

Washington's Critical Educator Shortage

Central Washington University is proposing a comprehensive strategy to address Washington's educator shortage and requesting \$3 million in the 2023-2025 operating budget to fund it.

The Professional Educators Standards Board (PESB) has called Washington's current educator shortage a "crisis." Although shortages exist statewide, their severity is not equally distributed. For example, the rural areas of central Washington have reported some of the most acute teacher shortages in the state over many years. Shortages are most pronounced in schools where a high percentage of students qualify for the free and reduced lunch program. Furthermore, Washington state has identified an extreme shortage of teachers who are racially, ethnically, and linguistically representative of the students that they teach. Increasing educator diversity is crucial to addressing opportunity gaps and developing cultural competence, interpersonal skills, and the ability to think critically in all students.

Central proposes to increase the number and diversity of highly qualified certified teachers and channel more of them directly to the schools with the greatest need. The unique strategies within the plan seek to provide more pathways for students into the profession, remove financial and geographical barriers, and increase capacity where it is most needed while contributing to a richly diverse educator workforce.

CWU's educator preparation program is among the largest in the State of Washington and the U.S. CWU's reputation as a top choice for educator preparation comes from a 125-year history of producing the state's best educators, leading educational innovation, and providing students the experience they need to succeed in diverse classrooms.

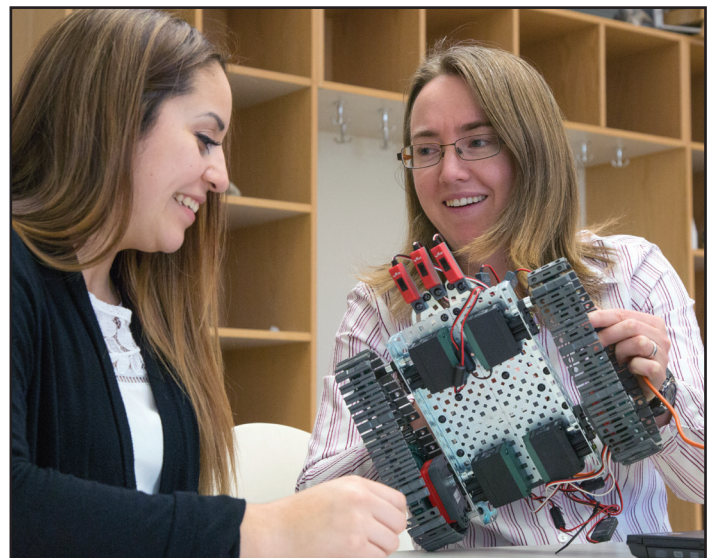
Strategic Plan for Getting More Teachers into the Classroom

Expand Programs at Diverse University Center Locations

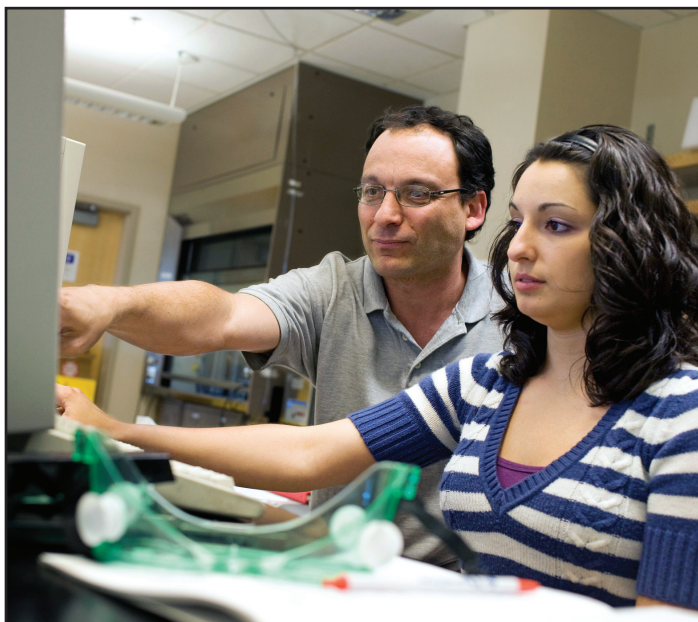
In August 2022, Superintendent of Public Instruction Chris Reykdal announced the need to expand access to dual language learning across Washington's school districts. CWU proposes to expand access to our bilingual elementary education program at two of our most diverse CWU Centers, Yakima and Des Moines. CWU-Yakima is co-located at Yakima Valley College (YVC), where over 56% of YVC students identify as Hispanic/Latinx and many school districts in the Yakima area have high percentages of Spanish-speaking students. CWU-Des Moines is co-located at Highline College, which is the most diverse college campus in the state. Programs at these Centers have strong partnerships with local school districts and have great potential for expansion to other areas.

Expand High School Teacher Academies to STEM Fields

Science and mathematics teaching have been shortage areas in Washington state for over 20 years. CWU has a unique STEM teaching program that was initially funded by a grant and modeled after a successful program at the University of Texas.



The program design includes a higher level of hands-on training and time in classrooms and has proven to dramatically improve retention rates of students. CWU was funded by legislative action in 2019 to develop teaching academies in targeted, diverse high schools. CWU proposes to develop a pathway that connects students in the teaching academies directly into CWU's STEM teaching program. This approach would be the first in the state of its kind and has great potential for future extension to other teaching academy programs.



Launch Grow-Your-Own Residency Programs

CWU proposes to launch residency programs in the high need areas of bilingual education, elementary and special education. These residency programs provide innovative alternative routes to teacher certification for paraeducators without a teaching license. In a residency program, a school district develops a "grow-your-own" (GYO) program within it and allows their employees to be apprentices of expert mentor teachers while taking classes offered at a university's teacher preparation program. By design, this proposed GYO residency program will both increase the number of teachers in high need areas and contribute to diversifying the teaching profession. It is common in rural areas to have teachers with bachelor's degrees who are conditionally certified, paraeducators who are not certified to teach, and a high school teaching academy all in the same school district. CWU's proposed model would provide pathways for all these groups to pursue teaching certification.

Break Down Financial Barriers

School districts that have more than 50% of students eligible for free and reduced lunch, "poverty impacted," also often have the highest recruiting and retention challenges. Research indicates that one of the most promising, but underutilized, policy levers for addressing teacher shortages is targeted student teaching placements. Where a candidate student teaches is a better predictor of where they will start a job than where they went to high school or college. Yet far too few graduates experience student teaching in poverty impacted schools. CWU is proposing to offer \$4,000 conditional scholarships to up to 50 candidates and \$3,000 housing/transportation stipends to up to 30 candidates who agree to student teach in poverty impacted schools with a focus on those in rural areas. This will create necessary support to cover the costs students incur to live in a location outside the service area of their primary or campus residence.

CWU's Responsibility to the People of Washington

As a state-funded institution, CWU has an obligation to be responsive to the needs of the state in areas of our expertise. As the educator shortage is felt in schools across the state, CWU is ready to step up and address the challenge. The plan is to widen the pipeline of students into CWU's educator preparation program and then create multiple pipelines out into the districts that need teachers the most.

