

Services & Activities Fee Annual Program Review

Program Name: Central News Watch
Program Manager: Terri Reddout
Fiscal Year: 2021-2022

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

Central News Watch (CNW) provides students with campus news along with news happening in Ellensburg and Kittitas County. CNW also provides a channel for students across campus to share events, awards, and special activities with other students and the community.

CNW also trains students to become journalists. Many of our graduates currently work in television markets throughout the Pacific Northwest and the West Coast providing the public with information that impacts them.

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

CNW's mission is to cover the news on campus, in Ellensburg and throughout Kittitas County that impacts CWU students. Our other focus is to prepare students to launch their broadcast careers. CNW has a reputation among television stations and media groups in the Pacific Northwest for giving students a solid news foundation.

CNW posts stories on our Facebook page. The analytics show we have nearly 3600 followers. Half fall in the 18-34 age range. The other half fall in the age range of family and community members wanting to follow what's happening in Ellensburg and with their student(s). We believe CNW has the strongest "town and gown" connection of all the student media.

The analytics don't tell us if our followers are Central Students, but the majority fall in cities where you'd find Central students, such as Ellensburg, the Greater Seattle area, Yakima, Spokane, Wenatchee, etc.

Winter quarter we posted 50 stories.

- We profiled a CWU student opening a successful new taco business.
- We warned students about social media bitcoin scams.
- We provided updates on COVID testing, free masks and test kits in Kittitas County.
- We profiled two record-breaking Wildcat athletes
- We produced a rather popular story on the pre-game rituals practiced by Wildcat athletes.
- We covered the rugby, basketball, and volleyball teams.
- We introduced our viewers to new Board of Trustees member Jeff Charbonneau.
- We recently interviewed the 2022 Ellensburg Rodeo Court. Queen Sydnie Price is a Central student.
- Our reporters tackled issues like climate anxiety, graduation anxiety, along with mental health and burnout.

- CNW covered events, like the Parade of Nations and the Student Success Seminars.
- We also covered community-based stories that impact students, such as snow removal, flooding preparation, construction projects and housing issues.

Our stories have impact. Our story post on the rugby team's dedication of the memorial goal post for Henry Foster has reached over 6500 and received over 1800 comments, shares and likes. The story on Ellensburg's snow removal reached over 5200 and received 1191 comments, shares and likes.

The numbers on our YouTube, Instagram and Twitter accounts also continue to grow.

Another way we access the success of our program is through our soon-to-be graduates. We currently have three CNW reporters who will graduate this spring. Television stations have already reached out to them for job interviews. We anticipate all will have signed contracts long before their diplomas arrive in the mail.

They will join many, many graduates who already landed careers in the broadcast industry. In fact, KHQ in Spokane has hired so many former CNW reporters, they refer to them as "The Central Mafia!"

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?

The purpose of CNW is to provide news and information to our viewers and to train our students to find careers in journalism. Our mission certainly intersects with the Digital Journalism major in the Department of Communication. But what we do is put the lessons they learn in the classroom into practice in the field.

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."*

CNW supports cocurricular and extracurricular activities. Reporting and managing CNW certainly aligns itself as a cocurricular activity with the classes they take in the Communication Department. But our cocurricular activity expands beyond our department.

Covering events sponsored by ASCWU, student art shows, theater and musical productions gives other programs a chance to share their experiences and successes with the campus and community. Our coverage of sports is another example.

In all these cases, students get an opportunity to speak on camera to explain and share their accomplishments with their families, friends, fellow students and family.

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

Well, we certainly prepare enlightened, responsible, and productive journalists. Those journalists start careers where they provide enlightened, responsible, and productive information to the public. Basically, a ripple effect with Central as its center.

Our students enter the workforce with the goal to give people a voice and to keep them informed on events and situations that will impact them.

Putting together a news story that clearly and concisely communicates a message is an example of creative expression.

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 utilize our program both directly and indirectly.

CNW students have an obvious direct connection. What often gets overlooked is how often students from across campus, across different colleges and programs are directly impacted when we profile or interview them. Often, we turn to faculty members, Central staff, and the community as news sources for our stories.

Most students on our current CNW crew are juniors and seniors. We generally have an even mix of gender on the crew. Our current staff of 10 has two Hispanics, one member of the Yakama tribe, an African-American and an exchange student from Korea. As I review CNW group shots, we're consistent in attracting students of different ethnicities and cultures.

If you look in the display case in the middle of Lind Hall you will find pictures of former CNW students. Recently, an academic advisor stopped me and commented on how many people of color are represented.

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

In Fall 2021, we had 12 students on the CNW crew. Winter 2022 we had 10. This spring we have over a dozen students enrolled. We generally average 10-12 students each quarter. Some students enroll in CNW 2 to 3 times.

We could go through and count how many students we've interview in stories, but it would take a lot of time. Basically, most of our stories include the voices of CWU students, staff or faculty. The students who watch those reports utilize the program as well.

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

With Cait moving over to the SURC, we're missing a student media manager. The department has come up with a plan to combine Cait's job with the soon-to-be vacated department secretary's job.

Of course, each quarter our paid student staff changes.

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.

S&A generously increased our budget for paying student staff. To qualify to be a student manager, you must have worked on CNW for at least one quarter. Fall Quarter we had an unusual situation. Only one student was a veteran. The rest were rookies. This quarter we had two staff members. Spring quarter we enough people with experience that we anticipate having 4-6 staff members.

Taking the money that we had planned to spend fall and winter for staff wouldn't hurt us at this point. But now that we've moved back into the studio, we expect the number of people returning to CNW will bring our staffing back up to normal.

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

My understanding is the money may only be used for student salaries. That's great! It's amazing! It's wonderful! But it would be nice to be able to set aside a few hundred dollars for competition entry fees. We do some award-winning work, but we can't enter contests to prove we're doing award-winning work.

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

We've bounced back from the pandemic. I anticipate our numbers will stay stable for a year as we focus on getting the studio back up and running after being shut down for 2 years. Once we get back in the studio full-time, I anticipate the number of students enrolling and re-enrolling in the class with increase.