

**State of the University**  
**President Jim Wohlpart**  
**Friday, October 4, 2024**  
**9:00-3:00 in the SURC Ballroom**

**Slide 1: Title Slide**

Thank you for coming today to attend what I expect will become an annual event: the State of our University as seen through the accomplishments of our Strategic Plan. I promised, when I arrived and when we began the process of developing a new Vision, Mission, and Strategic Plan, that the Strategic Plan would not sit on a shelf, but would, rather, guide our work. Today you will get to see some of the outstanding accomplishments of the past year.

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 honor the survivors of the boarding schools and note that Monday, September 30, was National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. It is also known as Orange Shirt Day as inspired by Phyllis Jack Webstad's experience of having the orange shirt her grandmother gave her taken away when she arrived at the residential school. You will notice several members of our community wearing orange shirts today in remembrance. Please join me in thanking them and others for their commitment to this collective call to action.

Finally, I also want to thank all of the organizers of today's State of the University, including especially Lauren Zeutenhorst and Alexis Andrews. Thank you to our dining and catering staff and our SURC staff, audio.

## **Slide 2: Agenda**

As mentioned, today's State of the University will be a bit different. I'm going to talk for about 45 minutes to share lots of information connected to our work together. We will then rearrange the ballroom and have two sets of four breakout sessions each. We will be recording these sessions so that anyone can watch all the sessions if they would like.

We will also gather for lunch and then have a special presentation that will challenge our thinking around the inequities that exist in our society and in our own unconscious minds. Dr. Rodrigo Renteria-Valencia has provided this

presentation to our Board of Trustees and administrative, faculty, and staff leaders. It will be sure to challenge your thinking, so please be prepared to be uncomfortable.

### **Slide 3: Takeaways**

I want to open my presentation by acknowledging the challenges we have in front of us. Good leadership is not about hiding from challenges, and it certainly isn't about hiding those challenges from the communities we lead. I will open with those challenges, but I will not dwell there – for the challenges do not define us or our future.

What does is the vision, mission, values and strategic plan that we have created which provide an opportunity for us to engage those challenges. Today, I will report on the way in which our strategic plan is coming to life and is building our capacity for addressing three adaptive challenges facing our nation. The breakout sessions that come next will provide depth to many of these initiatives.

And I will conclude today reminding us not only of the significance of our work, but also of the work we have in front of us to build our capacity to live into our aspirational vision.

Okay. Here we go.

#### **Slide 4: Where are we going? (Vision)**

On Friday, May 20, 2022, late in the morning, the Central Washington University Board of Trustees approved our new Vision and Mission statements, recognizing that they pointed our community in an aspirational direction. These statements were developed with thoughtful, inclusive, and collaborative input over the previous year, through open forums and departmental and office meetings, guided by a broadly representative committee.

Our Vision statement, to “be a model learning community of equity and belonging,” recognizes the significance of the change that we must undertake in that it points us towards the necessity of learning. In *The Fifth Discipline*, Peter Senge defines learning as a “process of enhancing [our] capacity, individually and collectively, to produce results [we] truly want to produce” (364). The focus, for Senge, is on this capacity—not just on accruing an intellectual understanding of something, but rather on building our ability to do the work that brings about the change that we want to see.

#### **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 equity and belonging. We are committed, as a community, to increasing access to

postsecondary education and the success of our students who come through our doors, success which will occur through “fostering high impact practices, sustainability, and authentic community partnerships that are grounded in meaningful relationships.”

### **Slide 6: Why are we here? (Unifying Value)**

In the next year, encouraged by our Board of Trustees and through continued rich input from the university community, we developed a Unifying Value and Three Core Values that will guide our work and allow us to live into our Vision Statement. The 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.

I want to share one example of how we are working to live more deeply into this value. Over the spring and summer, I have met with our ASCWU Board of Directors and other students who are employed at Central. We had discussions about how we could make student employment a more positive and wholistic experience, recognizing that while they are employees they must be students first and providing opportunities for them to learn, grow, and advance in their roles. A team of leaders from Student Engagement and Success and Finance and Operations, where most of our students are employed, met with our students to draft a set of agreements on the student employee experience.

Please join me in thanking our ASCWU Board of Directors and other students who are here today for their collaborative work in elevating the student experience.

### **Slide 7: Current Context and CWU's Adaptive Challenge**

I want to refresh our understanding of the nature of what we mean when we refer to the adaptive challenge that we face in higher education and here at Central.

