State of the University Address
President Jim Wohlpart
Friday, October 23, 2026
9:00 AM -3:30 PM in the SURC Ballroom

Slide 1: Title Slide

- Welcome
- Gratitude
  - Our SURC staff, Cherie Wilson, Sam Williams, Ryan Jack and all their staff.
  - Maury Weber a genius at all things live streaming; he has helped us connect with our faculty and staff who work virtually;
  - Chef Joe, Dustin, Shannon, Sonora and all our dining and catering staff!
- Event Organization: Lauren Zeutenhorst and Taylor Sivak

  Please join me in thanking everyone who played a part in today's experience.

Slide 2: Agenda

9:00-9:30	Welcome – report on Accountability Data
9:30-10:45	"Advancing Equity and Belonging for All" Keynote Speaker: Paulette Granberry Russell
10:45-11:00	Break
11:00-12:00	Groupwork – Revising CWU's Strategic Plan
12:00-1:00	Lunch
1:00-3:00	"Shared Equity and Belonging as an Operational Framework for the University and for the Strategic Plan" Ángel Gonzalez and Elizabeth Holcombe
3:00-3:30	Closing Remarks – Jim Wohlpart

Slide 3: Where are we going? (Vision)

- On Friday, May 16, 2025, Board of Trustees approval
- Our Vision statement includes the recognition that we must "be a model learning community" if we want to realize this aspirational state. That means we must build our capacities for self-reflection, learning, and growing.
- I want to recognize that change is hard. Change includes loss, for it includes learning how to give up our usual ways of doing things and to show up in new ways. Our focus on learning together as a community is the key to our ability to thrive in a time when higher education is endangered and threatened. Our willingness to learn, grow, and change will allow us to live into a bright future.
- "Access and Opportunity"

Slide 4: How will we do it? (Mission)

We are committed, as a community, to "fostering **high impact practices**, **sustainability**, and **authentic community partnerships** that are grounded in meaningful relationships."

- Work of faculty and staff with students outside the classroom; SOURCE
- Capital Projects/EcoGeothermal Plant and Curriculum (Susan Kaspari)
- Tribal Relations work – Zoe, Vi, N'chelohan, NAC wood sourcing

Slide 5: Values (How will we work together?)

Values drive organizational behavior. Values help us understand what we care about most and guide us in knowing how we must show up together to make our vision and mission come to life.

Our Unifying Value of Student Success reminds us why we are doing what we do: to open doors that allow our students to realize their dreams. This should drive everything we do.

Our responsibility is to create pathways into and through the university so that our students can achieve their professional goals. We do that through the supportive learning environment that we foster, allowing them to become "engaged professionals, active citizens, and lifelong learners."

Slide 6: Accountability Report Data

Okay, here we go. There will be lots of data in the upcoming slides. I won't spend a lot of time reviewing the data in detail as it is available on our dashboards and in our accountability reports, and we will publish this PowerPoint after this address.

A quick thank you to Jason Jones and the Institutional Effectiveness team for creating and transparently sharing all this data.

Slide 7: Newly Enrolled Undergraduate Students by Type

As you know, our new First Time in College (FTIC) enrollments were very high before the pandemic, around 2,100 students. And our new Transfer enrollments were high, around 1,300 students.

Those numbers bottomed out in 2021 and 2022, with around 1,500 FTICs and 700 Transfers. Every year since then we have grown our number of FTICs—until the last two years. Our census numbers are now in: this fall we have 1,521 FTICs (the black part of the bar) and 831 Transfers (the red part of the bar). We also have a sliver of Readmits—130 (the gray part of the bar).

Slide 8: Total Enrollment

Because of those very large new student classes before the pandemic, and the time it has taken them to push through to graduate, our enrollment has declined every year since 2020. Last fall we had a total enrollment of 8,334 students. This fall, our census enrollment stands at 8,297.

This is a modest decline of about 2%; other institutions are down a great deal more than this.

Please join me in thanking our Enrollment Management team led by Hung Dang, and all of our admissions and financial aid counselors and staff for their outstanding work in getting us through this challenging time.

