

MEMORANDUM

TO: Faculty Senate Executive Committee

FROM: Li Xu, Chair, Senate Budget Committee

DATE: March 18, 2026

RE: Budget Committee Reaffirmation – Extension of Computer Science Degree to WSU Everett

On January 26, 2026, the Senate Budget Committee voted to approve the proposal to extend the Bachelor of Science in Computer Science degree program to the WSU Everett campus. Since that approval, the committee has received and reviewed a memorandum dated February 20, 2026 from Stephanie Kane, AVP for Institutional Research, System Analytics and Reporting, providing supplemental enrollment analysis and budgetary observations.

The IR memorandum raised the following concerns: (1) whether projected enrollments of 15 students in years one and two, growing to 30 by year five, would represent net new students or substitution from existing Everett programs; (2) whether tuition waiver programs—including the Everett Scholars Award (\$1,500/year), Distinguished Everett Scholars Award (\$2,500/year), and Everett WUE (\$11,000/year for non-residents)—were adequately accounted for in the budget; (3) that Everett’s overall headcount has not grown in proportion to the number of new programs added; and (4) the degree of career-outcome overlap between Computer Science and the existing Software Engineering program (45 students as of Fall 2025), given that Software Developers is the largest occupation by job count in the three-county region.

After careful consideration of these observations, the Budget Committee has voted to **reaffirm its approval** of the program extension. The committee’s reasoning is as follows:

1. **No additional funding is requested.** Because the program leverages existing faculty, facilities, and course infrastructure, the budgetary risk associated with enrollment substitution or waiver discounts is substantially mitigated. Even under a conservative scenario in which a portion of enrollees are drawn from existing Everett programs, the marginal cost to the university remains near zero.
2. **Enrollment substitution risk is acknowledged but acceptable.** The committee recognizes that Everett’s overall headcount growth has lagged the pace of new program additions. However, as the proposers noted, the Computer Science designation serves as a primary attractor for prospective applicants and is expected to generate net new interest, including from community college transfer students who would not otherwise have enrolled at WSU Everett. The committee expects the proposers and campus leadership to monitor enrollment at both the program and department levels and to report back if net growth does not materialize.
3. **Tuition waiver impact is limited at this scale.** While the IR memorandum correctly notes that the original budget analysis assumed gross tuition with no waiver offsets, the small initial enrollment (15 students) and the modest size of the renewable awards reduce the dollar magnitude of any discrepancy. The committee recommends that future program-level budget reporting incorporate net tuition figures that reflect applicable waiver programs.

4. **Career-outcome overlap does not negate program value.** The committee acknowledges that Computer Science and Software Engineering graduates compete in overlapping labor markets. Nevertheless, the two programs serve distinct student interests and curricular emphases, and the Computer Science designation carries broad national recognition that may attract students who would not otherwise consider WSU Everett. This is consistent with VCEA's stated recruitment strategy.

In summary, the IR feedback highlights legitimate considerations that the committee takes seriously, particularly around enrollment monitoring and accurate net-tuition budgeting. However, because the program requires no incremental funding and carries minimal downside financial risk, the committee concludes that the concerns do not rise to the level of reversing its prior approval. The committee recommends that the proposers address tuition waiver accounting in future budget updates and provide the Senate with an enrollment progress report after the second year of operation.

Please contact me if you have any questions regarding this reaffirmation.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Faculty Senate Executive Committee

FROM: Li Xu, Chair, Senate Budget Committee

DATE: January 26, 2026

RE: Budget Committee Approval – Extension of Computer Science Degree to WSU Everett

The Senate Budget Committee has reviewed the proposal to extend the Bachelor of Science in Computer Science degree program to the WSU Everett campus and is pleased to report that the committee has voted to **approve** this program extension.

After careful evaluation of the proposal and the supplemental responses provided by the Voiland College of Engineering and Architecture (VCEA), the committee finds that:

1. **No additional funding is requested.** The program will leverage existing faculty, facilities, and course infrastructure currently supporting the Software Engineering and Cybersecurity programs at WSU Everett.
2. **Adequate faculty capacity exists.** Local EECS faculty at Everett can accommodate increased enrollment through modest increases in course enrollment caps and utilization of existing classroom space.
3. **The program demonstrates financial sustainability.** With a minimum enrollment threshold of 15 students and projected steady-state growth of 30 students per year, the program is expected to supplement and strengthen adjacent programs rather than strain resources.
4. **Strong market demand supports the program.** WSU Everett's location in Washington State's technology corridor, combined with stable enrollment in related programs and continued industry demand for computer science graduates with AI competency, indicates favorable employment outcomes for graduates.

