



February 6, 2025

Director K.D. Chapman-See
Office of Financial Management
302 Sid Snyder Ave SW STE 300
Olympia, WA 98504

Dear Director Chapman-See,

Eastern Washington University appreciates the opportunity to collaborate with the Office of Financial Management and the Legislature in assessing the impacts of the projected revenue shortfall on public agencies and institutions.

In response to fiscal challenges stemming from the Great Recession, the COVID-19 pandemic, and shifting enrollment patterns, Eastern has undertaken a strategic resource allocation process. This transparent and collaborative initiative evaluated resource distribution across academic programs and university services to ensure that our academic programs are best aligned to meet regional workforce needs, and our university services aligned in such a manner as to ensure the student experience is meaningful and campus resources are efficient and effective.

This spring, Eastern finalized a new five-year strategic plan (2024-2029) to position the university for long-term sustainability. This plan prioritizes adaptability to emerging economic conditions, technological advancements, and evolving student needs, ensuring that EWU remains competitive and relevant in Washington's higher education landscape.

To meet compensation obligations, all new tuition revenue has been allocated to offset state funding under the fund split model, leaving no additional tuition revenue available to mitigate further reductions in state appropriations. With enrollment growth remaining modest and tuition rates capped, our ability to generate new revenue is significantly constrained.

Further reductions in state funding would directly impact Eastern's mission to provide accessible, high-quality education to a diverse student population—more than 40% of whom are first-generation college students. Eastern remains committed to affordability, with 60% of graduates completing their degrees without student debt. Continued budget cuts, however, threaten this commitment by challenging public institutions' ability to maintain affordability, access, and academic excellence, impacting students, faculty, staff, and the broader regional economy.

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

214 Showalter Hall | Cheney, WA 99004 | 509.359.2371 | president@ewu.edu | ewu.edu/president

Eastern Washington University provides an inclusive, equitable, and transformative learning experience, driving the pursuit of knowledge with affordable academic excellence.



We recognize the state's fiscal challenges and stand ready to implement budgetary adjustments equitably applied across agencies. As policymakers work toward a balanced budget, we urge consideration of one-time or short-term reductions rather than ongoing cuts that could have long-term consequences for higher education in Washington. Additionally, we encourage providing agencies with the flexibility to determine how best to implement budget reductions, allowing institutions like Eastern Washington University to make strategic, data-informed decisions that minimize disruption to students and core educational services.

While we acknowledge the need to address the budget deficit, we encourage state leaders to explore innovative solutions to sustain investment in public higher education. Eastern Washington University, like other institutions, continues to recover from the financial impacts of the Great Recession and the pandemic. Preserving funding for higher education is essential to ensuring Washington's students have access to an affordable, high-quality education that supports workforce development and economic growth across the state.

We appreciate your leadership and consideration of these critical issues. We look forward to continued dialogue on ensuring the long-term stability of public higher education in Washington.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Shari McMahan".

Shari McMahan, PhD
President

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