



PRESIDENTIAL LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY



WESTERN
COLORADO UNIVERSITY

GUNNISON, COLORADO



F&D Studio

THE OPPORTUNITY



Western Colorado University invites applications and nominations for the position of President.

Reporting to the Board of Trustees, the President of Western Colorado University (Western) serves as the University's chief executive officer, providing leadership to support the institution's mission to promote intellectual maturity, critical thinking, and personal growth in its students and prepare them to assume constructive roles in local, national, and global communities. Western's distinctive character emerges from unity among academic and professional disciplines, high standards of scholarship, individualized learning, and a unique environment in the

Rocky Mountains of western Colorado.

The successful applicant will possess a demonstrated record of effective leadership with significant management experience at an institution or organization of comparable size, scope, and complexity. Candidates must demonstrate the highest integrity and ethical standards with strong interpersonal, collaboration, and communication skills, and are expected to be a significant presence on campus, within the regional community, and the State of Colorado. With the skills and experience to be the chief advocate for Western, the president will work with state and federal elected leaders to enhance the financial sustainability of Western. They should

be a proven fundraiser who will engage with donors, alumni, and community leaders in development activities. The candidate will have the capacity to build on Western's innovative partnerships, like the one with the University of Colorado Boulder. This will strengthen Western's academic enterprise by building creative partnerships to grow enrollment, and leverage the energy created by a successful NCAA Division II athletics program and mountain sports programming. They will embrace Western's distinctive location in the Gunnison Valley of the Rocky Mountains to increase success for Western as an educational and transformative destination for all students.





THE PLACE



“The Gunnison Country, anchored by the towns of Gunnison and Crested Butte, is a stunningly beautiful

mountain paradise on Colorado’s Western Slope. The region is characterized by high alpine valleys surrounded by the 14,000-foot-high San Juan, Elk, and Sawatch Ranges.”

– Dr. Duane Vandenbusche, Western Professor of History and former Colorado State Historian, “Around Gunnison and Crested Butte.”

“The place we live has the power to ground and shape us. The Gunnison Valley inspires us through its natural beauty and caring community, and it challenges us through its weather and geographical isolation. To live here, people support one another, try new things, and persevere. They discover themselves here,

which builds grit, resilience, and character – all of which serve people in their personal and professional lives.”

– Dr. Brooke Moran, Western Professor of Recreation & Outdoor Education and Outdoor Industry MBA

The Rocky Mountains and the Gunnison Valley are not merely a breathtaking backdrop, they are an integral part of the educational experience at Western. Western is an institution with an incomparable sense of place, which derives from faculty, students, and community embracing the magnificent beauty of nature embedded in the Western educational experience. This sense of place is a part of every person who joins the Western community. Students, educators, and staff who choose

Western possess curiosity, resilience, integrity, courage, endurance, and a commitment to learning and teaching excellence. These qualities are developed in the Western experience of personalized education, where the professor-student ratio is 16-1. The University and Gunnison Valley have a symbiotic relationship with a rich texture of intellectual discovery and the vibrancy of student learning. The Gunnison Valley provides the University with exhilarating opportunities for experiential learning and exploration. The University provides the Valley with energetic intellectual curiosity, broadens its diversity, and provides an array of enrichment and entertainment opportunities through extended studies, lectures, concerts, and athletic events.





THE ROLE OF THE PRESIDENT

The President is Western's chief executive officer and advocate of the university, reporting to the Board of Trustees. Committed to a process of shared governance, the President is responsible for strategic planning and management of academic, personnel, fiscal, and student life policies of the institution. The President and the Board of Trustees are responsible for advancing the interests of Western by working effectively with regional community leaders; local, state, and federal government leaders; alumni, donors, and the Western Foundation.