### **Slide 8: Adaptive Challenges**

To become a model learning community that allows us to bring our Vision to life means that we must embrace new perspectives and new beliefs. Sharon Parks explains the distinction between technical problems and adaptive challenges: "*Technical problems* (even though they may be complex) can be solved with knowledge and procedures already in hand. In contrast, *adaptive challenges* require new learning, innovation, and new patterns of behavior" (*Leadership Can Be Taught*, 9-10). Adaptive challenges "call for changes of heart and mind—the transformation of long-standing habits and deeply held assumptions and values" (10).

Ronald Heifetz notes that “Adaptive work is required when our deeply held beliefs are challenged, when the values that made us successful become less relevant, and when legitimate yet competing perspectives emerge” (“The Work of Leadership,” 6).

### **Slide 9: 30 Year Enrollment History**

The context in which we have taken on this aspirational vision is an essential part of realizing the opportunity in front of us and the new capacities that we need to develop. Over the last twenty years, Central Washington University slowly and gradually built towards our peak enrollment in 2017, 2018, and 2019. The pandemic erased that slow growth in just four years, and with it \$26M in tuition revenue.

Over 20 years, we built academic and student support programs for a larger student body and number of faculty and staff than we currently enjoy. The resources for those programs have been diminished through this loss of tuition revenue.

Additionally, in 2017, the state legislature stopped providing full funding for our Cost of Living Adjustments, only covering 50%, because they assumed that tuition increases would make up the difference. These tuition increases did not cover the other 50% of COLA, which means that our budget for employees was

effectively reduced; that is, we had less money to pay employees. Additionally, this new formula failed to understand that before the fund split was instituted the increased funding from tuition was used to pay for the inflationary increases to goods and services, which comprises about 30% of our total budget. So, not only did we not have full funding for COLA, but we also did not have funding for inflation.

### **Slide 10: Enrollment Projections**

I want to note that the pandemic affected enrollment across the state. Before the pandemic 59% of high school students moved on to some form of postsecondary enrollment. That dropped to about 50% as a result of the pandemic. In other states, there has been a slow return to pre-pandemic levels of postsecondary enrollment, but that is not the case in Washington. We remain in the very low 50% range for college going rates. We are 46<sup>th</sup> in the nation.

What this means is that we have a new reality in front of us. Thanks to all of you, we have managed our budget carefully over the last three years, and balancing that budget, which has not been the case at many other institutions, who are now falling off of a budget cliff.

What we have not done, that other institutions have done, is circled the wagons and eliminated programs, offices, and initiatives. Instead, we have used

our new vision, mission, values, and strategic plan to guide our work and direct our resources. And while we have been successful balancing our budget every year for the last three years as a result of this strategy, and successful in slowly growing our new freshman and transfer classes (which also has not happened at other institutions), it does not mean that we should not—in every way we can—reimagine our work to make certain that we are using our resources in the most effective way possible to maximize student learning, growth, and development.

I cannot emphasize this last point enough. We are a new institution that has weathered a steep decline in enrollment over a short period of time. Our enrollment is not going to rebound to pre-pandemic levels anytime soon. Through a new funding process and because of reduced enrollment, our resources have shrunk—and we have the opportunity in front of us to reimagine our work to fit the resources we have.

And continue to live into our vision, mission, values, and strategic plan – because they are the pathway to a brighter future and they put students at the center of our work. As we build our capacity for change, we will better be able to see around the corner to the beckoning future that is awaiting us.

In order to initiate such a shift and engage the adaptive challenges before us, we must become aware of the way in which we are conditioned by our culture, by long standing habits of mind, by established processes, by structures

that enable as much as they constrain, by a worldview that predetermines what we see, know, and do. Truly investigating the nature of those patterns, the way in which they further enhance our own established beliefs and values, requires an openness to self-critique and to transformation, both necessary components to fully realize the possibilities of the moment we face—a moment when a new narrative can unfold, one more responsive to the complexities we face.

This slide has been up long enough, yes? Let me put a more hopeful slide up.

### **Slide 11: New Student Enrollment**

We are going in the right direction in terms of growing our new student class, both First Time in College students (FTICs, generally known as freshman), and Transfers, especially as our community college enrollment is beginning to rebound.

**ANALYZE THE DATA SET** – NOTE: CWU has had a market share of about 4% - that is, about 4% of students in the state of Washington who have gone on to higher education have come to CWU. If we want our enrollment to grow, especially with the enrollment cliff that is in front of us, we will have to increase our market share. THANK ADMISSIONS TEAM – Freshman and Transfer.

