

State of the University Address and Strategic Plan Update
President Jim Wohlpart
Friday, October 17, 2025
8:30-10:00 AM in the SURC Ballroom

Slide 1: Title Slide

Thank you for coming today to our second annual State of the University address and Strategic Plan Update.

Before we begin, I would like to acknowledge that the land we reside on is the historic home of the Yakama people. The federally recognized Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation remain committed stewards of this land, cherishing it and protecting it, as instructed by elders through generations. We are honored and grateful to be here today on their traditional lands. We give thanks to the legacy of the original people, their lives, and their descendants.

We should remember that the land is not owned. It is, rather, a gift that is inherited. In taking responsibility for that gift, we must think of the seven generations—of how we will pass this gift forward and create a legacy worthy of our inheritance.

I also want to thank all of the organizers of today's State of the University. It takes a team to pull this off!

This includes:

- 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!
- And thank you to the folks out front handing out Tommy Bahama logo wear:
 - Kim
 - Sarah
 - Dania
 - Akiko
 - Peggy
 - Lisa
 - Vaile

We have generous donors who have provided today's shirts. I especially want to thank Doug Wood, CEO of Tommy Bahama and CWU alum for his generous support.

And finally and especially Lauren Zeutenhorst and Alexis Andrews in the President's office. The professional conference-style atmosphere you will experience today is largely because of their efforts.

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

Slide 2: Agenda

Like last year's State of the University, I will begin with an address to share data and information relating to our strategic plan. Much of the data I present is on our dashboards or in

our Accountability Report (google CWU IERP). We will then rearrange the ballroom and have two sets of four breakout sessions each. We will then break for lunch and return to engage together in two interactive workshops at the heart of our work together and the future that we are building.

The first will be on our Strategic Enrollment Management Plan led by Hung Dang and Tishra Beeson; they will share with you goals for our plan and have you assist in the development of tactics. Enrollment Management, which includes both recruitment and retention of students, is a whole campus initiative, so your involvement, feedback, and input are critical.

The second workshop will focus on Infusing Equity and Belonging across the university. This work, and the presentation, will be led by Ruben Cardenas and Elvin Delgado. This will also be an interactive session gathering your ideas on how we will go about this work.

On your tables you have two cards – one with our Vision, Mission, and Values and one with our Shared Governance; each has a QR code on it that will allow you to access the full text of each of these documents. Please take these cards away with you today.

Please join me in thanking our Marketing and Communications team, led by Emilie Hobert, for these resources.

Slide 3: Takeaways

Over the last several years, we have weathered significant challenges together and, as a result, we have become a stronger and more resilient community. Unfortunately, the challenges are not over with. With federal cuts to Medicaid and FEMA, states will have to pick up new costs. I'll talk about this later when I discuss budgets.

But I will not dwell on these challenges – for the challenges do not define us or our future.

What does define our future is our vision, mission, values and strategic plan. Today, I will report on the way in which our strategic plan is coming to life. The breakout sessions that come after this address will provide depth to many of these initiatives.

For us to truly create our future though, we cannot remain standing still. We must develop our capacity for change. We must be curious and open to new ideas. And we must collaborate and trust each other along the way. If we have developed practices and structures that build barriers and distrust, we need to take them down. Trust is a capacity that grows through practice—and we all have a role in initiating those practices.

Slide 4: Where are we going? (Vision)

On Friday, May 16, 2025, late in the morning, the Central Washington University Board of Trustees approved our revised Vision and Mission statements. As we think about how to be agile and responsive to what we are learning along the way, we must remember that our Vision, Mission, Values and Strategic Plan are living documents.

Our new Vision statement focuses us not on a theoretical future but on the actions that will get us there – on providing access for our students to all of you, the amazing faculty and staff who transform their lives. And you do this through the opportunities that you give them.

During our deliberations on whether and how we should revise our vision statement, Malik Cantu, former ASCWU president, stated that it was the opportunities that Central provided to him that made him feel like he belonged and that helped him be successful.

That focus on access and opportunity for all our students must be our north star, our statement of excellence, the place we aspire to live into in all of our daily work.

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.

Slide 5: How will we do it? (Mission)

Our Mission statement explains how we will go about the process of building our capacity to become a model learning community that advances access and opportunity. We are committed, as a community, to “fostering high impact practices, sustainability, and authentic community partnerships that are grounded in meaningful relationships.”

Can we make certain that all our students have access to the opportunity that high impact practices represent? Can we make certain that we have intentionally and developmentally created these opportunities? We will show some data on our progress with High Impact Practices – as well as with sustainability and community partnerships.

Slide 6: Values and Shared Governance (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.”

Finally, last May, our Board of Trustees also approved our new Shared Governance document: *Aligning Priorities to Advance the University’s Vision and Mission*. This document guides how we work together as a community. Critical to healthy shared governance is understanding and honoring the roles and authority that various constituencies hold.

I want to acknowledge, again, that living into this new framework will require learning and change as we let go of structures and systems that have been with us for perhaps decades.

Our Board of Trustees engaged in thoughtful self-reflection this summer around our new Shared Governance commitments and recognized that they need to change some of their own policies, bylaws, and structures. I appreciate that they were willing to be vulnerable and open to modeling this new way of showing up.