EXPECTATIONS

The President will lead Western Colorado University by strengthening relationships with faculty, staff, students, and the community; building a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI); developing and stewarding resources; focusing on enrollment, retention, completion, and post-graduate success; and being a community leader on campus and in Colorado. The new President will bring ideas to the evolving, highly competitive higher education business model. This requires creative branding of academic offerings coupled with efficiency while focusing on integrating Western's liberal arts and professional mission with the recently created Rady School partnership with the University of Colorado Boulder to offer engineering and computer science degrees.



BUILDING A CULTURE OF TRUST AND UNITY

The new President will inspire confidence with the Western trustees, faculty, staff, students, and community by engaging in visible leadership both on campus and off. Reaching out to the various constituencies is a key component to developing a unified culture and taking advantage of the talents found within the campus community. In addition to campus stakeholders, the President will be a leader in the Valley and capitalize on opportunities in the community to advance Western's mission.

A natural relationship builder, the new President will find ways to encourage collaboration across both academic and operational programs. Building structures to support championing people, recognizing success, and creating opportunities that ensure Western is a “great place to work” will be a key strategic priority of the new President.



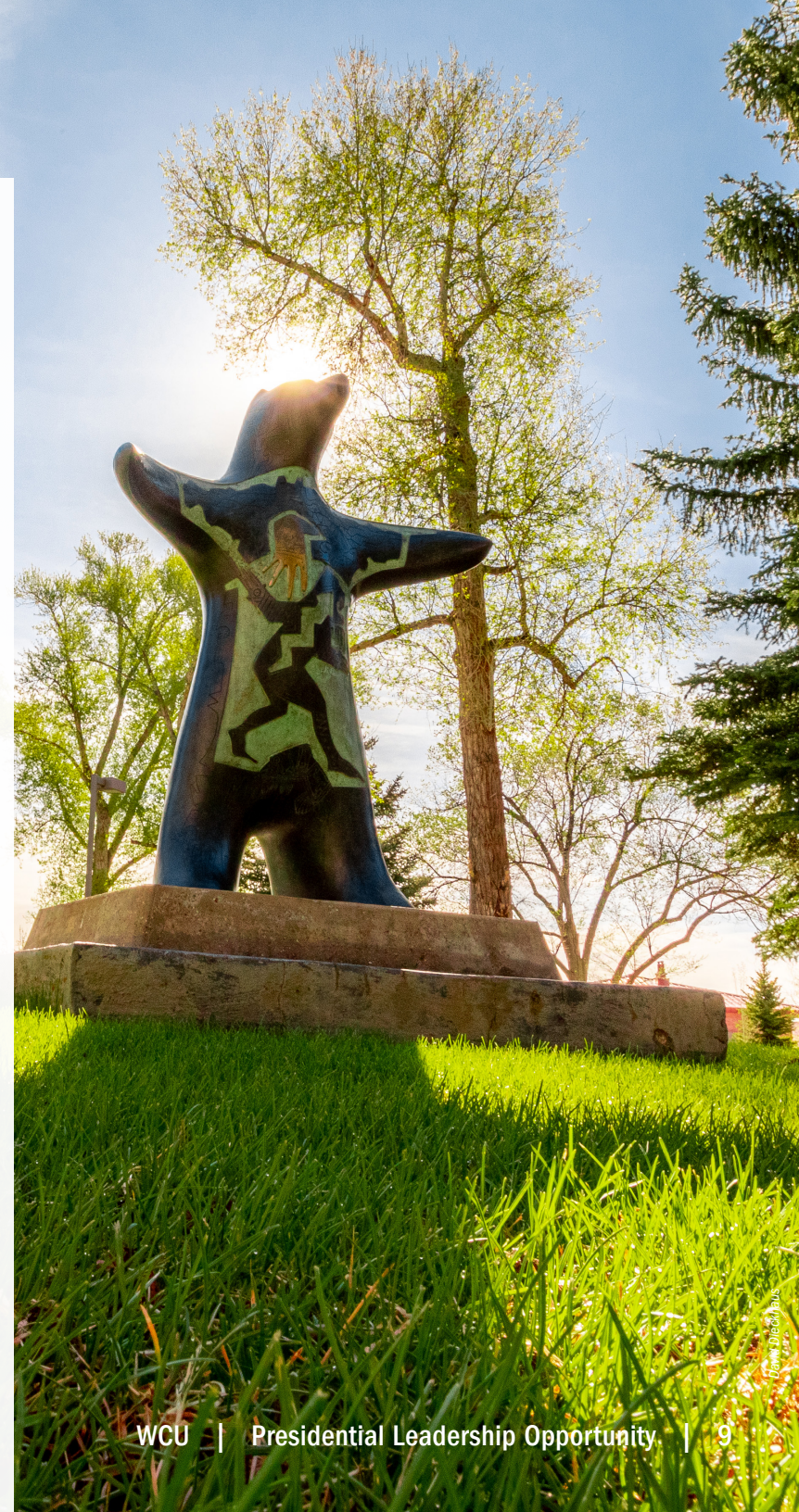


DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

The new President will be passionate about and committed to a climate of inclusion, belonging, and safety at Western. A focus on DEI will be central to the culture the new President will build. They will support the expansion and development of policies, programs, services, and activities that educate faculty, staff, and students on the principles and practices of equity, diversity, and inclusion and cultivate a climate of awareness, understanding, and respect for all individuals and groups.

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability will be another core value of the President. They will take an expansive view of what is facing the world and how Western can lead on climate change by developing Western's local and global sustainability initiatives across numerous disciplines. In addition, the new President will understand the intersectionality of DEI and sustainability and will support programs and structures that advance prosperity and justice.



RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, AND STUDENT SUCCESS



Understanding the challenging demographic trends facing higher education, particularly for a rural institution, the President will be expected to ensure growing and sustainable student enrollment levels through an effective strategy that provides state support, tuition, housing, and fee revenues aligned with budget needs as well as seeking opportunities to diversify revenue streams through partnerships, concurrent enrollment, and cash-funded programming. They will also support an infrastructure that is focused on student retention, completion, and post-graduate success for traditional and non-traditional students.



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ELEVATE WESTERN CAMPAIGN



In 2018, Western was the grateful recipient of a historic \$80 million-plus commitment from alumnus Paul Rady. Thanks to the Rady family generosity, a partnership with the University of Colorado Boulder College of Engineering & Applied Science was created. The Rady gift inspired Western to pursue many ambitious visions and created the opportunity to do much more.

To that end, in 2019, Western launched the Elevate Western Campaign – a comprehensive fundraising campaign which has raised nearly \$20 million towards a goal of \$80 million by 2026. The new Western President must build on the campaign's momentum and inspire new energy and investment into fundraising efforts.

PARTNERSHIPS



Public-private partnerships are critical for Western's future and the success of its students. The new President will continually seek opportunities to partner with industry, government, public and private foundations, NGOs, and other academic institutions to create opportunities for the Western community.



COLORADO



The new President will utilize political experience and savvy as the chief advocate for Western with the Colorado General Assembly, the Governor, as well as local, state, and federal elected officials. The new President must cultivate relationships with Western's external partners to navigate Colorado's political landscape and build positive working relationships with elected officials and community and business leaders.



PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS: *(In no particular order)*