Slide 9: FTIC Retention Data

Over the last two years, we involved the whole campus in an effort to improve the retention of our FTIC students. This work was supported by Institutional Effectiveness as they provided weekly enrollment reports and was implemented by advisors, faculty, our residence hall assistants, admissions, financial aid, dining, student billing, and led by Dr. Tishra Beeson, Dean of Undergraduate Studies.

And it worked. This chart shows the retention from Fall to Winter (red bar), Fall to Spring (black bar), and Fall to Fall (gray bar) of our full time First Time in College students.

Our FTIC retention continues to climb: from 68% and 69% five years ago to 74% this year.

I want to thank all of you for the work you did focusing on increasing our retention of FTICs last year. We will not grow our way out of our current enrollment decline simply recruiting new students. We must also retain them.

Slide 10: FTIC Retention Data Comparison by Student Demographic

The gap between the retention rate of our total student body compared to our students of color has been as high as six percentage points. We have been closing that gap over the last few years, bringing it down to only a few points. This last year the gap is 1% points.

Slide 11: Graduation Rates for Full-time FTICs
This chart shows our 4-year and 6-year graduation rates—which are national standards for measuring student progress. Our 4-year rates are on the left and have been hovering in the mid 30% for quite some time, up to 37% last year. Our 6-year rates are on the right and have been as high as 61% but have dropped to 49% last year.

Slide 12: Dual Enrolled Data
You also may know that three years ago the state legislature started covering the costs for College in the High School courses, our main dual enrollment program at Central Washington University. We are, indeed, the largest provider of College in the High School in the state.

This chart shows the percentage of our undergraduate students who enrolled in a Central Dual Enrollment course, most likely College in the High School.

The red bar indicates the percentage of First Time in College students of color who have taken a CWU DE course (31%). The black bar indicates the percentage of all First Time in College students who have taken a CWU DE course (29%).

Please join me in thanking everyone who works in our High School Partnerships office, which is currently being led by Director Angelia Riveira, as well as all of our program liaisons.

Slide 13: Accountability Report and Dashboards
QR Codes

Slide 14: State and Local Budget
We have been very transparently sharing our budget over the last few years and have gotten better at communicating it with more granularity, especially at the division level.

This slide includes our Budget for FY26 (the same information I presented last year at this forum with our BOT approved budget), our Actual for FY26 (middle column), and our Budget for FY27, just approved by the BOT yesterday.

Because of higher than expected interest income and salary savings, we ended up with a slight surplus for the year ($931,000) when we were expecting about a $2.8M deficit. For the current fiscal year, we have a balanced budget—without including salary savings. This is largely due to the higher than expected enrollment (we had budgeted at 8,200 students) and efficiencies with goods and services and other areas.

Getting to this place has been hard work, and I want to acknowledge the way in which we have reduced our costs and our spending, even while, in some cases, we have not reduced our workload. The Board has given us a goal to review all of the work we are doing and to bring it into alignment with our workforce. Joel Klucking will be leading that effort along with a Steering Committee that includes representatives from our shared governance groups and our four divisions.

Slide 15: Comprehensive Campaign
On Friday, October 9, we launched the public phase of the Futures Campaign. This launch has been long in the planning. The purpose of our comprehensive campaign is to increase donor support and engagement for key CWU initiatives that are important for the future of our students and the university.

The campaign is about how philanthropy can transform the lives of students and their families and strengthen communities across our region and state by developing programs and graduating students who can become the workforce our state needs.

Slide 16: Launch Event

The public launch was a wonderful event, with over 400 people in the concert hall, that featured alumni, donor, student and faculty speakers. It also included performances by the CWU Chamber Choir and the CWU pep band.

In this slide Campaign Co-Chair Lisa Conquergood, joined by alumni members of the Campaign Leadership Committee, announces one of the campaign goals.

After the launch we hosted 275 supporters at a reception in the Fluke Lab in Hogue Hall, which felt like a swanky jazz bar.

Slide 17: Comprehensive Campaign Pillars

We are in the process of raising funds in our Comprehensive Campaign in three different areas:

- Opportunity – which provides support for students so that they can get access to the great educational experience at Central and to the support they need to be successful while they are here. This includes such things as scholarships like the Wildcat Promise, support for the Wildcat Pantry and emergency funds, and Housing assistance.
- Experience – which supports the great things that our students do while they are here, including such things as High Impact Practices like undergraduate research and internships, study away, and first year programs.
- Impact – the way in which our faculty, staff, programs and facilities make a difference in the university experience, which includes such things as endowed professorships, athletics, and programs like our Business and Community Services office.