Our Trustees are with us today. Please join me in welcoming them to our State of the University and thanking them for their engagement and leadership.

Slide 7: Unifying Value: Student Success

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 8: Unifying Value: Student Success | Goal 1

The first goal of our strategic plan is about bringing students into Central Washington University, enhancing student engagement and success, and improving retention and graduation rates. Again the full text of these values and the goals and initiatives can be found through scanning the QR Code.

Slide 9: 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 1,400 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 this year. Our census numbers are now in: this fall we have 1,593 FTICs (the black part of the bar) and 795 Transfers (the red part of the bar). We also have a sliver of Readmits—about 130 (the gray part of the bar).

This represents a decline of about 1.5% in our FTIC numbers; some of our sister institutions are down as much as 10% of their FTIC students.

Slide 10: 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 8,509 students. This fall, our census enrollment stands at 8,309.

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, including our Admissions office led by Jill Orcutt and our Financial Aid office led by Kelsey Haney, and all of our admissions and financial aid counselors and staff for their outstanding work in getting us through this challenging time.

Slide 11: FTIC Retention Data

Last year 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 led by advisors, faculty, our residence hall assistants, admissions, financial aid, dining, student billing.

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 went from: 70% last year to 73% 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.

This effort cannot be a one and done. It must lead to practices and behaviors that become a new normal – and allow us to demonstrate that we truly believe in our Unifying Value of Student Success. This is not only a fiscal imperative; it is a moral imperative.

Slide 12: FTIC Retention Data Disaggregated

We also track disaggregated retention data. This graph shows Fall to Winter, Fall to Spring, and Fall to Fall retention data for students of color. You can see that the retention rate for students of color is the highest that it has been in the last several years.

Slide 13: FTIC Retention Data Comparison

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 3% points.

I don't have a slide for these two data points. Our retention of low-income students (those who receive the Washington College Grant) increased from 67% to 74%. Their retention rate is higher than those who did not receive this funding. And the retention of FTICs who took a CWU Dual Enrollment class was 80%.

Slide 14: 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. Our 6-year rates are on the right and have been as high as 61% but have dropped to the low 50% in recent years.

The Washington Roundtable, the CEOs of some of the largest corporations in the state of Washington, is currently leading an initiative to create a performance-based funding model for higher education. I was asked to serve on the Executive Committee, which is supported by a Data Committee that includes Jason Jones. Brian Jeffries from the Roundtable is with us today. Brian, thank you for leading this effort!

This funding model will be based on a set of metrics that will include such things as retention rates and graduation rates. If we are going to fare well in this new environment of performance-based funding, we must change our systems, structures, and practices to continue to improve these metrics.

I greatly appreciate the fact that our faculty and staff are already working towards rethinking and restructuring such things as advising and mentoring, our scheduling of classes, our curriculum--which is being streamlined with clear pathways into and through to graduation, our residence hall assistants' interface with students, our billing practices, registration holds, and on and on.

To do this work means overhauling our policies and practices so that we can be nimble and agile. We may have created structures that made sense at one point but that have become barriers to our students' success. I greatly appreciate the fact that everyone is learning, growing, reflecting, and imagining new ways of doing things.

Slide 15: Yakima Valley College – CWU Admissions Initiative

One great example of this type of reimagining is in our partnership with Yakima Valley College. We are working towards developing a unified process for students to apply and be admitted to both Yakima Valley College and Central Washington University simultaneously – one application with collaborative advising and guidance with clear pathways into and through both institutions. We will share data transparently across institutions and truly create a seamless experience for students.

I want to thank Interim President Teresa Rich and Interim VP of Instruction Kerrie Caveness for their vision and willing partnership in this initiative. I also want to thank several leaders of our university who have made this possible (please hold your applause):

- Monica Modrano Regional Director for our eastside centers and
- Megan McConnell our Transfer Director,
- Kurt Kirstein our Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs,
- Arturo Torres and our Registrar's office,
- Katrina Whitney our Careers Services Director – as well as
- Hung Dang, Jill Orcutt, and Kelsey Haney and the entire admissions and financial aid teams.
- I also want to thank Rob Ogburn and his team in Business and Community Services for providing a connection to the economic impact of this work.

These teams are leading the way in advancing our Vision, Mission, Values and Strategic Plan as well as living into our new Shared Governance Document.

Please join me in thanking them for being curious, open-minded, and willing to take down barriers to student success.

Slide 16: Dual Enrolled Data

You also may know that two 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 all undergraduate students who have taken a Dual Enrollment course (this includes FTICs and Transfers)—which has grown from 7% in 2019 to 19% now. The black bar indicates the percentage of First Time in College students—which has grown from 10% in 2019 to 25% now.

I appreciate the work that is being done in many of our departments, like Physics, where we are connecting our current programs and students with the College in the High School students who are taking our courses. These kinds of bridges are great recruitment tools.

Slide 17: Dual Enrolled Data

Over the last several years, the gap between demographic groups enrolled in College in the High School and Running Start courses has narrowed. The red bar of the left indicates students of color enrolled in our high school dual enrollment courses; the black bar indicates white students; while the dark red bar indicates total students.

In 2015, white students enrolled at twice the rate of students of color; we had under 4,000 total students enrolled. This last year, that breakdown was nearly even, with well over 16,000 students enrolled.