In the year ahead, we must come together as a community, with everyone doing their part for the work they own, to be more resourceful, more efficient, and more effective—and continue to use the strategic plan to guide our work. I'll talk a bit about retention in a moment, as retention can be a driver for increasing our overall enrollment as much as recruiting new students.

### **Slide 12: Biennium Budget Request**

The most important ask that we will be making of the Governor and the legislature is to return to full funding of our Cost of Living Adjustments. The elimination of the fund split would put us on the path to restoring the positions that we have lost.

Along with that, we will be asking to provide a base budget adjustment for several initiatives and offices that we have created, carving funds out of salary savings and reserves. Fully funding these initiatives would also provide us with resources that would allow us to restore positions we have lost.

We are also asking for new, additional faculty lines and graduate assistant stipends, as well as increases to those stipends. And finally, we are asking that the state restore the funding for preventative maintenance to the operating budget, rather than having us take these funds out of our capital budget.

I want to thank Lisa Plesha in Finance and Administration for her work shepherding all of the budget requests that you will see in today's presentation – as well as the faculty and staff who have provided information for the requests. I'd also like to thank Delano Palmer for his work on our Capital requests, which you will see later. We have repeatedly shared drafts of our requests with our faculty, staff, and student shared governance leaders and appreciate their feedback and input. And I want to thank our Government Relations team, Alethia Miller and Steve DuPont, who work tirelessly to get the legislature to adopt our requests. We have already started meeting with key legislators; that work will continue throughout the fall quarter with lots of meetings on the west side.

### **Slide 13: National Challenge One**

Today's State of the University—along with the breakout sessions that will occur next—is the first annual report on the amazing work that all of you are doing that is a bright light shining in the midst of this challenging time. I will frame my comments around three challenges that we face as a nation and a world that we are ably addressing through our strategic plan: climate change, racial and economic injustice, and the fraying of our democracy.

## **Slide 14: Climate Change and Sustainability**

The first challenge that institutions of higher education must address is climate change and the creation of a sustainable future. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) issued its *Climate Change 2023 Synthesis Report* “Summary for Policymakers” to describe the current “state of knowledge of climate change, its widespread impacts and risks, and climate change mitigation and adaptation” (3). The overarching conclusion of the report which is based upon extensive scientific research is that “Human activities, principally through emissions of greenhouse gases, have unequivocally caused global warming” (4) and it highlights the urgency of our work. The report notes that “Climate change is a threat to human well-being and planetary health (*very high confidence*). There is a rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a liveable and sustainable future for all (*very high confidence*)” (24). The report concludes that “The choices and actions implemented in this decade will have impacts now and for thousands of years (*high confidence*)” (24).

## **Slide 15: Climate Change, Sustainability, and CWU**

You may remember that sustainability plays a central role not only in our Mission statement but also in the strategic plan initiatives under Core Value 3: Stewardship.

### **Slide 16: Climate Change, Sustainability, and CWU**

Through Jeff Bousson's leadership this last year we have gone through a very inclusive and collaborative process to develop CWU's first ever Climate Action Plan which includes targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions based on five climate action pillars. If you are interested in learning more, you can attend Jeff's session at 10:00 today.

### **Slide 17: Climate Change, Sustainability, and CWU**

One element in our goals is to incorporate sustainability into the curriculum. This last summer, Susan Kaspari led a workshop on curricular development which was attended by about 20 faculty. The workshop included presentations by several faculty who are already doing this amazing work—and who presented at the Earth Charter International Conference in Florida last spring. Susan will also be presenting with Jeff at 10:00 if you want to learn more.

### **Slide 18: Climate Change, Sustainability, and CWU**

As part of our efforts to develop alternative funding for our work at CWU, we applied for, and received, two grants from the Department of Commerce to advance our Climate Action Plan. One grant will allow us to install solar panels on

Dugmore Hall; the other will allow us to develop a more comprehensive plan for solar panel installation across the Ellensburg campus.

### **Slide 19: Climate Change, Sustainability, and CWU**

This good work in operations, curriculum, and community has led to national recognition by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. Thank you especially to Jeff and Susan who were instrumental in our application for this award, which we found out recently we received.

### **Slide 20: Climate Change, Sustainability, and CWU**

Additionally, as part of our biennium budget request, we are asking for the first phase of funding for a new Sustainability Solutions Center. The Center will increase our capacity to do the work of creating a sustainable future both in our curriculum and in our operations, including a composter for post-consumer food waste along with a compost operator.

