

Washington State University

Student Success Proposals Responsive to the Strategic Reallocation RFP

Description

The Washington State University Strategic Plan for 2014-19 emphasizes the University's commitment to a transformative student experience. In particular, the plan states the University community's intention to 1) Provide an excellent teaching and learning opportunity to a larger and more diverse student population; 2) Provide a university experience centered on student engagement, development, and success, which prepares graduates to lead and excel in a diverse United States and global society; and 3) Improve curricular and student support infrastructure to enhance access, educational quality, and student success in a growing institution.

The vast majority of undergraduate students who leave college without graduating do so in good academic standing (81% according to Delta Cost Project, "Measuring (and Managing) the Invisible Costs of Post-Secondary Attrition" [2012](#)). Their failure to persist is costly to them personally and to the university community more broadly. Among the things known about why they leave:

1. The biggest reasons students leave tend to be financial problems, health challenges, a lack of connectedness, or a lack of academic progress.
2. Students with GPAs of 2.0-3.0 typically seek and receive less intervention support than students < 2.0, but the 2.0-3.0 students are more likely to progress successfully when provided with assistance.
3. GPA *trend* and credit completion *trends* are among the most important signals for persistence toward graduation.
4. Although reasons for delays vary, a delayed choice of major decreases likelihood for graduation success.
5. Because degree-switching patterns are largely predictable, coordination across majors can reduce the potential for delays caused by degree-switching.

Accordingly, the purpose of this RFP is to invest in multidisciplinary strategies that will increase student retention at Washington State University and increase their progress toward successful graduation with the abilities to lead and excel in a diverse United States and global society.

Eligibility for Participation in the Research and Student Success RFP Processes

- Proposals will be organized, prioritized, endorsed, and submitted by the College Deans in collaboration with each other and with administrative support areas. One proposal can be led jointly by the Dean of Students, Division of Student Affairs in collaboration with the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education.
 - This is a limited submission process coordinated by the College Deans and the Dean of Students/Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education.
 - The College Deans and the Dean of Students/Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education will engage with faculty in the identification and refinement of RFP themes and in the creation of RFP proposals.
- Deans will involve Chairs/Directors, VPs of administrative support units, as well as the faculty of departments/schools, as appropriate, in envisioning a limited and prioritized number of focused research/student success initiatives that will be submitted within the context of college collaboratives.
- Deans will commission a number of select groups of faculty and staff to work in collaborations with colleges, as well as administrative support units as appropriate, to draft proposals.
- Each proposal submission is expected to be multi-disciplinary and must involve two or more degree-granting colleges. Involvement of the Honors College, Graduate School, Global Campus, Libraries, and administrative support units is encouraged, as appropriate.
- Pullman, Spokane, and Everett PBL is the primary source of the funding provided under this RFP. The Vancouver and Tri-Cities campuses are performing their own budget reallocation exercises based on their PBL. Involvement of Vancouver and Tri-Cities campuses in this RFP program is encouraged where appropriate and normally will include cost sharing or in-kind commitments from those campuses. Funds can be transferred across campuses if a proposal team considers doing so to be in the best interest of an initiative.

Degree-granting colleges will be eligible to lead a fixed number of proposals, with that number driven by the size of the research and academic enterprise. The total number of proposals, including both research and student success proposals, for which each college can be the lead is designated as follows, including one additional proposal that can be led by the Office of Undergraduate Education/Division of Student Affairs:

College or Unit	Total number of proposals as lead*
Carson College of Business	1
College of Ag, Human, and Nat. Res. Sci.	3
College of Arts and Sciences	3
College of Education	1
College of Nursing	1
College of Pharmacy	1
College of Veterinary Medicine	2
Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine	1
Murrow College of Communication	1
Office of Undergraduate Education and Division of Student Affairs	1
Voiland College of Engineering and Architecture	2

****Total number permitted across both RFP types (Student Success and Research)***

- Colleges can be participants on proposals from other colleges and Student Affairs/OUE, and this will not count towards their limit.
- The Honors College, Graduate School, Libraries, and administrative support units are eligible to be participants on proposals.
- VPs of administrative support units, and the Deans of the Honors College, Graduate School, and Libraries, and the Vice President for Global Campus, and/or their designees, as appropriate, will provide leadership in collaboration/coordination with colleges on the creation and submission of proposals.
- Proposals that address a research and student success goal jointly will be eligible for funding from both pools of RFP funds, although any single project award will still range from \$250,000 to \$1,000,000.
- The Provost's Office will facilitate discussion and program assistance workshops throughout the application period.
- Graduate students may be involved in and funded by Student Success proposals to the extent they facilitate undergraduate student retention and progress toward graduation.