- Minimum of 10 years of progressive leadership experience in higher education and/or other sectors with familiarity of the university environment.
- Bachelor's degree required. Advanced degree strongly preferred.
- Proven history of leadership and management of people, finance, and operations.
- Student success centered.
- Record of success in advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.
- Commitment to stewarding sustainable natural resources that fosters social, ecological, and economic well-being.
- Demonstrated ability to build trust within a shared governance environment with diverse stakeholders.
- Proven ability to generate revenues through public relationships and private fundraising.
- Innovative and entrepreneurial spirit with proven success taking calculated risks.
- Motivating leader who builds strong morale and unifies people; inspires trust and treats all community members with dignity and respect.
- Strong interpersonal skills – communications and listening – and emotional intelligence.
- Highly collaborative, resourceful problem-solver with intellectual curiosity and a desire for life-long learning.
- Sense of accountability for self and the community members.
- Knowledge of public higher education trends and challenges.
- Appreciation for the liberal arts and the interdisciplinary opportunities created with the new engineering and computer science programs.
- Ability to build, maintain, and improve relationships with the legislators and the governor.
- Enthusiasm and support for NCAA sports competition at the Division II level.
- A resilient leader who advocates for the Western community.



ABOUT WESTERN – WESTERN’S RICH HISTORY



Western Colorado University delivers career preparation, engineering, computer and other sciences, and a liberal arts curriculum to about 3,500 intellectually adventurous undergraduate and graduate students in the heart of the Rocky Mountains. Our University’s small size and unique setting ensure students receive personalized attention, gain hands-on experience, graduate without taking on excessive debt, and are prepared to make meaningful contributions in Colorado and beyond. From engineers to outdoor recreation professionals, teachers, and artists, Western Colorado University graduates become preeminent leaders in their fields.

Founded in 1901 as the Colorado State Normal School, Western was the first college on

Colorado’s Western Slope and was dedicated to the education and preparation of teachers. Over the course of more than a century liberal arts and professional learning has become the heart of Western’s moorings and is the touchstone for all education at the University.

In 1923, the institution evolved into a four-year institution and was renamed Western State College, with the iconic “W” built on nearby Tenderfoot Mountain overlooking the school. The W remains one of the largest and highest human-made letters, at 420 feet tall. It was whitewashed in 1924, and our Mountain Rescue team sets it on fire every Homecoming.

Western’s official colors were chosen in 1923—crimson for the color of Indian Paintbrush which grow on the hillsides in the Gunnison Valley and slate representing sage.

The fawn was the school’s original mascot representing alertness, strength, speed, curiosity, grace, and sensitivity. In the 1950s, the Mountaineer would replace the fawn as mascot through a student contest.

From music and the arts to social and natural sciences and an array of professional programs, academic excellence in a variety of fields has grown at Western as it remains a proud student-focused learning institution.

Western’s first graduate programs were created in the 1920s. After an 18-year hiatus, the State of Colorado re-authorized graduate programs at Western in 2007. Distinctive graduate programming is once again a key part of Western’s future in serving the region and the world. In its 2021 edition of the Almanac, the Chronicle of Higher Education listed Western as the ninth-fastest growing institution among graduate-degree issuing schools in the nation for the decade between 2009-2019.

With expansion came the need to reflect the quality of education in Western’s own name. In 2012, Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper signed into law Western’s second name change, from Western State College to Western State Colorado University. The name was simplified in 2019 to Western Colorado University with Governor Jared Polis’ signature.



"The Rady School of Computer Science & Engineering at Western Colorado University is home to the Western-CU Boulder Partnership program. There is no other program like it in the State of Colorado. With our state-of-the-art facilities, we have created a strong experiential education to engage our students. The partnership students are exceptional scholars and problem-solvers."

– Dr. Jenifer Blacklock, Director of the Rady School of Computer Science & Engineering



Western has been the home to NCAA championship skiers, cross country runners, and wrestlers, and successful Division II basketball and football teams among both women and men. The Mountaineer Bowl, built in 1948, was long recognized as the highest college football field in the nation. Twenty-three athletes from Western have competed in the Olympic Games.

More recently, Western has added such state-of-the-art buildings as the Borick Business Building, the Mountaineer Field House, the University Center, and the Paul M. Rady Building. Two transformational gifts have resulted in the Paul M. Rady School of Computer Science & Engineering and the Clark Family School of Environment & Sustainability.