### **Slide 21: National Challenge 2: Racial and Economic Injustice**

The second national challenge that we must engage in higher education is the continued existence of racism and other forms of discrimination that are also connected to a deeply unjust economic system. The necessity of engaging and

ending discrimination of any and all kinds is an essential component of sustainability and the fraying of our democracy, for without equity and justice we cannot weave together the torn fabric of our society in wholesome and sustainable ways.

### **Slide 22: Racial and Economic Justice**

In *Racing to Justice*, John Powell identifies two forms of racialization that are important to understand as we engage racial discrimination in the United States. The first form of racialization is “implicit biases that can affect our behaviors and understandings. Because we have conscious control over—or, indeed, access to—only a small part of the processes going on in our brains, many of our thoughts and feelings, even during waking hours, occur without our express command or permission. This recognition helps explain inconsistencies between our conscious attitudes and our behavior” (21). He notes that while we are generally unaware of the influence of these biases on our subconscious, they nevertheless affect how we interact with and understand each another: “Because these attitudes—unrecognized on the conscious level but powerful at the unconscious level—influence choices and decisions, individual and institutional discrimination can and does occur even in the absence of blatant prejudice, ill will, or animus” (22).

The second form of racialization is structural racism. Powell notes that “Harmful practices, cultural norms, and institutional arrangements, if left unchallenged, create and maintain racialized outcomes. To address this structural racialization effectively, we must understand the work that our institutions and policies are, in fact, doing—not just what we hope they will do” (23). In order to address structural racism, Powell suggests that we need to learn “how to talk about race in ways that are not divisive . . . [and] to make sure our institutions do the work we want them to do” (24).

### **Slide 23: Racial and Economic Injustice & CWU**

Many of our strategic plan initiatives center on increasing access to postsecondary education for historically underrepresented groups, what the American Association of State Colleges and Universities calls “the new majority.” At the heart of this work is the goal of building a relational model for recruitment and increasing the success of our students—through higher retention and success rates.

One significant element in doing this work is to disaggregate our data, something we have struggled with at Central in the past. Under the leadership of Jason Jones, Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness, we now have

accurate and meaningful data on a public facing dashboard. Thank you Jason and the IE Team!

I am going to go through several slides with lots of data – I won't be pausing on these slides to do the kind of analysis that needs to be done to create action and policy. That work needs to happen elsewhere. I just want to show you what is now available to us on public dashboards.

### **Slide 24: Institutional Effectiveness Dashboards**

DATA DASHBOARD – Scan!!

Or Google CWU Dashboards

Go to Headcount Enrollment – then to Weeks Until Census

Go to Admissions – then to Weeks Until Term Starts – Click First Year under Admit

Type

### **Slides 25-30: DATA**

Quick Review

### **Slide 31: Retention Data – Demographic Breakdown**

In addition to increasing the recruitment of new students—which our new AVP for Enrollment Management, Hung Dang, and our amazing Admissions Team

will be laser focused on (join their presentation at 10:00)—we must also work to retain our students. This is a moral imperative. Every year we lose 31% of our new First Time in College students. We have disaggregated this data by race and ethnicity, which only tells a small part of the story.

### **Slide 32: Retention Data – by Grades**

A more complete story is told when we look at retention data based on High School GPA. This fall, we have developed a concerted effort across all divisions to engage in disrupting this trend. In the past several years, we have lost 9% of our FTICs between Fall and Winter Quarters. Our goal is to reduce that attrition to 5%.

We all have a role to play in this retention initiative and we have several very cool things that different areas are working on that should move the needle. I look forward to sharing the results of this work...and to keep it going in winter and spring in order to bring our first year retention rate from 69% to 75% or higher.

The impact of increasing enrollment is significant. Every 200 students equates to about \$1M in tuition revenue. A 5% increase in retention equates to about 500 more students at CWU, or \$2.5M. We cannot recruit our way out of our enrollment drop; we must work to increase our retention.

### **Slide 33: Six-year Graduation Rates**

Here again is more data broken out by demographic background.

### **Slide 34: CWU's Multicultural Center**

Over the last year our Capital Office, led by Delano Palmer, and our Diversity and Equity Center, led by Mal Stewman, have held many conversations with students regarding the creation of CWU's Multicultural Center. The renovation of Black Hall will transform our DEC into our new Multicultural Center, while also creating more appropriate and much needed spaces for our School of Education. We will be launching a Design Page which includes all of the information on the process and specs. One important note is that CWU's Multicultural Center will be the largest of similar institutions in the state, around 12,000 square feet.

