

Services & Activities Fee Annual Program Review

Program Name: PULSE magazine
Program Manager: Jennifer Green (temporary)
Fiscal Year: 2021

1. In what ways does your program support CWU students? Please be specific, yet concise.

PULSE is a lifestyle magazine that aims to capture student life at Central Washington University. Its quarterly issues, which are 80 glossy pages each, inform, entertain, education and enlighten about the concerns, hobbies, problems and lifestyles of CWU students across campus and on satellite campuses. PULSE aims to represent and speak to college students and provide a critical and independent as well as engaging and entertaining student voice on campus.

2. What are your specific program goals or learning/operational objectives? How are you assessing the effectiveness of your program in achieving those targets?

- Provide experience for student writers, photographers, videographers, designers and web/social media/marketing managers.
- Provide a critical and independent student-led magazine for the campus community.
- Assessments: We assess the course quarterly to see how we can improve the learning experience. We assess the product regularly to see how we can improve what we are providing to the campus. We evaluate and measure interactions on social media and our website, as well as distributed copies of the print newspaper, to improve how we reach our target audiences. We monitor feedback on social media, our website and via emails to hear how our readers react to our content, and we respond accordingly. We attend conferences and submit student work for regional and national recognition, regularly winning accolades which confirm we are competing with much bigger journalism programs and putting out quality publications.

3. What is the overall purpose of your program and what service(s) does your program provide?
a. Are there overlaps or intersections with other university programs who have a similar purpose or service?

- Provide experience for student writers, photographers, videographers, designers and web/social media/marketing managers.
- Provide a critical and independent student-led magazine capturing the student voice for the campus community to report about news, people, events and trends that directly impact students.
- We overlap with programs that send us students to work on PULSE beyond our own Media & Journalism students. These regularly include Graphic Design (Art), Photography, English, Professional & Creative Writing, Public Relations, Communication Studies, Digital Marketing, Liberal Arts and other students.

4. How does your program align with the purpose of S&A funding? *“Supporting cocurricular and extracurricular activities and programs participated in by students in the furtherance of their education.”*

S&A funding guarantees not just PULSE’s long-term viability, but also its independence from control or interference from faculty, staff or administration. Our Media & Journalism program sets out to train students in every aspect of the media and journalism fields, and the basics of creating a magazine and its companion websites from scratch is a real selling point for a relatively small, regional program like ours. PULSE has put our program on the map of student media in the US thanks to its top-quality output. Our program teaches and our student media exercise the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States, and we represent the only profession explicitly protected by it. S&A funding allows the exercise of this crucial protection and learning around it.

5. How does your program support CWU’s mission and goals? (<https://www.cwu.edu/mission/>)

1. Prepare students for enlightened, responsible, and productive lives – PULSE teaches journalism and media skills, but it also teaches teamwork, responsibility, accountability and credibility. Students gain valuable skills and knowledge to lead fulfilling lives. PULSE is also a highly creative and collaborative environment which allows students to explore their own expression and potential.

2. To produce research, scholarship, and creative expression in the public interest – Putting together an 80-page magazine involves deep research and creativity, from choosing stories to reporting, writing, photographing and designing them.

3. To serve as a resource to the region and the state through effective stewardship of university resources. –PULSE offers a public forum for student expression. Anyone across the state or region interested in independent news about CWU can access PULSE in print or via our award-winning website.

6. Please provide detailed information regarding who utilizes your program? (*Students, faculty, staff, community? Specific demographic information? Class standing, gender, ethnicity, transfer, campus location, etc.*)

Students studying Media & Journalism, Graphic Design (Art), Photography, English, Professional & Creative Writing, Public Relations, Communication Studies, Digital Marketing, Liberal Studies and more put together the magazine. Students, faculty and staff have access to PULSE in print and online. Most of the students involved in the class are juniors or above (not all – sometimes we attract first-years and sophomores). Those accessing PULSE are of all demographics and the magazine makes an effort to represent and speak to a diverse campus community. PULSE was recognized for that effort as the first-ever student group to win the campus Diversity Award.

7. How many unique CWU students utilize your program or services?
 - a. How do you gather these metrics?
 - b. If you do not, what is preventing you from getting that data and how are you determining usage by CWU students?

We publish 1,000 copies of the magazine every quarter. We distribute those on campus and in town as well as via tabling events at the SURC and at other events. This year we collaborated with Orientation to make copies of the magazine available to new students.

8. Are there any current vacant positions in your program?

Yes – the Student Media Business Manager role.

9. Given the budget reductions taking place and continuing for the remainder of the funding cycle, please tell us what specific impacts those reductions have had on your program compared to what was originally planned and including in your initial base funding request.

We have to request funding from the Dean's office in advance of any purchases. This has so far (fortunately) not created any interference with student journalists' independence, but it's not an ideal situation.

We feel under-funded at PULSE. For the work students do on this magazine, our minimal funding – much lower than requested for this four-year cycle – has meant limitations on paid staff and tightening our belts on things like sending students to conferences, essential learning that complements our own program.

10. Are there any circumstances or challenges that are currently impacting your ability to use your base funding allocation this year?

Still hiring for a Student Media Business Manager.

11. What growth or increases would you like to see in your program in the future?

We are working on increasing our interaction with readers via social media and marketing campaigns. We have a good-sized staff and attract writers and visuals students from across campus, but we do not have enough paid positions to make staying with PULSE long-term (even after credits are fulfilled) attractive enough. We have a great reputation.