And we just got this news: Central Washington University is third in the nation of all public four-year institutions in dual enrollment.

Please join me in thanking everyone who works in our High Partnerships office, which is currently being led by Assistant Director Sarah Maes and Angelia Riveira.

Slide 18: High Impact Practices

Lastly, data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) shows that over 80% of our students report that they engaged in at least one High Impact Practice while at Central Washington University (the bars on the far left—covering four years of data), and over 50% report having participated in at least two High Impact Practices (the set of bars one over from the left).

Service Learning continues to be one of the more common practices (the middle set of bars), along with internships, student teaching, and clinicals (the second to last set of bars) and senior experience (the last set of bars).

The work before us is to make these practices intentional and developmental. That is, to provide full access to this amazing opportunity, we must ask what High Impact Practices our first-year students should engage in, and how we can build off of that experience in their second year. And given those foundational practices, what can we do in our majors to take this co- and extra-curricular learning to the next level?

Slide 19: Breakout Session

If you want to learn more about our work with the first goal of Student Success, I encourage you to attend the breakout session at 11:15 to learn about what is happening in Career Services to serve our students.

Slide 20: Concluding Workshop: SEM

As well as our Concluding Workshop where we will develop tactics for our Strategic Enrollment Management Plan. If you want to be part of charting the future of Central Washington university, please stick around for this engaging workshop.

Slide 21: Unifying Value: Student Success | Goal 2

Our second goal in the Unifying Value of Student Success focuses on the culturally sustaining practices we are building to nurture our talent and help our students succeed.

Slide 22: Concluding Workshop: Equity and Belonging

To hear about the work we have done to date for this goal and to help chart our pathway into the future, I would encourage you to attend the Concluding Workshop on Infusing Equity and Belonging across CWU.

Slide 23: Unifying Value: Student Success | Goal 3

Our third goal in the Unifying Value of Student Success focuses on elevating the holistic well-being of our students, including providing access to basic needs, financial literacy, and health promotion.

Slide 24: Wildcat Pantry and Basic Needs

Our Basic Needs office over the last year and a half has worked towards providing support for students who find themselves in immediate financial need for a variety of reasons. The office worked with 94 students, distributing \$150,000 in emergency funds, much of it provided through the Washington Student Achievement Council and through the generous support of donors. The Basic Needs office this year is being led by Kelly Boozer, who formerly worked in financial aid.

And our Wildcat Pantry, which was created, implemented, and led by our students has grown into a sophisticated and nationally leading food pantry. Last year, they served over 1,000 students, with over 10,000 visits, seeing more than a 50% increase in shoppers. I want to thank Dean Sydney Thompson and all the library faculty and staff for their vision and support in providing the space for the Wildcat Pantry. They, too, exemplify the willingness to learn, grow, and think differently – and give up space to meet a student need. This is what it looks like to think institutionally and live into our Unifying Value of Student Success.

I also want to welcome Charles Johnson to the lead role in the Wildcat Pantry. Charles is not new to this effort as he has been working in the Pantry since its inception.

Kelly and Charles, please stand if you are with us and give a wave.

Please join me in thanking all of the library faculty and staff, as well as Kelly and Charles for their leadership. Thank you for your work!

Slide 25: Student Financial Wellness

Finally, I want to highlight the great work that has been done to reduce student debt. Over the last eight years, the amount of debt our students leave us with has declined from about \$25,000 to about \$20,000, and the percentage of students with debt has also decreased, from almost 70% to about 55%.

Much of this work has occurred through our Financial Aid office and Student Accounts office, as well as through our Money Savvy Wildcats initiative, which provides peer financial coaching to CWU students. They offer individual and group coaching, both in person and virtually.

If you work in our Financial Aid office or our Student Accounts office or with our Money Savvy Wildcats initiative, please stand and give a wave. Let's thank them for their amazing work!

Slide 26: Breakout Session

If you want to learn more about our work with the third goal of Student Success, I encourage you to attend one of two breakout sessions, both at 10:15. The first is on how we will advance a Health Promoting Campus.

Slide 27: Breakout Session

And the second is on the work in our Advancement Office for our Day of Giving.

Slide 28: Core Value 1: Engagement

Our core value of Engagement focuses on nurturing authentic relationships, recognizing the importance of our interdependence with the city, state, and region.

Slide 29: Core Value 1: Engagement | Goal 1

The first goal in our Engagement Value focuses on local and regional communities, including work on economic development and tribal nations.

Slide 29: Town and Gown

Over the last three years, we have been working collectively to establish partnerships and relationships across our area. Central has participated in the development of the Kittitas County Economic Development Strategic Plan and the Ellensburg Creative District, and we have built partnerships with school districts, the Chamber of Commerce, and nonprofit organizations.

This work has initially been led by Dania Cochran in her role as Executive Liaison to the President’s office and has continued with her role as Chief of Staff; Dania now chairs the Board for the Ellensburg Downtown Association which sponsored the event for the photo on this slide – a Blank Canvas Party – whose purpose is to paint more murals across our downtown.

Given the way in which this work of building town and gown relationships has exploded, Alexis Andrews has started to take on some of these leadership roles. Dania and Alexis, please stand so that we can thank you for your work!

