

UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

FY2020 Annual Review Narrative Response for: **255 - Continuum College**Programmatic & Academic Vitality Narrative

- 1) Please briefly describe your unit's annual internal budget development process. *Question Type: Free Text, Word Limit: 500, Required For: All Units*

UWC² primarily uses a zero-based budgeting approach for individual program budgets and administrative budget salaries and benefits. We categorize our budget process into three groups: School/College programmatic budgeting, UWC² programmatic budgeting, and UWC² administrative budgeting.

For programmatic budgeting, the budget process starts in Autumn quarter the prior fiscal year. Each program is provided with a budget template with known expense formulas pre-filled (e.g., benefit load rates, UW Overhead rates, UWC² fees).

- **Schools/Colleges:** UWC² works collaboratively with campus partners to develop fiscal year budgets; there are over 150 programmatic budget numbers (cost centers) used to support our campus-partner fee-based programs. The budgeting process includes working with campus to identify faculty, staff, and programmatic expenses. Estimation of program enrollments and revenue generation against historical enrollment trends is utilized to calculate the fee rate to be charged to students in order to create a financially sustainable, low risk budget.
- **UWC² Programs:** UWC² works internally to develop almost 200 non-credit budgets annually. Like the school/college budgeting process, we start with estimating instructor and programmatic expenses at the cost center level. We compare our estimation of program enrollments and revenue generation against historical enrollment trends to determine the fee rate that will be charged to students in order to create financially sustainable programs.
- **Administrative Budgets:** The UWC² annual budgeting process for administrative cost centers starts in early Spring for the upcoming fiscal year. UWC² leadership discusses headcount increases/decreases and promotional/salary increase proposals. Salaries and benefits are calculated based on leadership's agreement regarding new FTE, promotions, and anticipated salaries for existing staff. Typically, 80-85% of our annual administrative budget is salaries and benefits, which is why we use zero-based budgeting for this activity to ensure accuracy.

In contrast, an incremental-based calculation is used for the remainder of the budget, which typically mirrors recommendations from OPB during the previous budget cycle (e.g., 2% or CPI forecasts), along with funding for specific projects that may increase a unit's budgeting for the duration of the project. Funding for our administrative budget comes from the fees (program management and infrastructure) that we charge to programs; the rates and estimated funding were determined the prior October (6 months earlier); our campus partners need our rates to increase at stable rates (usually 2-4%).

- 2) What are 3-5 key elements of your unit's current strategic plan? *Question Type: Free Text, Word Limit: 500, Required For: All Units*

The UWC² strategic plan is designed to move our organization towards implementing the framework for the 60-year curriculum (60YC). We have operationally defined the 60YC as the formal higher educational experiences an individual will need over a 60-year (or more) working life. Some of the key areas in support of the 60YC that will be focused on in the upcoming year include the following:

Online Learning: UWC² is driving the development of a new, robust center for online learning at UW that will debut in FY2020. The center will be a collaborative effort between Academic Affairs, the Graduate School, CoMotion, and our campuses, schools and colleges. The center will require strategic start-up funds from UWC² reserves and a new financial/service model. Hiring for the new center has begun.

Non-Credit Credential Framework: As learning stretches over a lifetime, it is likely we will need new nomenclature and new markers of completion that characterize formal learning in more distinct ways and allow more granular tracking of skills and knowledge. In FY2020, we will implement a new non-credit credential taxonomy and framework across UWC²,



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to include credentials beyond degree and certificate, which may be used to define learning across a lifespan rather than a distinct course of study.

Updating the Academic Stack: In order to track even a single learner across decades of life, we are rethinking our digital infrastructure. In FY2020, UWC² will begin implementation of the technology roadmap (currently under construction) designed to fully meet the needs of our students in the context of a 60-year curriculum. Key strategic initiatives include upgrading, expanding, and integrating our SIS and CRM systems to improve the student experience around self-service, credentialing, and scale. Improvements to the academic stack will be on-going.

Scholarships for non-credit students: Success for UWC² includes increasing access to education for low-income individuals residing in our Seattle community. In FY2020, UWC² will continue to grow our scholarship program that launched in FY2017. The scholarship program currently serves low-income individuals who can utilize skills gained from a certificate program to advance their careers and move out of poverty. Our goal is to offer scholarships to 10% of non-credit students by FY2022.

Improving our relationship with UW Schools and Colleges: In addition to our non-credit programmatic offering, UWC² is also a service partner for schools and colleges with fee-based programs. Our long-standing one-size-fits all model does not always meet the complex and unique needs across campus and we are proactively working on a positive path forward.

- 3) **What major obstacles or institutional barriers currently do, or likely will, hinder execution of your strategic plan? What are you doing to address these challenges?** *Question Type: Free Text, Word Limit: 500, Required For: All Units*

Online Learning: Our largest challenge will be to meet the expectations of faculty and deans who are now increasingly interested in online learning and have many different ideas about how it should be supported. Should support be local, central, external, or some combination? Running a sustainable online development program will mean that a sustainable number of programs will need to use our services.

