



UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

FY2021 Annual Review Narrative Survey

Unit Name: Office of External Affairs

Programmatic & Academic Vitality Narratives

- 1) Have you made any changes to your unit's annual budget development process from the response provided last year? If yes, please briefly describe the changes you've made to your unit's annual internal budget development process. If no, please answer with a simple, "no changes." *Word Limit: 500*

No Changes

<OPB inserting FY20 response, below>

Being a relatively small organization, the Vice President for External Affairs and Director of Finance and Administration work in tandem to develop the unit's budget submission. In recent years items for submission are based on standing needs. However, there are times when External Affairs is selected to lead a campus initiative, such as the periodic Economic Impact Survey that we are proposing to refresh in 2019. The Economic Impact Survey refresh will require one-time off-cycle funding, which is not an entirely unusual situation for External Affairs, given that its business model must be reactive as well as proactive.

- 2) Have you made any changes to your unit's strategic plan in the past year? If yes, what are 3-5 key elements of your unit's new/revised strategic plan? If no, please comment on the progress you've made in 3-5 key areas of your strategic plan. *Word Limit: 500* Only minor changes:
- o The Office of External Affairs brings together units and functions responsible for influencing public policy and opinion, communicating about the university priorities, challenges and achievements and strengthening the university's reputation and the perceptions people hold of it.
 - o Our four government relations teams advocate for the UW's priorities, provide advice on legislative strategy, build and maintain strategic relationships and raise awareness of emerging issues and opportunities. These efforts result annually in millions of dollars in both state, federal and regional financial support for a variety of UW programs.
 - o The Office of External Affairs also engages in vigorous outreach and engagement by hosting elected officials, staff and other key business and civic stakeholders on campus and at other UW locations throughout the state.
- 3) What major obstacles or institutional barriers currently do, or will, hinder execution of your strategic plan? What are you doing to address these challenges? If no changes from your response to either component of this question from last year, please answer "no changes": *Word Limit: 250*
- o Last year we were primarily concerned with the continued use of temporary funding for two of our staff members. We are grateful that the decision was made to provide permanent funding for those two positions effective with the FY 20 operating budget.
 - o Our secondary concern is that some of our financial support for our state contract lobbyists is dependent on temporary funds which were not provided in FY 20. This leaves the increased cost of those contracts dependent on our carryover funds. Due to some unanticipated cost savings that have arisen in FY 20, the funding for these costs will not be problematic. Going forward, our carryover spend plans will require a reinstatement of those funds and we have included that in our FY 21 funding request at the original \$45,000 level.

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- o For the past two years, our Spokane Center staffing has included a member from CoMotion who advises and mentors members of the Spokane and Eastern Washington start-up community. The position was originally funded on a temporary basis by the Provost's office with the goal of broadening the UW's engagement in Spokane and Eastern Washington beyond medical education. Beginning in FY 20 CoMotion became short of funding for the position within its own financial resources and now relies on temporary funding provided by the President's office and the central budget office. The Office of External Affairs remains concerned with maintaining the foothold and progress the UW has made since the opening of the Spokane Office in 2015 and the positive effects of ongoing outreach and partnership with Spokane and Eastern Washington. In order to maintain that forward progress, we considered partnering with CoMotion to request permanent funding to continue the Program Operations Specialist position's presence at the Spokane Center. A funding request for \$48,434 for one-half the salary and benefits for the position was considered for FY 21. As of this writing, a decision has not been made as to whether to continue to fund the Spokane CoMotion position. Further discussions as well as a potential funding request may be forthcoming.
- o For decades, the UW's 90 plus year old cherry trees have attracted thousands of visitors to campus each spring when they bloom. Every year, the popularity of cherry blossom season on campus increases. While the University has done some things to promote this on its website/social media, little has been done to accommodate the growing crowds which has resulted in significant traffic congestion on weekends, inadequate services, and a missed opportunity to engage visitors on campus and in the neighboring University District.

The Office of External Affairs has collaborated with several campus units to develop a modest plan that will improve the visitor experience while also providing some protection from crowds to our infrastructure. The plan improves both campus and visitor safety as well as traffic flow by adding increased UWPD presence on campus. It will better engage visitors through improved social media and an information booth and directional signage. The proposal will provide more comfort and sanitation services to visitors as well as additional garbage receptacles and collection. Finally, the plan compliments the work of the University District Partnership to create a new Cherry Blossom Festival to encourage visitors to campus to patronize the businesses in the University District before and after viewing the trees.

The Office of External Affairs is acting as the organizing campus unit to implement this effort, providing \$40,000 in needed funding from its own reserves for FY 20 and requesting permanent funding for FY 21 to be channeled to the various units.

- 4) Over the next year, could any of your planned strategic activities result in material changes to revenues or expenditures, faculty or staff workload, or the student experience within your unit/campus and/or another unit/campus? *Word Limit: 500* We do not foresee that at this juncture.
- 5) What is your unit doing to effectively use or redeploy resources in a way that benefits your unit/campus and/or other units/campuses? *Word Limit: 500*
 - o Our small but highly effective government relations teams continue to provide a considerable return on investment given the financial investment involved.
 - o UW Video realized \$177,981 in excess revenues over expenditures at the end of FY 19 thereby making remarkable progress in paying down its cumulative operating deficit. While we could never guarantee that level of performance each year, we continue to take steps to ensure that progress continues toward resolution of the deficit over time.



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- o The end of FY 19 capped the first year of our experiment outsourcing technical fiscal support to Creative Communications in Finance and Facilities, rather than retaining a half time fiscal specialist in house. We happily report that it was a tremendous success resulting in a cost savings of approximately 50% over what we formerly expended for a half time Fiscal Specialist along with access to a pool of talent, exceeding the capability of the previous lone staff member.
- 6) For UW student facing units, what are you doing to improve the experience and outcomes of students on your campus or in your unit? What could the University do to support your efforts? *Word Limit: 500, Leave blank if N/A*