

# THE ONEWSU SYSTEM

## INTRODUCING THE ONEWSU SYSTEM

As the state's land-grant university, Washington State University has been serving the residents of Washington state for over 130 years. Established under the mission of a true public service institution—to provide education to all, conduct scholarly inquiry that benefits society, and share expertise that boosts the lives of individuals and communities—WSU continues to have a tremendous impact on the communities it serves. WSU has a very strong brand and cultural presence across the state; as the WSU system grows and evolves, we seek opportunities for both strengthening and expanding that impact.

In the past 30 years alone, WSU has seen incredible growth—going from a single flagship campus in Pullman to an evolving system of interconnected campuses in the growing population centers of Everett, Spokane, Tri-Cities, and Vancouver. In 2015, WSU added a new medical school to the system within the Health Sciences campus in Spokane, and in 2018, Academic Outreach and Innovation was elevated as WSU's sixth campus (WSU Global) formally led by a Chancellor.

When the legislature approved WSU's original multi-campus system, they did so with the expectation that all campuses would develop focus areas directed at the needs of their local communities. Due to limitations in infrastructure, many campuses found themselves dependent on the flagship campus to provide expertise—restricting their ability to pursue degree and research programs that would appeal to local interest and take advantage of community resources. Though the current structure has led to some cases of duplicative, inconsistent, and inefficient administrative and student services, each of the campuses' unique identities have emerged:

**WSU Everett** – WSU Everett, the University's newest campus, is designed for transfer students and focuses on industry-aligned degree programs.

**WSU Global** – offering a wide variety of degree programs, WSU Global, WSU's online campus, delivers a virtual Cougar experience to students regardless of location.

**WSU Pullman** – WSU Pullman, The University's first and largest campus offers a classic college town experience with on-campus living and a rich variety of research and involvement opportunities.

**WSU Spokane** – located in a major regional medical hub, WSU Spokane is the University's health sciences campus. Students transfer to WSU Spokane after completing their first two years of study at any other campus.

**WSU Tri-Cities** – combining a small-college feel with the resources of a leading public research university, WSU Tri-Cities is a great fit for students who thrive in project-based learning.

**WSU Vancouver** – located in the dynamic Vancouver/Portland metro area, WSU Vancouver is known for its close-knit student community and real-world research opportunities.

Looking to the future, WSU must expand its outreach through the growth of a unified system infrastructure known as ONEWSU. This system supports the campuses as they evolve their individual identities and serve their constituencies, while also maintaining the quality of the WSU educational and experiential brand across the state. Like many public university systems, WSU seeks to provide appropriate level of autonomy of each campus location, while at the same time ensuring consistent branding, quality, and mission. Through the ONEWSU system structure, WSU's six campuses, five research and learning centers, and 39 extension centers join in a commitment to a set of ONEWSU operating principles, establishing an overarching philosophy that unites the WSU system and consistently guides the institution's day-to-day actions.

## ONEWSU OPERATING PRINCIPLES

The core of the ONEWSU system is **operational excellence**. Through the following operating principles, WSU will operate an efficient and effective organizational structure, characterized by systemwide operational and management processes that support and promote innovation, stewardship, entrepreneurship, and responsible risk-taking.

### One Degree

The quality of a Washington State University degree will be the same at all campuses throughout the ONEWSU system. While the desire for one diploma designation across the system was expressed in the system strategic plan, the decentralized nature of our campuses calls for reconsideration of that portion of the principle.

### One Faculty

All faculty, regardless of rank or appointment, are committed to the same standard of academic excellence across the ONEWSU system. While we recognize the uniqueness of each campus' foci and strengths, the standards for faculty career advancement are fundamentally shared at all WSU campuses, ensuring a consistent level of educational experience and interdisciplinary scholarly quality and productivity systemwide.

### Shared Accountability

WSU vice presidents, chancellors, and deans and their leadership teams each have unique and connected leadership roles that encompass campus, college, unit responsibilities, as well as

WSU system responsibilities, and are collectively accountable for the success of the institution and the system.

### **Fiscal Stewardship**

WSU's systemwide budget model supports student success and academic excellence in alignment with the ONEWSU system strategic plan and the institution's shared mission and purpose. All WSU campuses, colleges, and units operate within their authorized budgets, and are responsible for achieving fiscal, enrollment, and operating goals, as well as developing new sources of revenue that will fund future investments. Our new Executive Budget Council is seeking to improve our budget model so that we can provide greater alignment of budget authority with responsibility for all our campuses and locations.

### **Community Partnerships**

WSU seeks out and embraces opportunities to partner with external stakeholders in an effort to solve the critical problems and issues that face the state of Washington and its residents. The ONEWSU system also encourages the development of entrepreneurial activities that lead to creative, solutions-oriented partnerships. WSU sustains and enhances community-university relations statewide.