Timeline

December 15, 2015	Penultimate RFP documentation is vetted with College Deans and VPs, and preliminary contemplation of initiatives with faculty and staff under the direction of Deans and VPs can commence.
January 15, 2016	Final RFP documentation is released.
January 15, 2016	Provost Office program-support facilitation events will begin.
January 15 – February 15, 2016	All-System sharing of RFP ideas at meetings scheduled by the Co-Provosts and VPR.
February 15, 2016	Letter of Intent due that 1) identifies whether proposal responds to the RFP for Student Success, for Research or for Both; 2) identifies the primary RFP "area of focus" and specifies the major technical areas of research envisioned if a Research proposal, in order to help choose reviewers for the panel; 3) identifies the key contact's name, phone number and Email for the proposal.
April 1, 2016	Final submissions of proposals are due in the Provost's Office.
April 8, 2016	Proposals sent to reviewers by this date.
April 25 – 29, 2016	Proposal review panels meet in Pullman.
May 16, 2016	Executive Committee forwards recommended award package to Interim President Bernardo, Co-Provosts Mittelhammer and Austin, and VPR Keane for final decision.

June 15, 2016	Announcement of awards is made.
July 1, 2016	All applicants notified of final decisions. Funds will be transferred as proposed and as needed via the annual budget allocation process. Progress on plans will be monitored on a semiannual basis.

Areas of Focus

To address barriers to graduation from WSU, the student success element of the RFP will focus on the following specific issues and can include hiring of faculty/staff, and PBL and/or one-time fixed costs for other expenses. A few examples are included for illustrative purpose but are not intended to be prescriptive or exhaustive:

1. Strategic, coordinated advising processes.
 - For example: Restructuring advising to facilitate student migration patterns among majors and provide multiple pathways to successful graduation.
2. Reduction of barriers to academic progress through curriculum and/or course design, active-learning instructional strategies, and academic support.
 - For example: Streamlining curriculum to address bottlenecks, coordinate prerequisites.
 - For example: Increasing availability and student use of academic support services (e.g., tutoring, skill development).
 - Strategies to engage and assist faculty for the pursuit of instructional innovations.
3. Increasing connectedness and community for all students.
 - For example: Supporting the adoption of instructional innovations by faculty that increase active learning and student academic engagement.
 - For example: Strategies to increase contact among faculty and students across diverse backgrounds (faculty-student in and out of class, student-student reciprocity and collaboration, mentored research opportunities, strategies to optimize first-generation student success).
 - For example: Learning and engagement opportunities that increase respect and understanding of diverse perspectives.
4. Promotion of wellness, early intervention, and coordinated provision of crisis support.
 - For example: Coordinated support systems to prevent/address students in crisis.

Award Details

- Approximately \$2 million is available for funding.
- Awards will range from \$250,000 to \$1,000,000.
- The cost of benefits will need to be accounted for in the budgets of proposals that involve hiring faculty/staff.
- Proposals can be made for PBL and/or one time or fixed-term funds.
- Proposals for which colleges provide some degree of matching funds will be accorded additional positive weight in the evaluation process.
- Funding for approved proposals may in some cases be managed centrally rather than by the Colleges.

All campuses can participate in proposals, with some matching funding expected by Tri-Cities and Vancouver Campuses for participation.

Deliverables and Outcomes to Consider in this RFP

Strategic Plan-Related Outcomes

- Freshmen and sophomore retention at WSU across any campus and all majors.
- Progress toward graduation (any/all levels and groups).

Additional value benchmarks:

- Reversing negative term-by-term GPA trends.
 - For example: Improved success rates in foundational courses with evidence of consistent achievement of learning goals and improved performance in the “next course” in the curriculum.
- Earlier average certification of major.

Application Instructions

- Letters of Intent and proposals should be sent to Kristina Peterson-Wilson (kpeterson2@wsu.edu).
- Letter of Intent due February 15 should 1) identify whether proposal responds to the RFP for Student Success, for Research or for Both; 2) identify the primary RFP “area of focus” and specify the major technical areas of research envisioned if a Research proposal, in order to help choose reviewers for the panel; 3) identify the key contact’s name, phone number and email for the proposal. The Letter of Intent can be submitted in the form of an email.
- Proposal not to exceed 10 pages, recommended font size 11 for Times New Roman (or equivalent), 1” margins on all sides.
- Guidelines for the content of the narrative are in Appendix 1.
- Proposal components:
 - Each proposal should focus on one Student Success strategy that is specific, achievable at scale, and inspirational, the resolution of which would have significant impact. Proposals should clearly articulate a plan that is compelling and multi-disciplinary and that will be or can be replicated across units/locations for Institution-wide impact.
 - Other elements include strong evidence base for proposed strategies/methodology, such as through use of predictive analytics tools (e.g. Student Success Legacy and Student Success Campus); demonstrated ability of the team to execute the proposal at scale and in a timely fashion; methodology and approach that clearly addresses one or more of the Student Success issues in this RFP; an assessment plan.
 - Plans may generate additional outside financial support or establish/demonstrate a strong capacity for public engagement and outreach to underserved communities locally, nationally, or internationally through ongoing partnerships.
 - Plans should include a description of student involvement, such as opportunities for undergraduates to connect with tenure-track faculty in foundational courses and facilitation of increased understanding and positive interactions across diverse groups.
 - Budget and budget justification for all proposals: 2 pages max (this will not count towards the proposal page limit).
 - Include cost share by units.
 - The cost of benefits should be accounted for in the budgets of proposals that involve hiring faculty/staff.
 - All budget items must also be labeled “faculty/staff,” “capital/infrastructure,” and/or “operating”.
 - Non-PBL budget components can have a duration of up to 5 years; PBL allocations are not bound by the 5 year time period.
 - Budgets should be submitted using the template provided.