Slide 31: Breakout Session

If you want to learn more about our work with the first goal of Engagement, I encourage you to attend one of two breakout sessions, the first of which is at 10:15 and focuses on our Teacher Academies.

I love the picture included here. This is Abner Ramos who participated in a Teach STEM academy class when he was in high school in Renton—which got him fired up to become a Wildcat and pursue education. This picture is taken during his visit to the White House as a representative of Central Washington University at the inaugural First-Generation College Student Day.

We have so much to be proud of at CWU. We change the lives of our students, their families, and communities. Please join me in thanking all of our education faculty including those involved in our Teacher Academies.

Slide 32: Breakout Session

Three years ago, we worked closely with cities, downtown associations, and county leaders to develop a unified Economic Development Strategic Plan. Since then, we have been working together to bring the plan to life.

The second session scheduled at 11:15 will focus on the efforts of the office of Business and Community Services that provides foundational support for this work. We have received generous support from our University Foundation for their efforts. I believe Rob and the folks in the BCS office are with us today; will you please stand and give a wave so we can thank you—and let's also thank our University Foundation for their generous support?

Slide 33: Tribal Liaison

Finally, I am very pleased to announce that we have hired our first full-time Tribal Liaison. In the past, Dr. Cleary and Dr. Gilchrist assisted with this work while in other full-time roles; I appreciate their foundational work in developing relations with the tribes.

Dr. Higheagle Strong is currently the Vice Provost for Native American Relations and Programs and Tribal Liaison to the President at Washington State University, a position she has held for the last three years.

Dr. Higheagle Strong brings a breadth and depth of experience and an emphasis on relationships that is critical to the work we have in front of us as we seek to understand how CWU can best serve the tribes in our region and the state.

Please join me in thanking the search committee for their outstanding work: Jenny Dechaine, Vi Alvord, Tim Sorey, Don Woodcock, and Sarah Scott.

Slide 34: Core Value 1: Engagement | Goal 2

The second goal in our Engagement Value focuses on the development of increased civic engagement opportunities for our students and on the work of our Advancement Office.

Slide 35: Civic Leadership and Engagement Corps

Over the last few years, Central Washington University has received funding from the Washington Campus Coalition for the Public Good as part of their Civic Leadership and Engagement Corps. Next year, we will receive funding to support volunteers to engage K12 students to elevate their learning and readiness for college. The grant provides funding for 35 positions that come with \$75,000 of total stipends, along with stipends for 35 K12 students.

Please join me in recognizing Dawn Harry, our School of Education Field Director for leading this effort, along with Amy Meyers and Maria Hays who have worked with our students on this initiative.

Slide 36: Comprehensive Campaign

As you hopefully know, we are in the quiet phase of our Comprehensive Campaign, called Futures. We will announce, at a later date, the specific goals of the campaign which focus not as much on a total dollar amount raised but rather on creating the future culture of philanthropy that Central Washington University will need to thrive into the future.

We are working towards expanding our relationships with alumni so that they can get meaningfully engaged in our university community and ultimately towards increasing our donor

base. This work will pay dividends down the road through increased engagement and giving, all in support of our Wildcat students, faculty and staff.

Slide 37: Comprehensive Campaign

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.

You can see the approximate distribution of the total funds we expect to raise on the slide.

Slide 38: Comprehensive Campaign

We have made great progress on our campaign, totaling over \$43 million raised in the last four years, including gifts provided before the 2022 fiscal year that were intended to be part of the campaign.

We have a great Campaign Leadership Committee that has included two Trustees: Zabrina Jenkins and Jeff Hensler; members of our Foundation Board, Wendy Iwaszuk and Lisa Conquergood; and members of our Alumni Board, Jada Rupley and Craig Sanderson. Janet Backus will be joining this team, which is also supported by Paul Elstone, Emily Adams, and Shannon Connelly as well as the whole team in Advancement. And General Jim Mattis is an honorary chair. Please join me in thanking them for their leadership.

Slide 39: Core Value 2: Belonging

Our second core value of Belonging focuses on advancing our capacities to engage difference and elevate innovation and creativity in support of our vision and mission.

Slide 40: Core Value 2: Belonging | Goal 1

The first goal in our Belonging Value focuses on nurturing a culture of belonging and inclusion for the employees of Central Washington University.

Slide 41: Exempt and Classified Headcounts

The data from our dashboards show that while the total number of Exempt and Classified staff has declined by almost 100, the number of our employees of color has increased by 36, mostly among our classified staff. That is, our staff are becoming more diverse and more representative of our student body.

Slide 42: Faculty Headcounts

The data from our dashboards show that the proportion of the total numbers of faculty of color has remained about the same, 16%, over the last five years. We are down 59 Tenured and Tenure Track faculty and 56 Non-Tenure Track faculty.

I want to comment on the reduction in the number of employees at Central Washington University over the last five years. Our student numbers have dropped from a high of 11,800 to 8,300 now – a drop of almost 30%. We are down over 150 staff and Tenure and Tenure Track faculty and another 56 Non-Tenure-Track faculty – over 200 employees. Most of this loss has been through attrition, though the reduction in Non-Tenure-Track faculty has been because of the reduction in students. That’s an 13% reduction in employees.