The Rady School supports project-based learning and industry focused initiatives. The partnership is a distinctive engineering program in Colorado, as it offers low student-to-faculty ratios, and retention and support initiatives at a small university. Students also benefit from internship and job resourcing, curriculum, research, and extracurricular activity options from two different universities.

In 120 years of service, Western has grown to now offer more than 100 areas of undergraduate study and nine graduate degrees, launching graduates into successful fields, and allowing them to contribute dynamically to society's needs.





MISSION

“Western Colorado University promotes intellectual maturity and personal growth in its students and prepares them to assume constructive roles in local, national, and global communities. Western’s distinctive character emerges from its unity among academic and professional disciplines, high standards of scholarship, and a unique environment in the mountains of western Colorado.”

In 2021, Western’s Trustees embarked on a journey to redefine the vision and values based on input from the entire Western community. The new President will be an embodiment of this renewed focus and purpose.



WHO ARE WE?

- Public university featuring liberal arts, sciences, and professional programs
- Co-ed residential campus that serves approximately 3,500 students
- Located in Gunnison, Colorado
- Undergraduate and graduate programs in 100+ areas of study
- More than 25 majors, nine graduate programs, over 30 accelerated degree programs, and partnerships with other state schools





ENROLLMENT

- Total student headcount 3,680 (Fall 2021)
- 47% Undergraduate degree-seeking
11% Graduate degree-seeking
33% Concurrent Enrollment
9% Non-degree seeking
- 55% Male, 45% Female
- Students are from almost every county in Colorado, all 50 states, and five countries
- Underrepresented minority student headcount is about 30% of total enrollment
- Ethnic diversity of our entire student-body:
59% White
19% Hispanic
5% Black or African American
4% Multi-Race
2% Asian
1% American Indian or Alaska Native
1% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
9% Unknown/Other



STUDENT EXPERIENCE

- 80% of students receive some form of financial aid
- Student-to-faculty ratio of 16:1
- Retention rate is 74%
- 6-year graduation rate is 51%
- NCAA Division II athletics program offers 13 sports and is thriving with 13 All-Americans, 65 All-RMAC performers, and 99 Academic Achievement Awards



FACULTY AND STAFF

- 83% of classes are taught by full-time faculty
- Western accounts for 483 jobs, both direct and indirect, in Gunnison County
- 65% tenure density (tenure density is the proportion of all faculty who are tenured or tenure-track)
- 85% of faculty possess terminal degrees



SOCIAL MEDIA



Facebook: @WesternColoradoUniversity



Instagram: @westerncoloradouniversity



LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/school/western-colorado-university](https://www.linkedin.com/school/western-colorado-university)



Twitter: @WesternColoU



TikTok: @westerncou



DISTINCTIONS

- U.S. News and World Report ranked Western as the top institution among its peers in 2021 in the Regional Universities West poll. Western tied for No. 61, up 14 places from the previous year.
- Forbes again ranked Western as one of America's Top Colleges and improved one spot to 112th in the West, fall 2019.
- College Raptor ranked Western as Hidden Gem of Rocky Mountain Colleges in 2021.
- College Recon ranked Western as a top VA-approved university.
- U.S. News & World Report 2021 edition ranked Western No. 35 in Top Public Schools in Regional Universities West as well as No. 75 in Regional Universities West. Western landed ahead of all but one peer institution in those categories.
- Included in The Princeton Review's Guide to Green Colleges: 2022 Edition
- Rated Silver in the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS)



ACADEMICS

Western offers more than 100 areas of study, including 25 majors and nine graduate programs. Our campus serves on-campus and remote learners, transfer students, veterans, and adult learners working on degree completion.

