Central Washington University is proposing a comprehensive strategy to address Washington's teacher shortage. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction has described the state's teacher shortage as a “crisis,” particularly in rural and high-poverty areas.

CWU proposes to increase the number of highly qualified certified teachers and channel more of them directly to the schools with the greatest need. The unique strategies within the plan seek to recruit more students into the profession, remove financial and geographical barriers, and increase capacity where it is most needed.

Washington’s Critical Teacher Shortage

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

Currently, Washington faces an unprecedented teacher shortage. Across the state, 93 percent of principals report they are struggling or in crisis mode; approximately 45 percent of classrooms need a certified teacher. Providing qualified teachers for each classroom will have to be among the strategies for fully funding basic education in Washington state.

Strategic Plan for Getting More Teachers into the Classroom

Intensify recruitment and outreach
CWU intends to increase the number of students majoring in education by about 250 by targeting intensive outreach to prospective and current students.

• CWU will engage its School of Education and an army of teaching alumni in sharing the excitement of learning and discovery with high school students. Outreach also will focus on current CWU students who are still deciding on a major.

• CWU proposes to partner with 20 schools around the state to establish “Future Teacher” academies.

• CWU already has seen tremendous success with this model through the Renton Teacher Academy. The academies will identify high school students who want to become teachers and begin training them before they even graduate.

Break Down Financial Barriers
CWU proposes to eliminate financial barriers that drive students away from the profession and away from high-need schools.

• CWU proposes a $5,000 per year scholarship for to bring low-income students into the teaching profession. These students also would receive about $750 in fee waivers for various other costs related to teacher certification. This support is essential for low-income students who often turn away from teaching because they are concerned their salary after graduation won’t be enough to pay off student loans.

• CWU proposes to offer a $3,000 stipend that covers living expenses for 75 students who agree to do their student teaching at any school with a hiring crisis.

*One who gets the gist of a subject matter and knows enough to be dangerous with that subject in conversation or writing. (www.urbandictionary.com)
Open All Schools in the State to CWU Student Teachers

CWU proposes to reduce the cost of student teacher supervision while removing the logistical challenges of supervision in disparate locations through two strategies:

1. Implement virtual supervision through video streaming technology
2. Train and certify school district staff to become student teacher supervisors.

Currently CWU must severely limit the number of schools where student teaching can occur due to the need for face-to-face supervision by CWU personnel. Students may want to live at home while they student teach, or explore a diverse school setting. But students can’t teach in a school that is beyond the geographical reach of the CWU supervisors. These restrictions cut out many schools that desperately need teachers. By leveraging local educators and modern technology, students will be able to student teach anywhere they want and will be encouraged to do so at schools that need them most.

Leverage CWU University Centers Statewide to Increase Capacity

CWU can expand the reach of the School of Education by focusing the state’s and the university’s investment in University Centers in Everett, Lynnwood, Des Moines, Yakima, Moses Lake, and Wenatchee. Additionally:

- Central also can offer coursework leading to certification at public schools and Educational Service Districts. Furthermore, currently CWU requires cohorts to contain at least 25 students for certification coursework, which is a prohibitively high threshold for many schools. CWU proposes to bring these opportunities to hard-hit areas by allowing up to 10 cohorts to have fewer than 25 students.
- CWU proposes to emphasize this growth in the endorsement areas with the most critical shortages, including science, mathematics, special education, elementary education, early childhood education, and Teaching English as a Second Language.

CWU’s Responsibility to the People of Washington

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

BY THE NUMBERS

1. Ranking of CWU by The Economist magazine for economic impact on its graduates.
5. Number of CWU School of Education graduates named Washington State Teacher of the Year since 2005
8. Regional ranking (Washington, Oregon, and California) of CWU as a top teacher preparation program, according to the National Council on Teacher Quality
18. Percent of Washington state K-12 teachers who are CWU graduates
70. The percent of Washington schools with a CWU alumni teacher
125. Number of years that CWU has been educating students to become first-rate teachers

For more information contact Steve DuPont, assistant director of government relations, at 509-963-2185 or Steve.Dupont@cwu.edu.

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