Evaluation Process

The evaluation process will be overseen by an Executive Committee (EC). The EC will commission an external evaluation panel whose members will be assigned as appropriate to research proposals and student success proposals, with expertise appropriate to scientific, social scientific and humanities/artistic endeavors.

- The evaluation will be based on explicit sets of criteria relating to the two themed proposal categories, as delineated below.
- The criteria will be scale-weighted in importance, and evaluations will be conducted according to the criteria and their designated weights.
- The EC will evaluate and summarize the review input received from the panel.
- The EC will provide an advisory recommendation, including a priority order of funding of the proposals with rationale, to the President, Co-Provosts, and the Vice President for Research.
- The President, Co-Provosts, and Vice President for Research will jointly decide the awarding of funding to the proposals received, with the President being the ultimate decision making authority for funding.

Evaluation Criteria

(4=Excellent/High Institution-Level Impact; 3=Very Good/Moderate Institution-Level Impact; 2=Good/Limited Likelihood of Institution-Level Impact; 1=Fair/Unlikely to Have Institution-Level Impact)

Criteria for Proposals Targeting Student Success	Points*	Weight
Quality of the proposal: Responsiveness to one of the four stated Student Success areas of focus, achievable at scale, with evidence base that demonstrates likelihood to have significant impact; clear and realistic assessment plan; strength and quality of the team relevant to the proposed project; uniqueness of project and likelihood to produce publishable findings.	1-4	0.25
Ability to execute the proposed plan: Demonstrated ability of the team to execute the proposal at scale and in a timely fashion; range of impact on strategic outcomes and benchmarks.	1-4	0.25
Ability of project to generate additional outside financial support, generate internal savings, or generate new revenue; AND/OR Ability to establish/demonstrate a strong capacity for public engagement and outreach to underserved communities.	1-4	0.25
*Student involvement: Opportunities for undergraduates to connect with tenure-track faculty in foundational courses; facilitation of increased understanding and positive interactions across diverse groups.	1-4	0.10
Unit commitment (organizational, budgetary (cost share and other), accountability in annual review, tenure/promotion decisions, evidence of faculty involvement in proposal development process, etc.).	1-4	0.15

****Ratings to be used as a starting point for discussion among review committee members. Proposals will not be eligible for funding if a rating of "1" is received on any criteria.***

Questions

Questions can be sent to: RFP_Questions@wsu.edu. Please designate in the subject line: Research RFP, Student Success RFP, or both (Research and Student Success RFP).

Or you can call: Kristina Peterson-Wilson at (509) 335-8915.

Appendix 1

Proposal components (maximum of 10 pages, plus abstract, budget, references). Page guidelines below are suggested, but all topics identified must be addressed.

- Abstract
- Project aims (1 page) - Addressing one or more of the following:
 - Strategic, coordinated advising processes.
 - Reduction of barriers to academic progress through curriculum and/or course design, active-learning instructional strategies, and academic support.
 - Increasing connectedness and community for all students.
 - Promotion of wellness, early intervention, and coordinated provision of crisis support.
- Project significance to the university, and why this project is especially well suited to WSU (1 page).
- Implementation Strategy: Timeline and tactics needed to implement, with supporting evidence to demonstrate achievability, including nature of institutional impact relevant to the strategic plan.
 - Strategies/methodology, including supporting evidence for effectiveness of the proposed implementation strategy/methodology (4 pages)
 - Suitability of the team to execute the proposal at scale and in a timely fashion (1 page)
 - Assessment plan/milestones for each year of the duration of the project (1 page)
 - Expected outcomes related to generation of additional outside financial support and/or establish/demonstrate a strong capacity for public/community engagement and/or impact on underserved communities locally, nationally, or internationally (1 page)
 - Expected student involvement and other important outcomes (1 page)