That reduction represents real people -- your colleagues who have retired or moved on to other opportunities, and whose positions have not been replaced. The loss that all of you are feeling is real—and the grief and the frustration that comes with it is palpable. We won’t get through this hard time by ignoring how this makes us feel.

As president I want you to know that I am deeply aware of the challenges that our situation creates—and I am deeply sorry for those challenges.

Our strategy has been to hold onto as many of our academic programs as we can – because we know that this is why students attend Central Washington University. We have also held onto as many of our support programs as we can, because we know they are essential to our students’ success.

We have two choices in front of us. Both choices require us to rethink everything—which means we must exemplify what it means to be a model learning community to get to a healthier place.

The first choice is to recalibrate our university to be an 8,000-student institution; this would require additional reductions in employees – and, I must emphasize, make it almost impossible to meet our bond payments for residence halls, the SURC, and other student focused buildings. We need to be at 10,000 students to meet those payments.

The other choice is to do what we have outlined in our Values and Strategic Plan – to create a seamless and integrated pathway for students into and through the university. The Yakima Valley College – Central Washington University admissions project is one example of that reimagining of higher education, as is the work we are doing internally with our scheduling of classes, our curriculum, our advising, and our support structures.

Rethinking, restructuring, and reimagining is something we are all currently engaged in—and I appreciate the willingness to change and to develop new ways of thinking and working together. If our Vision, Mission, and Values guide us like a north star and our Shared Governance document helps us learn how to show up together in new ways as a community, we can become stronger on the other end of this journey.

Slide 43: Executive Level Administrator Headcounts

The attrition of employees exists also among Executive level administrators which include the President, Vice Presidents, Associate Vice Presidents, and Deans. We have gone from 30 in 2021 down to about 25 this fall.

During this same time, we have increased the number of people of color in this group, from about 10% in 2021 to 36% now, and maintained a high level of women, around 50%.

We must keep asking: can we restructure our organization to streamline and reduce administrative overhead? This is hard work, but must be part of our approach.

Slide 44: Executive Leadership Team

The leadership of a community charts a path into the future and must do so adhering to the values that guide us. They must act as one team, challenging each other and insisting on listening, reflection, and learning.

The Executive Leadership Team of Central Washington University is now the most diverse that it has been with 7 of our 14 members coming from diverse backgrounds, and 6 of the 14 women.

I am honored to be a part of a group of individuals who have such rich and various histories, cultures, languages, and ways of thinking. We challenge each other on a regular basis, in kind and respectful ways, and we receive those challenges with thoughtfulness and self-reflection.

Diversity is the cornerstone to innovation and creativity and a necessary component to a thriving organization. I have a great deal of confidence in this leadership team and the leadership across the university as we learn how to lead together in new and different ways.

In this new era, with a framework of operating together based on the Shared Governance document, we have specific roles to play for the success of the institution. This new era does mean that there are changes that we must all embrace in how we have been operating.

I already mentioned that the Board of Trustees are leading the way with this reflection, learning, and growing. This also includes me. Our future success will require me to shift from balancing my time internally and externally to more of a focus on external work with state agencies like the Washington Student Achievement Council, the Washington Roundtable, the Department of Commerce, the Washington Campus Coalition for the Public Good and with tribal governments, alumni, donors, legislators and various federal agencies.

I recognize that asking our university community to embrace this kind of change includes the experience of disequilibrium.

But if we can remember why we are doing this work, for our students, always for our students, we will be stronger and better and healthier as a university community, and our future will be bright.

Please join me in thanking the members of the Executive Leadership Team who have come together to serve Central Washington University, as well their teams and those that cascade on down the university.

Slide 45: Concluding Workshop: Equity and Belonging

I would again invite you to attend the Concluding Workshop on Infusing Equity and Belonging across CWU to hear more about the work we have done with this goal.

Slide 46: Core Value 2: Belonging | Goal 2

The second goal in our Belonging Value focuses on our work with Hispanic and Latinx students, faculty, and staff. No doubt many of you have heard that federal support for Minority Serving Institutions has evaporated. Our work, which focuses on recruitment in our region, fits with

who we are as a regional comprehensive university. We will continue with our focus on being good stewards of place, though we will likely need to alter this strategic plan goal. Remembering that these documents are living documents, such an adjustment will allow us to pivot gracefully.

Slide 47: Hispanic / Latinx Students

The percentage of our Washington resident students who come from Hispanic and Latinx backgrounds has been growing naturally as we have focused our recruitment efforts on our region, from 13% ten years ago to 25% now. This shift makes it even more important for our employee base to have a similar representation.

Slide 48: Hispanic / Latinx Staff and Faculty

While our total staff numbers have declined, we have actually increased the numbers of our Hispanic staff—shown in the chart on the left. Our Hispanic faculty numbers have declined, at about the same rate as the total decline in the number of faculty—shown in the chart on the right.

Slide 49: Breakout Session

One of our 11:15 breakout sessions will describe the work we have done in teacher education to expand access to bilingual education, an important initiative as part of this goal.

Slide 50: Concluding Workshop: SEM

As will our Concluding Workshop where we will develop tactics for our Strategic Enrollment Management Plan. I would strongly encourage you to stay through the day to participate in charting the future path of the university regarding this work.