Slide 18: Comprehensive Campaign Video

If you go to the campaign website – futures.cwu.edu, you can learn more about all these initiatives and priorities. You can also see a number of videos featuring our students and community.

Here is a very short 2 minute video that talk about the importance of the campaign providing support for Opportunity.

Slide 19: Comprehensive Campaign Goals

Our first goal is to raise $75M in gifts and commitments. We have gradually been building momentum in each of the last few years. Last year we raised $13.1M – the best fundraising year ever at CWU! Two weeks ago we announced that we had already raised $57M towards the goal. In the last two weeks that has grown again by $500,000 to $57.5M.

I mentioned earlier that the campaign is not only about supporting our students and university now, but also about building for the decades to come. We hope to engage more than 25,000 unique alumni and friends of the university in meaningful ways that will, in the future hopefully lead to them becoming donors as well. As you can see we are well on our way to hitting this goal already.

And finally, strong universities have strong endowments that allow us to build long term sustainable plans. In this campaign, through investment growth and new gifts, we hope to double the Foundation's endowment from $37M to $75M, while still providing millions in support of scholarships and programs across the university each year. As you can see we are also well on our way to this goal as well, with the endowment currently standing at over $58M.

Again, please join me in thanking our University Advancement Team, and all of the folks in the McIntyre Music Building, Hogue Hall, dining and catering, and facilities, and so many others, for the successful launch of the campaign.

Slide 20: Shared Equity and Belonging Leadership

Over the last five years, our collaborative work together at Central Washington University has allowed us to co-create vibrant vision and mission statements and strategic plan. As living documents, we must be ready to adapt this work when necessary, which we did with our vision and mission statement. The Board has asked us to do the same with our Strategic Plan, and you all will get an opportunity to provide feedback on this process soon.

I acknowledge one of my own central traits, which my own professional experiences have reinforced. My whole life I have had a tendency to question everything, to ask if the systems and structures that are in place are fair and equitable to all, to ask if we are achieving what we set out to achieve and, maybe even more importantly, to ask if we can achieve at a higher level.

Given that our common shared goal is student success, these questions have focused on developing ways that we can best support our students—which includes best supporting our faculty and staff. And to do so, I firmly believe, we need to disrupt some of our long held beliefs, systems, and structures.

Our work with the American Council on Education (ACE)'s model of Shared Equity Leadership is one of the ways we can do this work together. This work is not wholly new to us; it is the maturation and evolution of the meaningful work we have done around diversity, equity, and inclusion. We have created a committee of faculty, staff, students, and administrators deeply committed to taking our work to the next level. They have been reading, discussing, listening, and reflecting for the last year.

This summer, they began taking those conversations out to the university community through the Supervisor's Summit that we held in June. And they are now broadening that conversation to include all of you.

One of the pieces of advice I have been given my whole life is to learn the rules well, so that when I break the rules, I do so mindfully and intentionally in order to bring something new and good into the world. I firmly believe that this is the work that our Committee is working on and that our speakers today will help use learn about.

If you are on the Shared Equity and Belonging Committee, will you please stand so that we can recognize and thank you for your work?

I want to acknowledge that this work is nascent at Central Washington University. Our ACE colleagues have been working with other universities with great impact on this new model—and they will share with you what they are doing. They will provide us with an interactive workshop on this model after lunch.

In a moment, however, we will get words of wisdom from our keynote speaker. Paulette Granberry Russell was the President of the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education from 2020 to 2025 and has been a leading national voice and sought-after presenter on issues related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice in higher education and beyond. She retired from Michigan State University in August 2020 as senior advisor to the president for diversity, emerita, after more than 20 years advising on diversity and inclusion efforts at the institution. And she recently stepped down from her role at NADOHE.

Slide 21: Agenda

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12:00-1:00	Lunch
1:00-3:00	"Shared Equity and Belonging as an Operational Framework for the University and for the Strategic Plan" Ángel Gonzalez and Elizabeth Holcombe
3:00-3:30	Closing Remarks – Jim Wohlpart

Slide 22: Thank you!
Thank you for coming today.
Please join me in welcoming Paulette.