UNDERGRADUATE MAJORS & MINORS

- Accounting
- Anthropology
- Applied Physics/Pre-Engineering
- Art
- Biology
- Business Administration
- Business Administration and Environment & Sustainability
- Business Analytics (minor)
- Business Law (minor)
- Chemistry
- Communication Arts
- Computer Science
- Computer Science – CU Partnership
- Creative Writing (minor)
- Data Analytics (minor)
- Economics
- Elementary Education
- Energy Management (minor)
- English
- Environment & Sustainability
- Environmental Science (minor)
- Exercise & Sport Science
- Film Studies (minor)
- Geography & Geospatial Analysis (minor)
- Geology
- History
- Humanities & Diversity (minor)
- Innovation & Entrepreneurship (minor)
- Latin American Studies (minor)
- Mathematics
- Mechanical Engineering – CU Partnership

- Music
- Music Technology (minor)
- Nutrition Science
- Philosophy (minor)
- Physical Education (minor)
- Physics (minor)
- Politics & Government
- Psychology
- Public Relations (minor)
- Recreation & Outdoor Education
- Sales (minor)
- Sociology
- Spanish
- Sport Psychology (minor)
- Theatre
- Web Design & Development – Art (minor)
- Web Design & Development – Computer Science (minor)

SECONDARY LICENSURE

- K-12 Education
- Secondary Education

ACCELERATED GRADUATE DEGREES

- Bachelor of Arts/Science
- Arts/Science with M.A. in Education
- Elementary Education with

M.A. in Education

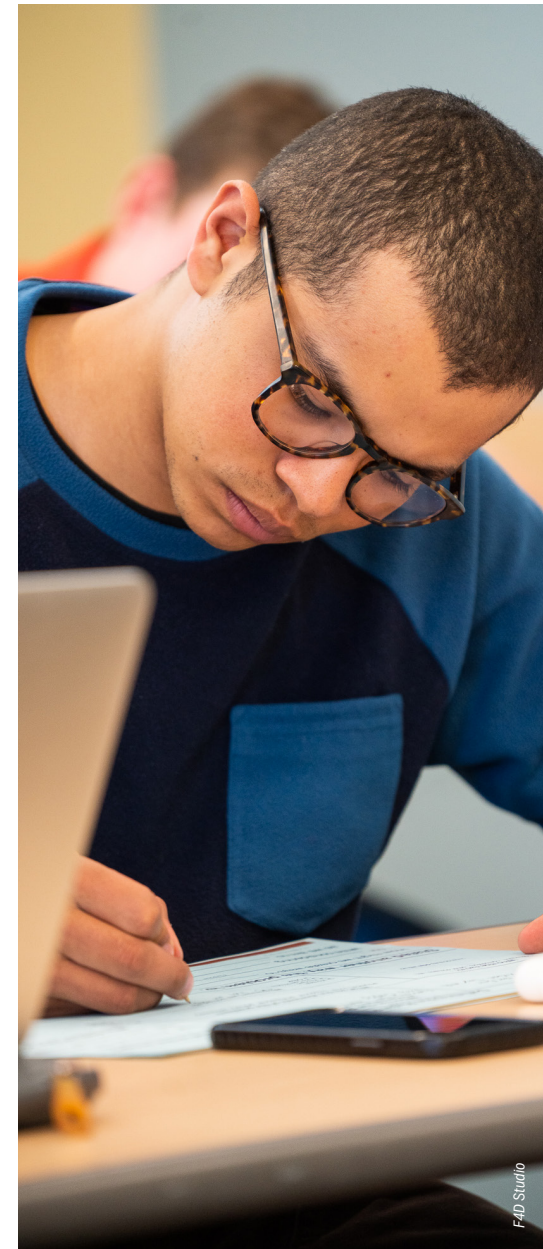
- Graduate Program in Creative Writing
- M.A. in Gallery and Museum Management
- M.S. in Ecology
- M.S. in Exercise & Sport Science
- Master in Environmental Management
- Outdoor Industry MBA

PRE-PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

- Pre-Engineering
- Pre-Health
- Pre-Law
- Pre-Nursing
- Pre-Medicine
- Pre-Physical Therapy

