



Reinstate a Business Engagement Committee to track engagement, outreach and event planning across campus



Develop a database of ongoing research and applied learning projects



Use board positions and membership on economic alliance groups to create connections and amplify WWU's contributions to regional economic growth

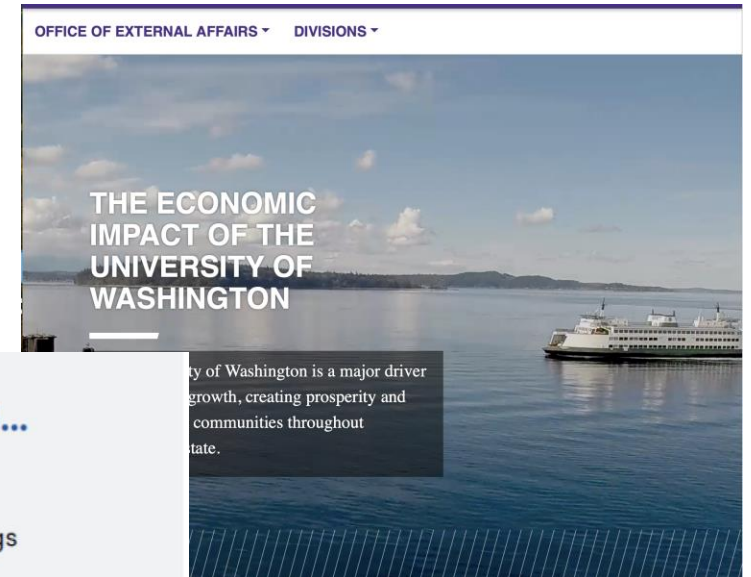
Whatcom County Business Summit



- Bring together faculty expertise to address local business and industry needs and workforce development strategies
- Explore co-sponsorship with Chamber of Commerce, WBA, Team Whatcom
- Each event would feature a theme based on a survey of local business interest and would strive to deliver real outcomes, not just talk

Community Impact Website

- Using new FY22 economic impact data
- Focus on operations and research spending
- Impact of student and visitor spending
- Alumni impact
- Taxpayer and social impact ROI










Lodging Discounts for WWU Guests

- In partnership with the Bellingham Whatcom County Tourism board
- About 20 of our region's top hotels currently offering discounts up to 20% off for guests booking a visit to Western
- Working on getting a small WWU gift to offer at check-in

Bellingham and Whatcom County offer a variety of accommodations for Western Washington University guests. Most hotels offer discounts to WWU guests which is indicated below. Discounts are included in the customized links or you can inquire about a WWU discount if booking by phone. Please note that the price categories below are general estimates. Hotel rates fluctuate based on availability and are typically more expensive in the summer and on busy WWU weekends. Happy travels!

Moderate (\$125+)

 Hampton Inn Bellingham Airport Miles to Campus: 6 Phone Number: 360-872-7200 WWU Discount: Yes - Book with this link.	 Holiday Inn & Suites Bellingham Miles to Campus: 9 Phone Number: 888-465-4329 WWU Discount: Yes - Book with this link.	 Holiday Inn Express Bellingham Miles to Campus: 6 Phone Number: 360-671-4600 WWU Discount: Yes - Book with this link.	 Marriott SpringHill Suites Bellingham Miles to Campus: 7 Phone Number: 360-714-5600 WWU Discount: Yes - Book with this link.
 Oxford Suites Miles to Campus: 7 Phone Number: 360-675-1400 WWU Discount: Yes - Book with this link.	 Silver Reef Casino Resort Miles to Campus: 13 Phone Number: 866-383-0777 WWU Discount: Call to learn of the most current promotion.	 TownPlace Suites Bellingham Miles to Campus: 7 Phone Number: 360-714-9700 WWU Discount: Yes - Book with this link.	

Luxury (\$150+)

Increasing Access, Expanding Economic Opportunity and Success

- WWU SBDC teaming up with Project Equity, the Whatcom Community Foundation, Sustainable Connections and the WA Dept of Commerce to create a statewide Employee Ownership Center in Bellingham
- Develop new SBDC model for tracking success and scope of services to underrepresented communities beyond traditional SBA metrics (clients, advising hours, jobs created)

Increasing Collaborations with K-12 and CTC Partners

- Explore opportunities with the newly-formed Whatcom County Council Incarceration Prevention & Reduction Task Force

Strengthening Whatcom County Alumni and Donor Engagement

- Revise Alumni Weekend with an on-campus festival
- Partner with Downtown and Fairhaven businesses for WWU Alumni Night
- “Send-off” events in Whatcom and Skagit Counties to engage local alumni with incoming students
- Launch “Dine out in Bellingham” events and other social gatherings
- Drive-In Movie Night at Lincoln Creek
- Increase the number of Western Advocates and opportunities for engagement with state and federal legislators

How Will We Measure Success?

- Increase the number of champions within local governmental circles
- Increase favorable regional media coverage
- Increase the number of Western Advocates with a focus on regional government advocacy
- Annual survey of the number of community partners, overall retention rate of partners, and qualitative feedback on the impact and effectiveness of our programs

Questions?

