

## **Academic Affairs Strategic Plan, 2023-2028**

### **Unifying Value 1: Student Success**

Academic Affairs will play a central role in supporting Central Washington University (CWU) as it creates pathways for students of all backgrounds to reach their academic and professional goals. By providing a supportive learning environment, faculty and staff inspire students to become engaged professionals, active citizens, and lifelong learners.

Goal 1: Develop clear pathways into and through the university that ensure equitable access to higher education, enhance student engagement and success, improve retention and graduation rates, and address factors that impact first-year student retention and achievement.

- Initiative 1.1: Working with high schools and community colleges, develop clear pathways into the university to provide equitable and inclusive enrollment practices and graduation attainment.
- Initiative 1.2: Increase retention rates of new first-year students through comprehensive, proactive, and intentional advising; the implementation of Civitas; and by following data-driven best practices to improve first-year student retention.
- Initiative 1.3: Improve completion rates by course and overall graduation rates, by analyzing disaggregated data for different demographic groups.
- Initiative 1.4: Integrate inclusive, evidence-based, mentor-supported, and pedagogically sound High-Impact Practices (HIPs) into our academic and student engagement programs throughout a student's developmental journey.
- Initiative 1.5: Expand and sustain in-demand graduate programs and certificates, that can be linked to undergraduate offerings, to serve the Pacific Northwest as a regional comprehensive university.

Goal 2: Academic Affairs will integrate and elevate culturally sustaining practices into the learning environment. We will provide opportunities for faculty and staff to increase their awareness of the impact of culturally relevant factors and circumstances that may impact a student's experience. We will work to ensure the holistic well-being of all students.

- Initiative 2.1: With input from faculty, develop and implement a comprehensive faculty development program focusing on inclusive pedagogy, culturally responsive teaching practices, and curricula incorporating diverse perspectives and experiences.
- Initiative 2.2: Working with teams across the university, analyze the issues of food and housing insecurity and their impact on student learning, retention, and equity.
- Initiative 2.3: Increase access and utilization of student health and wellness support services.

- Initiative 2.4: Expand access to financial literacy and financial coaching services for all students through a partnership between the Financial Wellness Center, the Center for Financial Planning and Well-Being, and academic programs.
- Initiative 2.5: Ensure that academic support services are easily accessible; conduct outreach campaigns to reach students who may not be aware of them.

## **Unifying Value 2: Academic and Scholarly Success**

Academic Affairs will ensure excellence in student learning through its support for continuous quality improvement in academics and scholarship. We will use direct outcomes assessment to review and improve student learning. We will also support faculty and student scholarship and creative expression to connect departments with their scholarly and creative communities.

Goal 1: Academic Affairs will engage in continuous quality improvement of its programs through direct assessment of general education and program outcomes. The knowledge gained through assessment will be used to improve student learning as well as the processes used to measure student achievement.

- Initiative 1.1: Create and implement a culture of assessment and accreditation to continuously improve student learning in general education, majors, honors, and graduate programs across the university.
- Initiative 1.2: Take action to identify student achievement gaps and provide support to faculty in addressing them.
- Initiative 1.3: Faculty will review the curriculum regularly to assess its relevance and work to remove any unnecessary obstacles or barriers to student success.
- Initiative 1.4: Report publicly on the success of our students and academic programs.

Goal 2: Academic Affairs will cultivate a culture of scholarly engagement to advance knowledge, support creative expression, and participate in community research. Student scholarship, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, will be encouraged using a responsive, holistic approach.

- Initiative 2.1: Provide time, resources, and support to encourage faculty members to engage in innovative and novel research or creative expression to contribute to CWU's reputation and academic standing.
- Initiative 2.2: Through mentorship, collaboration, and funding, support student scholarship and creative expression at undergraduate and graduate levels. Through forums such as the Symposium of University Student Research and Creative Expression (SOURCE), provide educational opportunities that show students how to conduct, apply, and present research across different disciplines.

- Initiative 2.3: To strengthen research capacity at CWU, expand support for faculty and students related to grants and sponsored projects' submissions, compliance, and management. Generate onboarding opportunities for new faculty and students regarding grant applications.

