

## Services & Activities Fee Annual Program Review

Program Name: Community Garden  
Program Manager: Kaitlyn Flesher  
Fiscal Year: FY2024

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

The Community Garden supports CWU students in the following ways:

- Serves as an outdoor classroom and living laboratory where students can learn new skills in their own time. Clubs & student organizations reserve plots that are used to grow crops to meet the unique needs of each organization.
- Supports community health by promoting the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables that are free of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides at little to no cost.
- Helps students build a sense of belonging & community by fostering authentic connections with community members that may not have occurred otherwise.
- Provide opportunities for community engagement through volunteer service.
- Helps meet the basic needs of students who do not have easy access to affordable produce through the establishment of a Community Box & communal garden spaces. These spaces provide anyone in need with fresh fruits and vegetables that are grown, tended to, and donated by community garden members & Wildcat Farm staff.
- Staff provide support for gardeners and serve as a valuable source of knowledge for new and returning gardeners by providing instruction, offering advice, & helping troubleshoot.

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

The program goal continues to be growing awareness and student involvement in the Community Garden by hosting educational events and programming that invite students to the space, as well as attracting new students to the garden. Outreach and tabling during Fall quarter has established interest from new and returning students planning to reserve a plot for the coming growing season.

Effectiveness in achieving the set targets will be assessed by the number of students that participate in events based around the Community Garden and by the number of students and student organizations that reserve and maintain at least one plot during the growing season

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 overall purpose of the Community Garden is to provide gardening space and resources for students, staff, faculty & community members. Our mission is to foster self-sustenance, resilience, sustainability, resourcefulness, and connection between students and the greater Ellensburg community. Our hope is that each individual that maintains a plot in the community

garden leaves with the knowledge and skill set to not only grow their own food sustainably, but to teach others how to do the same. The Community Garden strives to make food equity a reality by creating equal access to the land, water, and resources needed to produce healthy, nutrient dense foods.

We share similar goals with CWU Sustainability, Wildcat Farm, CWU Dining Services, Wildcat Pantry, the Environmental Science Department, the CERM Program, and the Sustainability minor/certificate program, but no other university program provides a similar service that allows students access to a space such as the Community Garden

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.”*

The Community Garden program aligns with the purpose of S&A funding by providing education and hands on experience in an outdoor setting that is not offered by any other programs or departments at the university. The outdoor environment allows students to apply principals they may be learning about in the classroom, such as biology, environmental science & sustainability, as well as explore out-of-class interests such as horticulture, ecology & local food systems. Creativity, self-expression, & exploration are all encouraged in the garden, leading to a rich education environment. The Community Garden encourages members to interact in positive and meaningful ways, which has led to knowledge sharing and deep bonds being formed between students, community members, staff & faculty.

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

The Community Garden reinforces CWU vision to be a model learning community of equity and belonging by welcoming all students, staff/faculty and community members to come together to grow food sustainably. The establishment of the Community Box and communal gardening spaces help to make access to food equitable in the community. The Community Garden continues to strive to nurture a culture of inclusion and expand access to all interested individuals by working with campus and community partners. The addition of the Friendly Access plots has made gardening accessible to those in wheelchairs or otherwise unable to garden in a traditional bed. The Garden has been instrumental in bringing together gardeners from a wide range of backgrounds, experiences, and abilities that are all working towards a similar goal, helping students feel more welcome and at home in the broader community.

The Community Garden continues to serve as a beacon for sustainability on campus. The space serves as an outdoor learning environment, where students and community members can deepen their existing knowledge of sustainable practices while also learning new skills that contribute towards fostering a more sustainable future. Farm staff regularly interact with garden members and have the opportunity to share information and ensure that sustainable practices are being followed to promote the health of the land for future students.

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.*)

The Community Garden does not track specific demographic information so as not to create additional barriers to entry for potential gardeners and as it is not seen as critical knowledge to maintain operations.

The breakdown for how the garden is utilized is as follows:

Students: 35%

Student Organizations: 13%

Staff/Faculty: 10%

Community Members: 43%

Community Organizations: 2%

The Community Garden provided fresh, local & organic produce for 212+ people in 2024.

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?

There are currently 14 students and 5 student organizations that have reserved individual plots in the Community Garden. When including all of the students involved in clubs that utilize the space, there are 71 students who spend time in the Community Garden.

These metrics are collected in a short questionnaire participants complete to reserve a plot. Individuals are asked to self-identify as one of the following: CWU student, CWU staff/faculty, and/or community member.

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

There are currently no vacant positions.

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.

The hours available for the student Community Garden Coordinator position have had to be reduced during the winter months in response to budget reductions. While this is less consequential in the offseason, the reduced hours will impact the garden more as the growing season gets closer and more attention is needed to get the garden ready for spring.

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

There are no challenges impacting our ability to use the base funding allocation this year.

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

The Community Garden seeks to increase student engagement by hosting more educational and volunteer events and collaborating with student groups in the coming season. We intend to continue to expand accessible infrastructure in the community garden to help make gardening and food production available to those of all abilities. We plan to continue to expand more communal growing spaces to provide fresh produce to those in our community in response to increasing grocery prices and inequitable access to food.