### **Slide 35: CWU and Yakima Valley Projects**

As part of our work in expanding access to postsecondary education, Central has partnered with the Washington Student Achievement Council and several school districts in the Yakima Valley. With funding from a Lumina Grant, we are working together to create a pilot that marries the Guaranteed Admissions

Program, which admits juniors and seniors in high school based on the coursework they have taken and their GPA, with the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance program. Through this initiative we are seeking a way to guarantee not only admission to CWU for students who come from families who receive SNAP benefits, but also guarantee them funding for four full years through WSAC.

We also have a Congressionally Directed Spending Request that is moving forward that would provide significant funding for developing pathways and credentials for students in the Yakima Valley, including expanding access to dual enrollment programs like College in the High School. Stay tuned on this one.

And, we have signed a historic agreement between Yakima Valley College, Yakima School District, and CWU to develop clear pathways and guaranteed articulations of courses for students who complete Running Start or College in the High School classes. Remember, last year, for the first time ever, the state started paying for College in the High School classes, making it free to students and their families. In the past, only students who had the financial means to pay for these classes could afford to enroll in them. As CiHS classes increase, more students will see themselves as able to attend college. Our work is to create clear pathways into and through CWU.

### **Slides 36: Equity and Belonging CWU**

We have also made a specific request to expand our work to support multicultural students, including funding that would move us intentionally and strategically towards becoming a Hispanic Serving Institution, the development of a Pacific Northwest Latinx Leadership Institute, and funding to elevate our work with Tribal Relations.

You can learn more about our work to become an HSI and these other initiatives at one of the 11:00 presentations today.

### **Slide 37: Equity and Belonging CWU**

Our strategic plan also has an emphasis on diversifying our employee base.

### **Slides 38: Employee Diversity**

We have already released data on instructional employees on the dashboard, which includes demographic information, and have just recently released data on non-instructional employees. The data shows that we have increased the percent of our new employees who come from historically underrepresented groups; we must work more diligently on creating a culture of belonging so that these employees feel like they belong at Central.

As part of these efforts, Central Washington University was selected as one of six universities working with the American Association of State Colleges and Universities through a Lumina grant to create a belongingness survey and toolkit, with the assistance of two Harvard researchers. Elvin Delgado is leading that effort.

### **Slides 39: Executive Level Administrator Demographics**

We have just recently finalized the definition of “administration” within our systems so that we can now pull data on this group, which includes three levels of administration. The “executive level” of administration includes the President, Vice Presidents, Associate and Assistant Vice Presidents, Deans, and Associate and Assistant Deans. As you can see, that group has increased in diversity and now includes more women’s voices. It has also decreased in size, from 30 to 25 between 2021 and 2023.

One major caution about these numbers: there is a lot of noise in this grouping. This data is pulled on November 1 of each year for consistency and for reporting to IPEDS. If a position is empty at that moment, even if we have made a hire and someone starts on November 2, it would not show up in our data. Similarly, if an individual is here as a consultant and paid by a firm like The Registry, they do not show up in our data. As an example, if you look at 2019

numbers, you would see 25 administrators because our accounting does not include several administrators who were in consulting roles. Please be cautious as you review this data—and if you are curious, ask questions. Please don't make assumptions. Remember that the nature of adaptive challenges is to investigate our beliefs and perspectives in order to entertain new ways of thinking. We are sharing even more detailed information about this data with faculty and staff leaders.

#### **Slides 40: All Administrator Diversity**

This slide includes all administrator groups, not just those in 1A but also all Executive Directors, most Directors and Associate and Assistant Directors, and many Managers. You can see that this group has gotten more diverse over the last three years. Again, a caution about the numbers: the snapshot is taken on November 1, and on that date we may have positions empty – even if we have a new hire starting the very next day.

#### **Slides 41: Equity and Belonging CWU**

One of the primary tools that we have to create a culture of belonging is to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion professional development and training—

which is led by the Office of Equity and Belonging and one of the primary responsibilities of the Associate Director.

### **Slide 42: Tier One: DEI Professional Development**

The Office Human Resources and the Office of Equity and Belonging have worked together to develop two tiers of professional development – the first tier a required online training that every employee at CWU will need to complete, based on Senate Bill 5227. This training is foundational; by itself it will not change our culture. It provides a base level understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

### **Slide 43: Tier Two: DEI Professional Development**

Knowing that online training may provide a foundation but is not sufficient to truly change culture, the office has created additional professional development opportunities so that we can come together in community to investigate, understand, and make real change to our beliefs, perceptions, and values and to expand our intercultural fluency.