GRADUATE PROGRAMS

- Creative Writing
- Ecology
- Education
- Exercise & Sport Science
- Gallery and Museum Management
- Master in Environmental Management
- Outdoor Industry MBA
- Rural Community Health
- Special Education





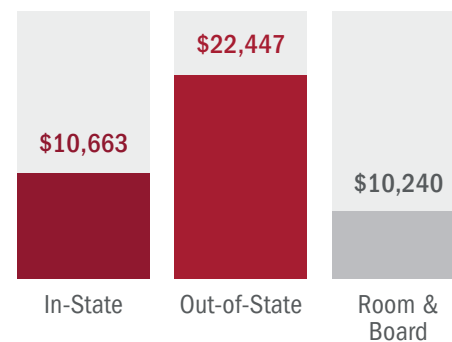
STUDENT AND CAMPUS LIFE

Western's students come from all backgrounds and ages, with one goal in mind: a successful learning experience that will enhance their contribution to the world and lead to a meaningful life. Our students participate in a variety of NCAA Division II and club level sports. They pursue academic excellence in a wide range of areas - from Exercise & Sport Science (ESS) and research in our High-Altitude Performance (HAP) Lab, to conservation issues in the Clark Family School of Environment & Sustainability. Additionally, Western offers more than 30 clubs, further enhancing students' collegiate experience. We know people of different backgrounds bring various experiences and perspectives to the classroom and community. We strive to foster a respectful, welcoming learning and social environment, and take a firm and unyielding stance in support of diversity, inclusivity, scientific inquiry, and creative expression.





TUITION & FEES 2021-2022



FINANCIAL AID RECEIVED FALL 2021

(First-time Freshmen
and Transfers)

Grants or Scholarship Aid
\$2,669,338



DEGREE COMPLETIONS 2020-21

Bachelor's Degree **338**

Graduate Degree **138**



FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Western's FY2021-22 total budgeted operating revenue is \$73.0 million. This includes:

- \$24.0 million (33%) from undergraduate tuition and fees;
- \$16.6 million (23%) in state appropriations;
- \$13.4 million (18%) from sources with restricted use (federal and state financial aid, Rady School support, ARPA allocations, etc.);
- \$11.5 million (16%) from auxiliary sources (residence halls, facility fee, food service, bookstore, conference services, etc.);
- \$5.5 million (8%) from graduate tuition and fees.

Western's FY2021-22 total budgeted operating expenditure is \$73.0 million. This includes:

- \$31.5 million (43%) in faculty and staff compensation;
- \$19.0 million (26%) in general operating expenses (department operational support, student employment, travel, utilities, etc.);
- \$15.4 million (21%) in scholarships and fellowships (including federal, state, and private support);
- \$6.0 million (8%) in debt service payments.



ALUMNI RELATIONS



Western Colorado University has more than 30,000 alumni with many residing in the Gunnison Valley and along the Front Range of Colorado. Distinguished alumni range from titans of industry like Paul Rady, CEO/President, Antero Resources, to amazing athletes like Austin Ekeler, NFL running back, Los Angeles Chargers, to Western Interim President Nancy Chisholm, to renowned neurosurgeon Dr. Sean Markey, to famed underwater archaeological explorer Barry Clifford. Our energized and engaged alumni participate in events like Homecoming and our annual Alumni Ski Weekend, mentor our students through our Mountaineer Mentors program, and stay connected with the University by reading our Westerner alumni magazine.

ADVANCEMENT



In addition to the generous gift from Paul Rady, in 2019 Western launched the Elevate Western Campaign – a transformative fundraising initiative that will leverage this critical juncture in our history and affirm our identity as Colorado’s boutique provider of targeted programs.