Slide 51: Core Value 2: Belonging | Goal 3

The third goal in our Belonging Value focuses on the creation of a welcoming culture at Central Washington University and that nurtures pride in our work.

Slide 52: Staff Recognition Programs

Over the last year, our Human Resources office has elevated our staff recognition programs, with regular monthly honoring of a classified and an exempt staff member, which then culminates in the selection of the Employee of the Year. The 2024-25 Classified Employee of the Year was Casey Stewart; the 2024-25 Exempt Employee of the Year was Juliana Lowe. Please join me in congratulating all of our staff who won monthly awards and Casey and Juliana on their employee of the year awards.

We have also initiated a Wildcat Way Spotlight award, with nominations coming from peers throughout the year.

Slide 53: Wildcat Way

Our Wildcat Way spotlights those who are Welcoming, Inclusive, Knowledgeable, Responsive, and Proud. We had almost 150 nominations last year. We celebrated all the nominees and the

winner on May 29. Please join me in congratulating all those who were nominated for or received a Wildcat Way nomination or award last year.

Thank you for your service!

Slide 54: Wildcat Pride – Theatre

Central Washington University is proud to support outstanding music, art, and theatre programs which are greatly enjoyed by the university community and the local community.

Over the last four years, in Theatre, we have seen very strong attendance not only of our students (the black part of the bars) but also faculty, staff, and local community members (the red part of the bars). Some of their performances over the last four years have targeted special audiences, including K12 students (see the dark gray bar in 2022-2023 and 2023-2024).

Thank you to the Theatre faculty and staff, as well as our music and art faculty and staff, for hosting these shows.

Slide 55: Wildcat Pride – Athletics

The pride we have in Central Washington University goes beyond the arts. Attendance at our Wildcat Football games has steadily increased to average over 5,000 per game last year.

Over the last few years, our football team has regularly gone to the NCAA playoffs, as have our volleyball and basketball teams. The football team is currently 4-0 in the Lone Star conference. We beat a tough 6th ranked UT Permian Basin last week 27-14. We host Texas A&M Kingsville tomorrow.

Slide 56: Wildcat Pride – Athletics

And this last year one of our student athletes, Emy Ntekpere, won three national champion titles: in the indoor and outdoor triple jump and the high jump. Her high jump was 5 feet, 11.5 inches.

Just in case anyone is paying attention, she would have flown over me. With room to spare. Like...3 inches!

Emy was named the 2025 NCAA Division 2 Women's Outdoor Track and Field National Scholar Field Athlete of the Year and the US Track and Field Coaches Association Women's Outdoor Track and Field National Athlete of the Year and the West Region Athlete of the Year.

Track and Field is coached by Jonathan Hill. I was hoping that Emy could join us today, but she has class and lab...and then practice!

Please join me in thanking all of our Athletics staff and our student athletes for representing CWU so well.

Slide 57: Wildcat Pride – Alumni Relations

Over the last four years we have also hosted our alumni at a Mariners game. In 2022 we had about 1,000 in attendance. The number has gone up every year. This year our goal is over 3,000 alumni!

Thank you to our Alumni office for their great work.

Slide 58: Wildcat Pride – Commencement

As a final measure of the pride we have been building in the university, our attendance at Commencement has been skyrocketing. This last year, almost 65% of those eligible for commencement attended, including many from the west side who indicated to us that even though they took their classes at one of our Centers, they wanted to walk across the stage in Tomlinson Stadium.

It takes a big team to put on Commencement. The volunteers are truly the key to its success.

And to host such a large team and make everything function so effortlessly, it takes a great leader. I want to recognize both the team that helps out with this event and Lauren Zeutenhorst in the President's office for her leadership.

If you have been part of the Commencement team over the last few years, please give a wave so that we can thank you.

Slide 59: Concluding Workshop: Equity and Belonging

I would again invite you to attend the Concluding Workshop on Infusing Equity and Belonging across CWU to hear more about the work we have done with this goal.

Have you gotten the sense that I want you to stick around for the full day?!

Slide 60: Core Value 3: Stewardship

Our third and final core value of Stewardship focuses on sustainability and nurturing our internal talent.

Slide 61: Core Value 3: Stewardship | Goal 1

The first goal in our Stewardship Value focuses on promoting sustainable practices in our operations and curriculum.

Slide 62: Breakout Session

To learn more about the great work we are doing with this goal, please attend the breakout session at 10:15 on our Climate Action Plan.

Slide 63: Core Value 3: Stewardship | Goal 2

The second goal in our Stewardship Value focuses on shared governance, performance management, and developing leadership. I will hold off on talking about shared governance for now; in a moment, we will collectively audit our shared governance practices as an inaugural assessment of this work.

Slide 64: Four Phases of Performance Development

Over the last year we have been working to develop a more intentional approach to developing employees that includes four-phases. The first phase, role clarity, was our focus this year with reviewing position descriptions, having conversations about role expectations, and engaging in understanding employee's career paths.

We will continue with this four-phase approach in the coming year making certain that our performance development process enriches the employee experience.