Executive level administrators have been required to complete Tier One training and have also participated in many Tier Two trainings, including one that will occur this afternoon led by Dr. Renteria-Valencia. This training was done with

the Board of Trustees at our summer retreat. The picture on the left is one of our alum, Eric Boles, speaking at our all Supervisor Summit. On the right is a workshop that Rodrigo led for our Trustees, executive leaders, and faculty, staff, and student leaders.

You will get to learn more about our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Training over the last two years and in the coming year if you attend the 10:00 session.

#### **Slide 44: The Fraying of our Democracy**

The third national challenge facing our nation that is an integral part of the work we should take on in higher education is the fraying of our democracy. Our democracy in the United States of America is based on a paradox best captured in our motto: *e pluribus unum*—out of the many, one. The ideal of our political state depends upon honoring the rich diversity of our nation, the way in which we are comprised of a wide variety of races and ethnicities, of political and social views, of religious affiliation, of various languages and cultures. When fully lived into its potential, democracy not only honors that rich diversity, but it weaves it together into a unified tapestry, a nation where diverse views are paradoxically at the heart of our union.

## Slide 45: The Fraying of our Democracy

In *What Universities Owe Democracy*, Ronald Daniels explains that “Universities are not merely bystander institutions to democracy but deeply implicated in, and essential for, its success. It is imperative in this moment of democratic backsliding that our universities more self-consciously vindicate their obligations to this most precious and fragile form of self-governance” (x).

We are a multicultural and pluralist society that is not practiced in how to engage difference in meaningful and productive ways. The fabric of our civic and political society has become tattered and torn. In *The Soul of America*, Jon Meacham notes that our political experiment has, throughout time, shifted between darkness and light, between fear and hope. As he explains, “Too often, people view their own opportunity as dependent on domination over others, which helps explain why such people see the expansion of opportunity for all as a loss of opportunity for themselves. In such moments the forces of reaction thrive” (8). He continues: “In our finest hours, though, the soul of the country manifests itself in an inclination to open our arms rather than to clench our fists; to look out rather than to turn inward; to accept rather than to reject” (8). And when we do so, “America has grown ever stronger, confident that the choice of light over dark is the means by which we pursue progress” (8).

#### **Slide 46: Democracy and CWU**

We have several initiatives in our strategic plan relating to the work of advancing civic engagement, including Initiatives 2.1 and 2.2 under Core Value 1: Engagement. With the transitions that are occurring in our Student Leadership, Involvement, and Community Engagement Office we have not yet worked on the first, nor have we engaged the Campus Compact model. These are potential future initiatives.

#### **Slide 47: Democracy and CWU**

At the end of summer, our ASCWU Board of Directors hosted three statewide organizations: Fuse, The Washington Bus, and the Washington Student Association who led a training for student leaders from across the state on how to get out the vote this fall. This non-partisan initiative welcomed about 100 students from community colleges, private and public universities, and non-profit organizations from across Washington.

I was inspired by their sessions and their commitment to our democracy. They understand that we have work to do to engage in practices that expand our capacity for listening and learning, especially to those who have a different story than our own.

As noted a moment ago, democracy depends upon a paradox: honoring and elevating diverse perspectives, beliefs, and backgrounds and, at the same time that we hold that diversity as a central commitment to who we are, we unite as one nation. The ability to live into the ideal of our democracy depends upon three capacities:

- First, the capacity for Authentic Sharing – which requires a place of trust and safety where everyone knows that they can show up for the person who they are and the person who they are becoming;
- Second, the capacity for Deep Listening – the ability to listen not to respond but rather to truly engage a new story, a new belief or value, a new voice; and
- Third, the capacity for Critical Reflection – the ability to hear a new perspective, reflect on our own values, beliefs, and perspectives based on what we have heard, and be willing to change.

We have initiatives happening this fall that you will hear more about through various sources to build these capacities in members of our university community, including students.

#### **Slide 48: Democracy and CWU**

Over the last two years, in response to one of our Strategic Plan initiatives, we have worked to develop a deeper understanding of shared governance. In 2023-24, we convened representatives from faculty, exempt and classified staff, administrators, our unions, our students, and our Trustees to learn about shared governance, where we were doing it well and where we might do this work better.