Elevate Western will enable our University to develop preeminent degree programs, provide aspirational students with life-changing scholarship and learning opportunities, bolster recruitment and retention efforts, pursue leading-edge research initiatives, and enhance campus infrastructure. The most ambitious fundraising initiative in our history, Elevate Western will strategically and significantly advance our institutional mission, amplify our delivery of high-value, customized education, and create significant and lasting impact – impact that will reverberate throughout the Rocky Mountain West and beyond.

Having completed two years of the seven-year campaign, Western alumni and friends have generously contributed nearly \$20 million to Elevate Western. There is great momentum built for this effort to be successful.





ABOUT GUNNISON

Nestled in the Rocky Mountains on the Western Slope of Colorado, Gunnison is a mix of old and new. From seemingly endless outdoor recreation opportunities to a robust ranching community, the area has much to offer. Tourism is a main driver of the economy, as about 80% of the county is public lands, and agriculture also plays a big role with about two-thirds of private land dedicated to ranching operations.

In the summer, the Gunnison River and the Blue Mesa Reservoir serve as playgrounds for rafting, swimming, fishing, sailing, and motorboating. Mountain bikers, hikers, and trail runners can explore 750-plus miles of singletrack trails, some of which are easily accessed from campus. In winter, Crested Butte Mountain Resort, half an hour away, is bustling with skiers from all over the world. A free bus — with a stop on campus — transports students to and from the resort. Western is also a 40-minute drive from Monarch Mountain, situated on the Continental Divide.

Gunnison County (pop. 16,800) has three main municipalities: Gunnison, a city with a population of about 6,400; Crested Butte, a town of about 2,000; and Mt. Crested Butte, population of about 1,000. Gunnison is 200 miles southwest of Denver, the state's capital.





Gunnison County is:

- Home to the arts with the Gunnison Arts Center and the Crested Butte Center for the Arts.
- A popular place to eat out with everything from an Italian restaurant on the river to brewpubs. Each town has its own trendy dining establishments.
- Fun in the winter with groomed Nordic ski trails, indoor and outdoor ice rinks, and abundant sunshine (300-plus days of sunshine per year).
- Resplendent in the summer with festivals, biking, horseback riding, wildflower wandering, and a host of other events. Daytime temperatures rarely get above 90 degrees.

To learn more about the area:

[Gunnison Country Chamber of Commerce](#)

[Crested Butte/Mt. Crested Butte Chamber of Commerce](#)

[Tourism and Prosperity Partnership](#)

COMPENSATION PACKAGE

Total Annual Compensation Range: \$250,000 - \$340,000. Total compensation may include base salary plus performance based bonus. Historically, the University has provided housing and vehicle, or an optional vehicle allowance. Full employee benefits package including shared contribution medical and dental insurance, defined contribution retirement plan, employer paid life and long term disability insurance, voluntary insurance plans, and undergraduate tuition remission for dependents (after one year of service).

APPLICATION AND NOMINATION PROCESS

The Search Committee will begin a review of applications in early January and continue its work until an appointment is made. To assure full consideration, application materials should be received by January 10, 2022. Candidates should provide:

- Letter of interest stating how the candidate's experiences and qualifications connect with the required/preferred characteristics and priorities expressed in the presidential profile
- Curriculum vitae/resume
- Statement of contribution to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Five professional references with emails, telephone numbers, and a description of the candidate's professional relationship with each reference listed (references will not be contacted without prior written authorization from the applicant).

Applications and nominations should be sent electronically (PDF or MS Word) to:
WesternPresident@agbsearch.com

The search is being assisted by:

Ms. Monica Burton | monica.burton@agbsearch.com | 917.825.2961
Dr. Margaret "Peggy" Plympton | margaret.plympton@agbsearch.com | 484.554.4542
Mr. Andrew Bowen | andrew.bowen@agbsearch.com | 802.345.1279

For more information about the search, visit western.edu/presidential-search

Western Colorado University is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer and is committed to a diverse, equitable, and inclusive campus. [Western EEO](#)