

Services & Activities Fee Annual Program Review

Program Name: PULSE Magazine

Program Manager: Gretchen Lohse

Fiscal Year: FY2024

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

PULSE is the student-led lifestyle magazine available to the entire CWU community. Distribution points also make it available to all CWU faculty and staff as well as a large portion of the Ellensburg community. Two to four student employees make up the editorial and leadership staff. With mentorship from a faculty adviser in the Media and Journalism program, students oversee the entire production of the magazine – from conceiving of ideas and laying out the magazine, to reporting, writing, editing and photographing stories. They design pages, create illustrations, film videos, and promote the magazine on and offline. With faculty adviser guidance, the student leadership staff directs and leads a team to cover, write and assemble information relevant to students, CWU and the community. The leadership staff is responsible for mentoring, managing and leading the class of staff reporters, photographers and designers. Each student gains valuable real-world knowledge and experience in their field. Students grow through the collaborative experience of working as a team, hitting deadlines and learning about leadership and management. Students report, write and design special interest stories that aim to accurately capture all aspects of student life, both on and off campus. The student staff continually seeks to engage with students of all backgrounds by offering content in a multi-faceted way through interactive multimedia content available on www.cwupulsemagazine.com. Content includes videos, virtual reality, podcasts, audio recordings and photo galleries. PULSE continues to add to the many accolades and awards received throughout its tenure from professional associations, such as the Associated Collegiate Press and Society of Professional Journalists, in recognition of student work published in print and online. PULSE has been recognized at a regional and/or national level for its magazine, website, design, multimedia features and social justice reporting.

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

Students writing stories and producing other content for PULSE magazine learn how to communicate effectively to broad audiences, identify and properly label facts vs opinions, employ news values to select information, and apply ethical standards to the gathering of newsworthy information. Students in paid staff positions at PULSE magazine also learn invaluable leadership skills, copyediting techniques, layout design, best online and social media practices, multimedia, marketing, advertising, and media relations skills. We assess the targets through a quarterly critique, performed in class by and with the support of the faculty adviser, of the published product. The faculty adviser also conducts an ongoing evaluation of the paid staff culminating in a mid-quarter and end-of-quarter assessment of said staff.

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?

PULSE magazine keeps the campus and local community informed of stories and issues relevant to CWU, providing reporting and coverage on topics such as news, features, profiles, sports, events, community, and national issues, and much more. The operations and service that PULSE magazine provides intersect with those of the other student media like The Observer. However, the newsrooms of the two outlets operate separately because they produce different kinds of news and feature stories. They may sometimes cover the same topics, but they generally do so from different angles dictated by the characteristics of the different media: different schedules, formats, and to some extent audiences.

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.”*

All students gain valuable, real-world experience with working in a newsroom, journalistic professionalism, teamwork, management and working under deadlines. By working for PULSE magazine, students put in practice knowledge that they learn in virtually all the courses that they take at CWU.

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

CWU’s mission states that “In order to build a community of equity and belonging, Central Washington University nurtures culturally sustaining practices that expand access and success to all students. We are committed to fostering high impact practices, sustainability, and authentic community partnerships that are grounded in meaningful relationships.” PULSE magazine is a high-impact practice offer that allows all CWU students interested in it to practice the written and oral communication skills that the General Education Program aims to teach, learn leadership skills, enjoy their First Amendment rights, and build a professional portfolio for job hunting purposes. The student-run lifestyle magazine provides an independent voice (that of CWU’s students—not CWU’s Administration or faculty) that shares information about CWU and the Ellensburg community necessary to pursue the “sustainability,” “meaningful relationships” and “authentic community partnerships” indicated by the University’s mission.

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.*)

PULSE magazine is a student-run operation supported by the College of Arts and Humanities through the professional and academic advising provided by faculty and staff of the Department of Communication. The program is open to and utilized by undergraduate students of all demographics (including gender, race and ethnicity), class standing, transfer and nontransfer status. Because the courses taken by students to participate in the operations of PULSE magazine are typically offered in person on the Ellensburg campus, students enrolled on other campuses are rarely on staff.

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?

All 8,000+ students enrolled at CWU are served by and have access to PULSE magazine, which is a free publication. Between the Fall quarter of 2023 and Spring quarter of 2024, 59 unique students took COM 446. Of those 59 students, 15 were Art majors, 12 were Media and Journalism majors, 8 were Film majors, and 7 were English majors. Other majors included Communication, Early Child Development, Higher Education Online, Psychology, and Public Relations. This Fall quarter of 2024 there are 18 unique students in the COM 446. Students who take on leadership roles, which are paid positions, in PULSE magazine take COM 446 more than once.

a. An Oracle PeopleSoft (CWU's internal software) query allows the Department Secretary Supervisor to access the roster of the course taken by students who work for PULSE magazine.

b. N/A.

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

No.

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.

To curb expenses, we have dropped the number of students employed by the magazine from 4 to 2. Staff cuts significant impact retention, leading to a higher turnover rate among leadership staff. For example, in fall 2024, we have only one editor on staff, the editor-in-chief (no associate, assistant or copy editor).

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

No.

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

We would like for PULSE to grow to operate at full capacity again. If we can have minimum wage covered by our base funding, there would be more opportunity to present students with professional experience. For example, attending ACP conferences regularly.