## **Core Value 1: Engagement**

Academic Affairs will create an inclusive and supportive learning environment built on varied curricula, modalities and policies for engaging diverse student populations effectively expanding CWU's engaged scholarship and community involvement within and beyond our institution. Academic Affairs will help programs to develop applied curricula and professionally oriented degrees, that paired with new teaching modalities, will be able to create and develop a portfolio of learning opportunities to boost transferable skills to enrich our students' employability and service to their communities.

Goal 1: Use outreach and recruitment strategies to address students' unique characteristics, strengths, and interests in different academic areas. Expand CWU's traditional focus to include non-traditional and underserved student populations. Develop support resources that are responsive to traditionally underserved populations.

- Initiative 1.1: Implement strategic outreach and recruiting strategies to create, support, and promote an inclusive environment that attracts and supports students from a diversity of backgrounds and experiences.
- Initiative 1.2: Develop and deliver programs that serve a broader range of students in multiple locations, including the centers. Expand our current programs to include support for non-traditional or mid-career students.
- Initiative 1.3: Ensure that curricula reflect diverse perspectives, cultures, and voices through majors, minors, specialized programs such as honors, and graduate programs.
- Initiative 1.4: Provide flexible learning options, including online, hybrid, weekend, and evening courses to accommodate diverse schedules and preferences.
- Initiative 1.5: Implement culturally responsive practices across the institution, including translating important materials and information into Spanish.

Goal 2: Academic Affairs will engage with local, regional, and professional communities in a manner that fosters collaboration, addresses community needs, and contributes to positive social impact.

- Initiative 2.1: Establish partnerships with local and regional organizations to expand service-learning programs across disciplines to provide students with hands-on experience, applied learning opportunities, and transferable skills sets, all while addressing community and economic development needs.

- Initiative 2.2: Collaborate with local and State-wide governments and organizations to encourage student and community participation in events that impact the community.
- Initiative 2.3: Facilitate collaborative research projects between university faculty and local businesses or organizations to address community challenges.

Goal 3: Academic Affairs will partner with governmental organizations, tribal agencies, and other entities to increase student opportunities.

- Initiative 3.1: Create an Institute for Civic and Community Engagement that partners with SLICE to expand community partnerships to provide students with experiential learning, internships, and civic engagement opportunities.
- Initiative 3.2: Strengthen the partnership between the Foundation, the Alumni Association, and the university community to enhance lifelong alumni and donor relationships that support our students, faculty, and staff.
- Initiative 3.3: Cultivate partnerships with the Yakama Nation and other regional tribal nations built on meaningful, ongoing consultation, collaboration, and cooperation that focuses on the recruitment, retention, and support for native students.
- Initiative 3.4: Participate in creating and implementing an economic development plan that builds a partnership between CWU and the cities within Kittitas County and with the county, as well as with other cities and counties in our region.

## **Core Value 2: Belonging**

Academic Affairs will support the belief that diverse peoples, cultures, and ideas are essential to learning, discovery, and creativity. We will contribute to the efforts to welcome and integrate diverse perspectives into our community to advance our university vision and mission. Academics will work to expand its influence in an increasingly globalized and connected world.

Goal 1: Establish hiring, onboarding, and evaluation processes that nurture a culture of inclusion for all faculty and staff, focusing on increasing the number of employees from historically excluded groups.

- Initiative 1.1: Make diversity and equity a priority in the hiring, onboarding, and retention of faculty and staff.
- Initiative 1.2: Create a process for considering the experiences of historically excluded faculty and staff and develop support mechanisms necessary for their success.
- Initiative 1.3: Facilitate and promote the work of faculty in advancing diversity and inclusion in teaching, scholarship, and service in compliance with the collective bargaining agreement to ensure that such work will be counted in professional records to meet tenure and promotion criteria.

- Initiative 1.4: Review and ensure that the University criteria for reappointment, tenure, promotion, and post-tenure review further diversity and inclusion in teaching, scholarship and service and that the College criteria align with the University criteria.
- Initiative 1.5: Promote and support interdisciplinary collaboration and public scholarship, developing clear mechanisms for affiliated faculty.

Goal 2: Become a Hispanic Service Institution (HSI).