#### **Slide 49: Shared Governance Committee, 2023-24**

We started our reading with the 1966 “Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities,” the foundational document for shared governance in higher education. This was endorsed by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), Association of Governing Boards (AGB), and the American Council on Education (ACE)

The Joint Statement calls for unified action on the part of all shared governance constituencies and aligning of our priorities in order to weather external pressures – which, as you surely know, are extensive in other states: reduced budgets, closing of DEI offices, reduction in tenure protections, reframing of the work of faculty to be considered “state speech” which greatly curtails or effectively eliminates academic freedom. What these three organizations realized

in 1966 is that if we were not aligned internally it would be more challenging for us to weather these storms.

The joint statement suggests that healthy shared governance depends on a recognition of our interdependence and interconnection; regular and authentic communication, especially around issues affecting the health and future of the university; and joint action in response to any challenges the university faces—whether it be enrollment, budget, legislative, or public challenges.

The Joint Statement also suggested that three elements are essential for healthy shared governance:

- A mindset of institutional thinking which depends on building trust;
- Transparent data and information sharing, analysis, and use; and
- Inclusion of faculty, staff, and students in decision-making in ways that elevate collaboration.

#### **Slide 50: Shared Governance Committee, 2023-24**

We also then read further in statements issued by AAUP and AGB in order to deepen our understanding of the rights and responsibilities of different constituent groups in the realm of shared governance.

At this point, we are finalizing a draft CWU statement defining Shared Governance and outlining several Principles. When the committee has finalized

this draft, members of the committee will be sharing this information with their constituent groups outlining what we have learned and explain the origin of the definition and the principles—and to get feedback.

Would members of the Shared Governance Committee please stand and be recognized? Please join me in thanking them for their work.

**Slide 51: Additional Information**

A couple of notes about our Comprehensive Campaign and Other Budget Requests.

**Slide 52: CWU's Comprehensive Campaign**

As you know, our campaign is part of Initiative 2.3 in Core Value 1: Engagement.

**Slide 53: CWU's Comprehensive Campaign**

The theme for the campaign is “Futures” which certainly fits with our new brand and marketing tagline.

### **Slide 54: CWU's Comprehensive Campaign**

The general timeline for this campaign, like most others, is divided into four phases. The first phase is building out the themes and capacity for launching the campaign and garnering the support of the Foundation Board and other key constituents. The second phase, which is where we are now, is working with the leadership at the institution and with key donors. The next phase will expand that work as we gain support for major gifts and leverage that support, until we go into the final phase which will be the public phase. Until then, you really won't hear a lot about the campaign in any kind of public way, though the Office of Advancement continues to work closely with deans, chairs and faculty on a variety of initiatives.

### **Slide 55: CWU's Comprehensive Campaign**

And we have made important progress towards our goal, raising around \$33M in the first three years, including gifts that were given before 2021 that were intended to be part of the campaign.

## **Slide 56: CWU's Comprehensive Campaign**

We won't determine the final goal of the campaign until we get to the public phase, but we are tracking right now towards an \$85M goal. If we land several larger gifts, which we are working on, we may track towards a higher goal.

Successful fundraising is often symbolized by a pyramid, with a few high end donors at the top of the pyramid and then many donors at the bottom of the pyramid who provide smaller but very meaningful gifts. The idea is that during the life of a campaign individuals move up this pyramid as they get inspired or have more capacity. One thing that we have learned is that Central has more of a diamond than a pyramid, meaning that we don't have as many folks at the bottom of the pyramid who are ready to move up and expand their giving.

Truly the goal of this campaign, very much aside from the final dollar amount, is to build out that pyramid and create the landscape for a much more successful second campaign. We will leave that up to the next president. Thank you to Paul Elstone and all the members of the Advancement Team in both the Foundation and Alumni Relations for their energy and hard work.

## **Slide 57: Additional Operating Budget Requests**

We have worked closely with faculty and staff across the university in developing our Biennium Budget requests, which were shared with our shared

governance leaders as they were being drafted. We are asking for funding to expand our mental health counseling faculty and resources and our allied health and public health programs. We are also asking for funding to meet one of the state's major needs in Occupational Safety and Health, as well as an expansion of our outreach to the region through our Business and Community Services.

### **Slide 58: Capital Budget Requests**

On the capital side, we are requesting funding for a backup generator for a portion of our campus that does not have any backup energy. If power went out for an extended period on a really cold winter day, we would be in trouble. We are also asking for design funding to replace Randall and Michaelsen Halls and our psychology building. The list is pretty expansive, including replacing equipment in our labs, purchasing a post-consumer food composter, and many initiatives to continue to decarbonize the university.