On the faculty side, two years ago we engaged an outside consultant who reviewed our faculty evaluation process and criteria and gave us a great deal of feedback on how to make that work more equitable. Our Associate Vice President for Faculty Success, Elvin Delgado, has been working on the University Criteria document to embody what we have learned. As part of the shared governance process, Elvin has reached out to Kara Gabriel and United Faculty of Central, the faculty constituency responsible for evaluation.

Additionally, Charlita Shelton is helping out with a new initiative: Stay Interviews. She is connecting with employees who have been here 5 years or longer to listen to them about their pride—and their frustrations—in working at CWU. We will use this data to continue to offer professional development for our supervisors, building on our strengths and learning in new ways.

Please join me in thanking Charlita and the Human Resources team for their work on performance development and Elvin and United Faculty of Central for their work on building equity into our faculty evaluation criteria.

Slide 65: 2nd Annual Supervisor Summit

This last summer we held our Second Annual Supervisor Summit to continue to offer professional development to our supervisors. We hosted Steve Jones, our keynote speaker and the inaugural Robert and Valerie Moehring Leadership Lecturer. The Moehrings have provided generous support for leadership development work at Central Washington University; their gift is an investment in our future.

In an interactive and engaging presentation, Steve helped us understand the importance of our connectedness as teams and the way in which our mindset sets the stage for our success. He discussed the way in which we can work better to build a culture where people matter and how we can make certain that we all have a growth mindset.

Slide 66: Breakout Session

If you would like to learn more about the work we are doing to develop a collaborative approach to building a strong university community, please attend the 11:15 session on the Adaptive University Initiative.

Slide 67: Core Value 3: Stewardship | Goal 3

The final goal in our Stewardship Value focuses on our budgeting practices to ensure our success into the future.

Slide 68: FY26 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.

With our enrollment now finalized, we presented our final budget to the Board of Trustees for their approval yesterday. Last year, we started with about a \$3M deficit, which we made up largely through salary savings, to end up with almost a \$1M surplus. Remember, we need surpluses in our budget year over year to build our reserves for any contingency

This year, we project a \$2.8M deficit and are already well on the way to gathering the funds we need to cover this deficit through salary savings.

Our budget shortfall would be significantly higher if we had not reduced employees through attrition over the last four years. The shortfall at Western Washington University is expected to be \$13M next year, and another \$7.5M the year after. They recently eliminated their Division of Student Affairs, laying off 20 employees. Our other sister institutions are in very similar situations.

While this has been hard work, I appreciate the way in which we have done this work together. I do know that reducing the number of employees means that we are all shouldering more of the burden. I would implore all of us to rethink and reimagine our work, our structures, and our systems to let go of some of the things we have traditionally done.

We don't have the budget or resources to hold onto past practices in this moment if we want to survive into the future.

Slide 69: Future Budget Possibilities

I am sure that many of you are following what is happening at the federal level. With reductions to things like Medicaid, states will have to cover new and additional costs. The legislature will need to grapple with this situation when they meet in the winter—and we must prepare for what may come out of this session.

While I am always reluctant to share this kind of hard news, especially in the midst of a celebratory event, I must be candid with you about what we may face so that if it happens, we are prepared. I have heard various possibilities of what the state might do, including increasing the sales tax or cutting budgets once again.

I don't know at this time what this means for Central. What I do know is that we cannot continue to operate in today's landscape -- using yesterday's policies, structures, and systems -- if we want to thrive tomorrow.

Steve DuPont and I are meeting with legislators throughout the fall and winter quarters to tell our story and why your work is transformational. We will keep you posted as the session unfolds. Thank you for your work, Steve!

Slide 70: University Reserves

We are not yet at the point where we can create a Value-based Fund, one of the initiatives in our Strategic Plan, but we are moving in that direction. We also have an initiative to increase our reserves, a necessary component to a healthy organization.

Our current total reserves include \$26M in our System Fund Balance and \$33M in our State and Local Fund Balance. Our total Cash On Hand is about \$50M, which is the equivalent of 75 days of operating costs. Our goal is to have 120 days Cash On Hand to cover operating costs should we see any disruptions. We have achieved this before – in 2018 – and can get there again, though it will take some discipline. At our current level of operating costs, we would need to go from \$50M to about \$80M.

Slide 71: Core Value 2: Stewardship | Goal 2

Now, I want to return to Shared Governance, which is part of Goal 2 of our Stewardship Value.

Slide 72: Purpose of Shared Governance

Two key components of a healthy organization include, first, Vision and Strategy, and, second, Implementation and Execution.

As you know, we have developed an aspirational Vision to be a model learning community of access and opportunity. The gap between our current state and our aspirational ideal will be filled through implementing our Mission, Values and Strategic Plan.

Having a strong and clear Vision is critical, as is the ability to implement and execute the Strategic Plan that will allow that Vision to come to life. Our Shared Governance document is the basis for our ability to implement our Strategic Plan for it guides our behaviors and interactions and the ways in which we work together. This document must guide us as we learn how to operate in the changing landscape of higher education, ensuring we are in business tomorrow.

As such, Shared Governance is as important as Vision, Mission, Values, and Strategic Plan – which is why you have cards for both on the table in front of you. If we do not understand and honor the roles and authority of our colleagues, we will struggle to make the changes we need to make to be agile in this fluid time.

If you would like, you might want to use the QR code to pull up our Shared Governance document.