- Initiative 2.1: Support a Hispanic/Latinx Thriving Leadership Council of faculty, staff, students, and community members to chart the path towards becoming an HSI, with clear leadership and resources, including continued participation at the United States Hispanic Leadership Institute, Alliance for Hispanic Serving Institution Educators, and Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities and a dedicated staff position to coordinate these efforts.
- Initiative 2.2: Strengthen relations with our existing institutional partners who are also pursuing HSI status. Develop strategic relationships with equity organizations, local community-based organizations, and HSIs for knowledge sharing and program development to better support underserved students.
- Initiative 2.3: Develop a plan for early outreach, targeted recruitment, retention, and graduation of Latinx students.
- Initiative 2.4: Develop a plan for hiring, retaining, mentoring, and promoting Latinx and bilingual faculty, staff, and administrators.

Goal 3: Ensure that the Ellensburg campus and the centers have a culture that embraces diversity, fosters a sense of belonging for all students, faculty, and staff, and nurtures pride in the university.

- Initiative 3.1: With the guidance and partnership of the VP of Equity and Belonging, develop and implement diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) training programs for faculty, staff, and students to raise awareness, build understanding, and promote inclusive practices across the university.
- Initiative 3.2: Working with the Diversity and Equity Center and the VP of Equity and Belonging, maintain and provide resources for affinity groups focused on marginalized identities such as racial/ethnic, LGBTQ+, disability, and internationals, to create a safe and supportive environment where students, faculty and staff can connect and share experiences.
- Initiative 3.3: Ensure that Student Life personnel at the centers have the resources they need to support the efforts of affinity groups at those locations.
- Initiative 3.4: Build mechanisms for nurturing a strong sense of affiliation with and pride in Central Washington University.

- Initiative 3.5: Recognize the different experiences (and challenges) of the many communities of students that compose CWU, including but not limited to graduate students, online students, transfer students, international students, etc., and develop congruent, holistic and integrated systems of support.

### **Core Value 3: Stewardship**

Through curricula, high-impact practices, and other student experiences, Academic Affairs will advance environmental, social, and economic sustainability in ways that support an ecologically healthy and socially just world and that honors the Indigenous peoples who have resided here since time immemorial and who continue to reside here.

Goal 1: Through all academic programs, Academic Affairs will promote sustainable practices and responsible stewardship of land and resources to support an ecologically healthy and socially just world while respecting and honoring Indigenous peoples and their traditions.

- Initiative 1.1: Support the development and implementation of a comprehensive, university-wide Sustainability and Climate Change Action Plan, which incorporates environmental, social, and economic considerations into academic programs in collaboration with the local community.
- Initiative 1.2: Integrate sustainability into the university-wide curriculum to provide students with the knowledge, skills, competencies, and values necessary to shape an equitable and sustainable future.
- Initiative 1.3: Support efforts to educate the CWU community in practices focusing on reducing, reusing, and recycling strategies.

Goal 2: Elevate shared governance and collaboration across the university and advance professional development and leadership opportunities that demonstrate the value of our human resources and build a strong, united university community.

- Initiative 2.1: Support the university's efforts to study shared governance, review our shared governance practices, and create and elevate a national model for shared governance at CWU.
- Initiative 2.2: Elevate the application of emotional intelligence, equity-mindedness, collaboration, inclusion, and deep care through professional development and mentoring centered on building a model of leadership-in-place at CWU.
- Initiative 2.3: Develop a new review process and criteria for faculty and staff that advances the university's vision and values.

Goal 3: Academic Affairs will implement a values-based budgeting model and use this shared understanding to ensure the efficient and effective use of its fiscal resources, contributing to the long-term fiscal sustainability of the university.

- Initiative 3.1: Right-size and fully fund instructional and non-instructional employee costs that support the vision, mission, values, and strategic plan.
- Initiative 3.2: Implement strategies for more efficient class scheduling, faculty workload management, and cost reductions.
- Initiative 3.3: Reduce redundancies and inefficiencies in goods and services costs and develop mechanisms to monitor and control spending in support of the vision, mission, and the strategic plans of the university and Academic Affairs.
- Initiative 3.4: Support academic programs in the responsive redesigning of curricular and programmatic offerings to support applied, career-ready, value-enhancement academic pathways.