The committee is satisfied that appropriate accountability measures are in place, including ongoing enrollment monitoring at both the program and department levels, as well as ABET accreditation review cycles to ensure instructional quality.

Please contact me if you have any questions regarding this approval.

Reference: Program Extension Q&A

Program Definition – Is the proposed program a Computer Science degree or a Computer Engineering degree? Please confirm the exact degree designation. We have separately asked for

the extension for both Computer Engineering as well as Computer Science. The Computer Engineering degree request was passed late last year. This proposal request is for extending the Computer Science degree to Everett.

Course Delivery Model – How many core required courses will be delivered online, whether broadcast from Pullman or through Global Campus? What measures will ensure instructional quality, student engagement, and learning outcomes comparable to in-person instruction? There are 0 required courses delivered online or broadcast from Pullman. Although, there are optional electives that are available to students, mainly via broadcast from Pullman. These courses are currently already being broadcast to support the existing software engineering and cybersecurity degree programs in Everett, and their efficacy is reviewed through student evaluation, continuous program assessment, as well as a rigorous ABET site visit that occurs every 6 years. The WSU Everett Software Engineering program (and all VCEA programs) was visited in the Fall of 2025 to ensure that learning outcomes for all courses are met to ABET accreditation standards.

Resource Requirements – What funding is requested for staffing (recruiting, career services, teaching assistants), laboratory space, equipment, and IT support? Please provide a comprehensive budget summary. Based on the funding support provided currently to sustain other EECS programs in Everett (Electrical Engineering, Software Engineering, and Cybersecurity), we are requesting no additional funding to support the extension of the Computer Science program.

Faculty Capacity – We note that the proposal does not include a funding request for additional faculty. Do current Pullman or Global Campus faculty have sufficient capacity to accommodate increased enrollment? If so, please explain how workload will be managed without compromising instructional quality or requiring future resource requests. Based on the number of WSU Everett local faculty members in EECS, we anticipate being able to accommodate increased enrollment, largely by increasing enrollment caps in most courses and are positioned to move to larger available classrooms present on the WSU Everett campus. Additionally, we do not anticipate significant increases in broadcast section enrollment limits, as there is current unused capacity for the courses provided to Everett.

Impact on Existing Programs – Given the overlap with related degree programs, what is the likelihood that current or prospective students will simply transfer into the new program rather than generate net new enrollment? How will this affect the viability of existing programs, and what is the projected incremental enrollment growth? While we do believe that some transferring is likely, we believe that with the low additional overhead to extend the program it will cause a net increase to the enrollment numbers for the EECS department and VCEA college as a whole in Everett. Generally, the computer science degree is the major attractor for applications on the other campuses. It is then that typically students may choose other focus' within the department such as software engineering or cybersecurity. We envision that adding computer science will likely not only result in a net increase in new enrollments but also help to increase enrollments in the other adjacent programs. We anticipate enrollment growth to be an additional 30 students per year in steady state.

Program Viability and Accountability – What is the minimum enrollment threshold required for financial sustainability? Is there a sunset clause or performance evaluation timeline, and what metrics will be used to assess program success? As we are not requesting any additional funding support, the financial sustainability of this degree will largely be reliant on the financial sustainability of the adjacent programs of software engineering and cybersecurity. We believe that an enrollment of 15 students in computer science would be required to help supplement the financial sustainability of the additional existing programs. Program success metrics will include enrollment data at both the individual program level as well as department level.

Market Demand Outlook – Given the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence, ongoing volatility in the technology sector, and potential shifts in federal workforce policy, what evidence supports sustained student interest and strong employment outcomes for graduates? WSU Everett has seen stable enrollment in software engineering and growth in cybersecurity through the current climate. Specifically for the computer science degree, while a focus on AI/ML is not mandatory to the current form of the CPT_S curriculum, we at WSU Everett, as well as the EECS department at large, are embracing the need for students skilled with AI competency. Additionally, with our 6-year ABET accreditation site visit that happened in the Fall, we intend to incorporate feedback from ABET to leverage the national expectations of AI literacy in EECS schedules of study after their official report.

The department, college, and campus are working together to tackle this need. Here are several examples:

- Dr. Jeremy Thompson offered a newly developed course in the Fall entitled "Coding with Agentic AI" which is locally taught in Everett and Broadcast to Pullman.
- Additional CPT_S courses in AI and ML are available for students to take currently in Everett.
- At the EECS annual retreat in August, faculty had robust conversations around introducing AI literacy earlier into the curriculum, including throughout core and fundamental CPT_S course sequences throughout the current schedule of study.

Additionally, WSU Everett is physically positioned in the heart of the technology sector of Washington State. The message we are receiving from advisory board members and local industry leaders are the continued need for graduates in computer science and related fields with enhanced skills in relevant topics such as AI.