### **Slide 59: Breakout Sessions 10:00-10:45**

In a moment, we will be reorganizing the ball room, splitting it into four rooms where you will have the opportunity to hear more about the many initiatives in our Strategic Plan that are coming to life. These sessions will be recorded for later viewing, since you will only be able to attend one.

At 10:00, sessions focus on our Climate Action Plan, our Recruitment work, our DEI Professional Training, and our work with the Yakima School District to create seamless pathways into CWU.

**Slide 60: Breakout Sessions, 11:00-11:45**

At 11:00 we have sessions on the Holistic well-being of our students, on our work to become an HSI, and on meeting Basic needs. We also will follow up from a very successful first annual supervisor summit—which is open to everyone, not just supervisors, if you want to hear about the work we did together over the summer.

**Slide 61: Living into our Vision, 1:30-3:30**

After the 11:00 sessions end, we will rearrange the ballroom again and come back together for lunch and building community. Then, we will have a special presentation on equity and belonging, which I strongly encourage you to stay for. This presentation, conversation, and discussion may make some of us uncomfortable. We should remember that when we are taken out of our comfort zone, we are given the opportunity to learn and grow. Thank you to Dr. Renteria-Valencia for his leadership on this initiative.

## Slide 62: Conclusion

I noted earlier that addressing racial injustice is deeply connected to both sustainability and the fraying of democracy. All three adaptive challenges require us to rethink our focus on the isolated self, set over and against the world, and to build our capacity to live into our interrelatedness and interconnectedness.

John Powell notes that “There is a need for an alternative vision, a beloved community where being connected to the other is seen as the foundation of a healthy self, not its destruction, and where the racial other is seen not as the infinite other, but rather as the other that is always and already part of us” (xviii-xix). Powell recognizes that such a vision is “profoundly a spiritual project. It is the urge and yearning for connection that lies within us all. Often we are not comfortable mixing our spiritual yearnings and our secular work for social justice, but this is a false and problematic separation” (161). He concludes: “Perhaps...we must end by talking about love. We must draw on love’s power to free us from separation and its accompanying sense of loss” (161).

To weave our rich diversity back into the tapestry of our country as a whole, to find the ways in which we are united, requires love and, I would argue, hope—hope not only about our political experiment but also about our future state. Jon Meacham concludes that “Fear points at others, assigning blame; hope points ahead, working for a common good. Fear pushes away; hope pulls others

closer. Fear divides; hope unifies” (16). This is the work we have before us, at Central Washington University, to create hope not through ignoring the challenges we have in front of us but rather through embracing those challenges and working together to find solutions.

For me, as president, this work is both professional and deeply personal. Last June one of our graduates was a student who I met working out in the REC center. He was a young black man from a disadvantaged background who struggled to stay at CWU and finish his degree. We had many conversations about his life and how he was doing.

What I learned from him is that there are no easy answers to the challenges he faces. Indeed, there are not even clear questions. He believed that higher education was a pathway into a better life, but he wasn't sure, and one of his friends who I also interacted with actually gave up and got a warehouse job.

In this time of disruption in higher education we should not be turning to the power of AI, or three-year degrees, or inauthentic marketing as quick fixes. We should be returning to the power of the human heart.

The disruption we must embrace is not about upending everything we have been doing for the sake of disruption.

The disruption we must embrace is more radical. And more simple. It is the disruption that arises from caring deeply about a first generation student whose

parents don't speak English—who literally has no script for their life, who faces uncertainty and ambiguity on so many levels that it would stop most people in their tracks.

How do we care for them, nurture them, prod and push and pull them to engaging the challenges they face—challenges of an unprecedented nature: not just the necessity of attaining a postsecondary credential (as if that wasn't enough) but also climate change, racial injustice, and the fraying of our democracy—in ways that allow them to show up as whole human beings when everything is at war with their wholeness, with them being seen, with them mattering?

How do we as a university community do everything in our power to take down the barriers to their success that we have constructed? Requirements that make sense to us, the college educated, but that don't translate to anything that they have experience with? 46% of our students are the first in their family to go to college. Have we created seamless and transparent pathways into and through Central Washington University so that our students know how to navigate this unknown terrain with confidence?

What you do matters. You transform the lives of our students and their families, as well as the communities within which they live. Our daily work

attaches every one of us to something bigger than ourselves, a community that is building its capacity for learning and growing and making change for one single purpose: to increase the access of our students to an enriching educational experience that will ensure their personal and professional success.

Thank you for coming and listening. Thank you for the work you do day in and day out for our students. And thank you for joining together for the work we have ahead of us.

Now...we need to prepare the room for the dividers to be opened for our breakout sessions.