Data: We've long considered our ability to effectively leverage data for decision-making as a barrier to our success. In FY2020, our intent is to make strides in this area, so leadership has better insight into progress towards goals throughout the year.

Updating the Academic Stack: We face some challenges in updating the Academic Stack. The design and implementation of systems and infrastructure that integrates with legacy built systems and dead programming languages is one of the obstacles we face. We also have a backlog of work (e.g., online application, registration and payment of non-credit programs/courses), which is imperative for reducing the amount of manual work, and to allow our colleagues time to focus on value-added activities in support of programs and students.

Scholarships for non-credit students: UW Advancement has limited resources to support our scholarship goals. As a result, we have very limited access to services that support our fundraising efforts. UWC² will engage a consultancy, at the council of advancement leadership in order to assess our Certificate alumni and Osher member database and recommendations for a strategy.

Improving our relationship with UW Schools and Colleges: We have made significant improvements in our communications and service approach with some campus partners over the past year. These were areas that were identified as areas of weakness. Our work is not done, resentment has built up over the course of many years and it will take time to change long held beliefs and attitudes. The root cause of frustration for many partners is that our fee-based structure does not work for all programs. It is challenging to identify low-cost solutions that meet all school/college needs and are also flexible enough to support the different programmatic shapes, sizes, and student populations reflected in fee-based credit programs. Although these hurdles are genuine, we are actively working towards a positive future in which campus partners want to work with UWC², rather than feel forced to.



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- 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 and/or another unit/campus? *Question Type: Free Text, Word Limit: 500, Required For: All Units*

One of UWC²'s values is the never-ending pursuit of excellence, which we wholeheartedly apply to our students' experience. One of our largest initiatives that began in FY18 was to scale some of our most in-demand noncredit certificate programs. This work entailed expanding the traditional part-time classroom experience into four distinct formats; two of those formats offered online (a cohort-based online format, and a self-paced, start-anytime online format). There are multiple material student outcomes learned from this experience which will impact our strategic objectives in FY2020:

1. We increased access to non-credit programs that are currently in demand for students developing their career path (resulting in 12% overall increase in noncredit enrollment in FY18)
2. We demonstrated that by offering more flexible offerings (such as self-paced, start anytime online) that we were able to meet students when and where they were available to learn. This coming year, UWC² will continue to develop our online learning capabilities, move more in-demand career-accelerator programs into the online space, continue CRM functionality improvements, and ultimately make meaningful improvements to the student experience. This will potentially impact all three campuses and numerous schools and result in world-class online programs that represent the rich research-based education of the Husky Experience but now online.

Changes to Summer Quarter will, for the first time, allow a portion of revenue to be shared back to schools and colleges. The FY2020 pilot will only include CAS which is 90% of SQ but the revenue share will open to all schools and colleges in FY21. UWC² will be actively working with campus partners this summer so they can actively plan for next year and fully participate. The goals of the 2-year pilot include testing the mechanics of the program (year 1) and assessing the growth in courses as a measure of whether this model encourages more SQ teaching (year 2). This will be a big benefit to students who need critical courses and may increase overall campus capacity. It also has the potential to provide much-needed revenue to schools and colleges.

- 5) What is your unit doing to effectively use resources in a way that benefits your unit and/or other units/campuses? *Question Type: Free Text, Word Limit: 500, Required For: UWB, UWT, UWS Administrative Units*

The shared-services provided for UWC² already helps to keep administrative costs low for more than 110 degree programs. We are often the unit that is turned to when a department or school wants to try an innovative or unique master's degree. In many cases, it is the first time a faculty member has started a degree from scratch. We have individual staff members that have successfully launched more than 30 sustainable programs and that wealth of knowledge can be used across all schools and colleges.

In FY2020, UWC² wants to work more strategically with the School/Colleges offering fee-based programs. With over 100 fee-based degree programs* served by UWC², we know that we can do more to meet each department's goals by focusing on value-added services. We hope to provide better data to drive decision making and use the lessons learned from our online self-sustaining non-credit programs to make meaningful impact in the online degree space. The capacity we are building in support of UWC² programs will also help us be better partners to schools and colleges for their fee-based degrees.

We are also working to show that we have value to partners outside of the degree space. We are a key investor in the Othello Commons project, part of the community engagement steering committee and working team, working to add revenue share to SQ in collaboration with OPB, and in early discussions about how our data about lifelong learners could be a rich source or research for faculty.

*Degree count is based on ABBV-pathway-level-type



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- 6) What are you doing to improve the experience and outcomes of students in your unit? What could the University do to support your efforts? *Question Type: Free Text, Word Limit: 500, Required For: UWB, UWT, UWS Academic Units, UAA, Graduate School*

Not Applicable