Slide 73: Shared Governance Constituencies

Through the process of studying the key literature on shared governance as well as best practices, and then understanding how that learning fits with Central Washington University, we identified the groups on this slide as Shared Governance Constituencies.

Each of these constituencies plays a different role and has different authority. The only group that has final authority over anything related to the university is the Board of Trustees, which is why they are not listed among these internal groups.

Respecting others' role and authority means that when we revise Exempt Policy and Code to live into this new Shared Governance document, Human Resources partners with the Exempt Employee Association. When the administration wants to work with faculty on curriculum, they turn to the Faculty Senate. When they work with faculty on criteria for evaluation, they turn to United Faculty of Central.

When we don't honor or respect these lines of authority, we lack clarity in our relationships and our work—something that I think has hampered us in achieving some of our goals.

Slide 74: Shared Governance Commitments

We also developed a series of commitments that we need to work towards to bring Shared Governance to life. Because this is new for us, we may not be achieving these commitments at this time, which is okay. These are new capacities that we are building together.

You can find a more detailed description of these commitments on the shared governance website, and an abbreviated version on the back of your card.

One of the commitments is regular assessment of how we are doing, and that assessment will begin today.

Slide 75: Shared Governance Audit

For the first part of this inaugural Shared Governance audit, we will ask you to have a conversation at your table about each of these six commitments and come to an agreement on how important these commitments are for Central Washington University on a scale of 1-10 (1= not important, 10=very important).

Most tables have a designated listener – either someone from Human Resources or someone from one of the Shared Governance groups. Please give a wave if you are a designated listener. Thank you for facilitating this conversation today!

For those tables without a designated listener, I would ask that someone volunteer. The role of the listener is to facilitate a conversation, making certain that everyone gets a chance to have input, and then move the group towards a consensus score. You will get a total of 5 minutes to score all six areas.

Ready? The table's designated listener will use a QR code included in an envelope on the table to provide the table's score for each of these commitments. This feedback will be shared with the leadership of our Shared Governance constituencies who have agreed to meet on a quarterly basis.

Slide 76: Shared Governance Audit

Now, for the second part of this Shared Governance Audit, we will turn towards scoring how well we are doing as a university community with each of these commitments, most of which include two parts. We would ask that you again have a conversation and move towards a consensus score, rating each of the two areas on a scale of 1-5.

The first pair to rate is Engagement—our ability to engage across divisions and shared governance groups in ways that honor and respect each other's authority and roles; and Institutional-Thinking—our ability to balance support for own area with support for the institution as a whole.

Slide 77: Shared Governance Audit

The next pair is Respect—believing in the good intentions of others and asking curious questions; and Mutual Trust—the way in which we focus on collaboration rather than competition.

Just a note—some of our scores may be low, and that's okay. It is important for us to know where our gaps are and where we can do better.

Slide 78: Shared Governance Audit

The next pair focuses on Communication, including both Clarity—that our decision-making processes are clear and that we share the reasoning for our decisions; and Transparency—that data and information is shared in transparent ways.

Slide 79: Shared Governance Audit

In our Board of Trustees approved document, the next commitment focused on Academic Freedom, the cornerstone to the work our faculty do in their teaching and research. I have broadened this commitment here in a way that relates to staff, as well.

So the first pair includes Innovation—the way in which we have created psychological safety to try new things; and Academic Freedom—the ability of faculty to explore the boundaries of knowledge creation.

Slide 80: Shared Governance Audit

Accountability includes two pairs. First, Accountability—which focuses on holding ourselves accountable to these commitments and honoring each other’s roles; and second, Assessment—the commitment to assessing how well we are doing with living into shared governance. Given that this is our first assessment, the score for this area might be understandably low.

Slide 81: Shared Governance Audit

The final pair includes Sustainability—the way in which this new framework is part of how we operate together and of our leadership and professional development; and Shared Governance Mindset—nurturing a culture of institutional-thinking.

Slide 82: Shared Governance Leaders Meeting

The leaders or their designees of our Shared Governance groups will meet, likely quarterly, as a way of regularly touching base about how we are doing with our shared governance work.

This audit will be one of the first orders of business as we will review the responses from the university community on the importance of these commitments and our implementation. Look for a communication back to all of you later in the quarter.

Slide 83: Breakout Sessions

Thank you!

Next, we will get to take a break, rearrange the rooms, and then attend breakout sessions that continue to share the story of the great work we are doing here at Central Washington University.

Slide 84: Breakout Sessions, 10:15-11:00

We have included room locations for each of these sessions outside in the hallway. These are the 10:15 sessions.

Slide 85: Breakout Sessions, 11:15-1200

And these are the 11:15 sessions.

We will then come back here for lunch.

Slide 86: Living into our Vision: Becoming a Model Learning Community of Access and Opportunity

And then participate in two interactive workshops.

Slide 87: Interactive Workshops

These workshops will allow the university community to participate in understanding your role in increasing our recruitment and retention of students, developing tactics for this work, as well

as begin the process of infusing equity and belonging across the university through a new shared equity leadership experience.

We will then gather for our concluding session.

Slide 88: Thank you!

Thank you for coming today. We still have lots more to share with you in the upcoming sessions! Coffee and tea outside!