For all the above principles to be successful, and for the system to continue to achieve **operational excellence**, WSU must begin with a priority on **data-informed decision-making**. Described hereafter as the Initiative for Data-Informed Decisions (I DID), WSU is advancing its institutional analytics capabilities, providing accurate, reliable insight into the future and current needs of the institution. Through I DID, WSU will make data easily accessible for all, removing barriers to information, and allowing quick, data-driven decisions.

## **ONEWSU SYSTEM LEADERSHIP**

By 2026, WSU anticipates adding a seventh campus in Washington state and is actively considering options for an eighth campus outside of the U.S. Even to date, the growth in breadth, geographic diversity, and complexity of WSU's system has not been matched with a statewide administrative structure. Administrative leadership roles at the flagship campus are conflated with system leadership roles leading to uncertainty around decision-making and accountability and organizational inefficiencies.

Growing into a fully-fledged system will require evolving the current leadership structure towards a formalized WSU system office with dedicated leaders. The currently combined duties of President of WSU (current title) and Chancellor of WSU Pullman (not currently used) should be split into two different positions as follows:

- *WSU System President* – charged with overall leadership of the WSU system without a singular focus on any system location. The system President is responsible for hiring and evaluating campus Chancellors; representing and advocating for the ONEWSU

system including at the state level in Olympia and at the federal level in Washington, DC; setting overall vision and direction for the WSU system; and advancement of the goals and objectives of the strategic plan. The System President will also be a leader in higher education policy and active in economic development work within the State of Washington. The WSU System President is appointed by the WSU Board of Regents.

- *WSU Pullman Chancellor* – charged with overall leadership of the WSU Pullman campus. The Chancellor is responsible for strategic planning for the Pullman campus including the appointment and mentoring of appropriate Vice Chancellors. This position reports to the WSU System President. The Chancellor will be responsible for fundraising and philanthropy supporting WSU Pullman initiatives, Cougar Athletics, and will serve on the WSU System President’s Cabinet. The Chancellor is expected to be present at Pullman events supporting campus-level faculty, staff and student organizations and functions and be an active leader and participant in the greater Pullman community.

Over time, other system officers will need to be identified. Initially, many system officers might be “split positions” between various campus locations (a Vice Chancellor title) and system responsibilities (a Vice President title). It is anticipated that several leaders will continue to carry multiple titles designating campus and system responsibilities, at least for the initial transition period and perhaps beyond. Through this restructure, WSU can prioritize the work of existing leadership roles, eventually assigning these positions to a system- or campus-focused role. Thus, there would not be a need for substantial investment in hiring for new leadership positions.

Additionally, there would not be a physical ONEWSU System office. Instead, a virtual “WSU System Office” would exist where system officers spend time each month at different campuses, teaching & research centers, and extension centers (as opposed to a physically distant and costly home office). Keeping the ONEWSU System office virtual and mobile will help avoid confusion between system and campus roles and responsibilities.

## A ONEWSU FUTURE

As the ONEWSU future emerges, the following tangible processes and outcomes will begin to develop:

- Integrated planning across the system – using a sustained approach to planning that builds relationships; aligns campuses, colleges, and units; and emphasizes a preparedness to evolve and change.
- Integrated and optimized financial and human resource management (done through systemwide implementation of Workday)—including the elimination of “shadow systems” that are a result of the current structure.

- An integrated “back of the house” admissions and enrollment management plan benefiting entire WSU system, balancing the need for local recruiters at campus locations. Coupled with integrated student support services, this plan would provide the ability for students to transition smoothly between various virtual and physical WSU system locations.
- Systemwide integrated, coordinated, and optimized fundraising, corporate relations, and government relations operations.
- An integrated data management structure (I DID) that supports system-level data reporting and demonstrates the impact of the ONEWSU system on Washington state as a whole, as well as key regions within the state. This initiative will also support annual reporting of important educational trends upon which the university and its leaders will be able to make data-informed decisions.
- An evolved and rebranded Extension enterprise that is more inclusive of WSU Health Sciences (advancing telehealth), as well as one that serves as county economic development centers similar to those at [Penn State University](#). These centers would facilitate bringing WSU research and scholarship to counties and communities throughout Washington, serve as incubators for small technology-focused businesses, and provide high-level expertise not currently available uniformly across the state.
- A clearly-designated system website that is inclusive of WSU across Washington and is distinctly separate from WSU Pullman’s website, similar to [Colorado State University](#). Each campus will be equally represented along with system level statistics. Additionally, it will include a focus around the ONEWSU system strategic plan.