

# University Centers

*Partnering with Community Colleges in Des Moines, Lynnwood, Moses Lake, Pierce County, Wenatchee and Yakima*

**What is a CWU University Center?** University Centers are permanent upper-division facilities located on the campuses of community colleges. Their long-standing partnerships with community colleges result in greater flexibility for students and lower costs for both students and the state. Although many universities offer programs off their main campuses from time to time, CWU has been a permanent education partner in these communities for 30 years.

University Centers are located in state-of-the-art facilities built for the specific purpose of providing upper-division education in a “2+2” partnership with a community college. Facilities include model classrooms and observation rooms for teacher education, computer labs, joint-use classrooms, and offices for resident faculty. Interactive Television technology allows CWU to teach students on several campuses at once.

**CWU University Centers are one of the most cost-effective ways to provide upper-division education** in high-demand urban areas. University Centers reduce costs by sharing the facilities and administration of community college partners. At about \$7,600 per full-time student, the FTE cost is well below other upper-division-only operations. University Centers are a cost-effective model for a state that needs to increase access to higher education in the midst of unprecedented budget challenges.

**What makes University Centers so successful?**

- **They’re close and convenient.** Students can complete all four years of a baccalaureate education in their own community. They earn a two-year degree from the community college, then simply transfer into upper-division courses at a University Center.
- **They respond quickly to the demands of the economy.** Close ties with community colleges, businesses, and the community allow CWU to respond quickly to the ever-changing demands of the job market. In 2005 the Higher Education Coordinating Board awarded more funding for “high-demand” programs to CWU than any other comprehensive institution in the state.
- **They respond to the needs of students** by creating a welcoming environment where non-traditional students can succeed. The average age of students at CWU University Centers is 30. Nearly a quarter of students are people of color. If University Centers did not provide access to upper-division education in their community, many could not leave their family and jobs to go to college.

Clearly, policymakers seeking high quality, economical solutions to funding upper-division education need look no further than CWU University Centers. Responsive to students and business, strategically located and economical, CWU University Centers are one of the best options for meeting the demand for higher education in tough budget times.

- **The Seattle Times** says CWU University Centers offer “...a broader range of degrees to more students and capitalize on the state’s strong community college network — without the expense of building and operating costly branch campuses.” (June 27, 2001)
- **The National Collaborative for Higher Education** said that of Washington’s myriad approaches to providing upper division higher education, “One — the co-location of regional university facilities on community college campuses — seemed to elicit the greatest support from educators and community leaders throughout the state.” (“A Public Agenda for higher Education in Washington,” 2004)
- **The Washington Institute for Public Policy** reminded policymakers that University Centers offer an efficient alternative for upper-division education, noting “... the growth in off-campus centers and distance learning shows that branch campuses are not the only way for the state to serve place-bound transfer students.” (“Higher Education Branch Campuses in Washington State,” July 2003).



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