

WESTERN COLORADO UNIVERSITY

Vice President of Advancement & Executive Director of the WCU Foundation



WESTERN
COLORADO UNIVERSITY



The Opportunity

Western Colorado University invites dynamic, collegial, and strategic professionals to apply for the position of Vice President of Advancement and Executive Director of the WCU Foundation. This unique opportunity allows a seasoned advancement executive to build on the momentum created from the highly successful Elevate Western Campaign.

Reporting directly to the President, the Vice President of Advancement and Executive Director of the WCU Foundation at Western Colorado University (Western) is responsible for designing and implementing a comprehensive institutional advancement program and activities to significantly increase constituent involvement and fundraising outcomes. The position is responsible for annual fundraising, corporate and foundation relations, major and planned gifts, gift/fund management, capital and comprehensive campaigns, alumni and constituent relations, scholarship management, donor stewardship, and advancement services as well as providing leadership to the Foundation Board of Directors and oversight of the Foundation’s operations.

The successful applicant will have a proven track record in securing significant funding from individuals, foundations, corporations, and government sources. They will also demonstrate exceptional leadership skills and considerable management experience, either within an advancement shop or a similarly sized and complex organization. Candidates must uphold the highest standards of integrity and ethics while demonstrating exceptional interpersonal skills, communication, and collaboration.

Living & Working in the Gunnison Valley

Located in the heart of the Rocky Mountains on Colorado's Western Slope, Gunnison offers a perfect blend of old-world charm and modern amenities. With seemingly endless outdoor recreation opportunities and a vibrant ranching community, the area has something for everyone. The University and tourism are the key drivers of the economy, supported by the fact that approximately 80% of the county consists of gorgeous public lands. Agriculture also plays a significant role, with about two-thirds of private land dedicated to ranching operations.

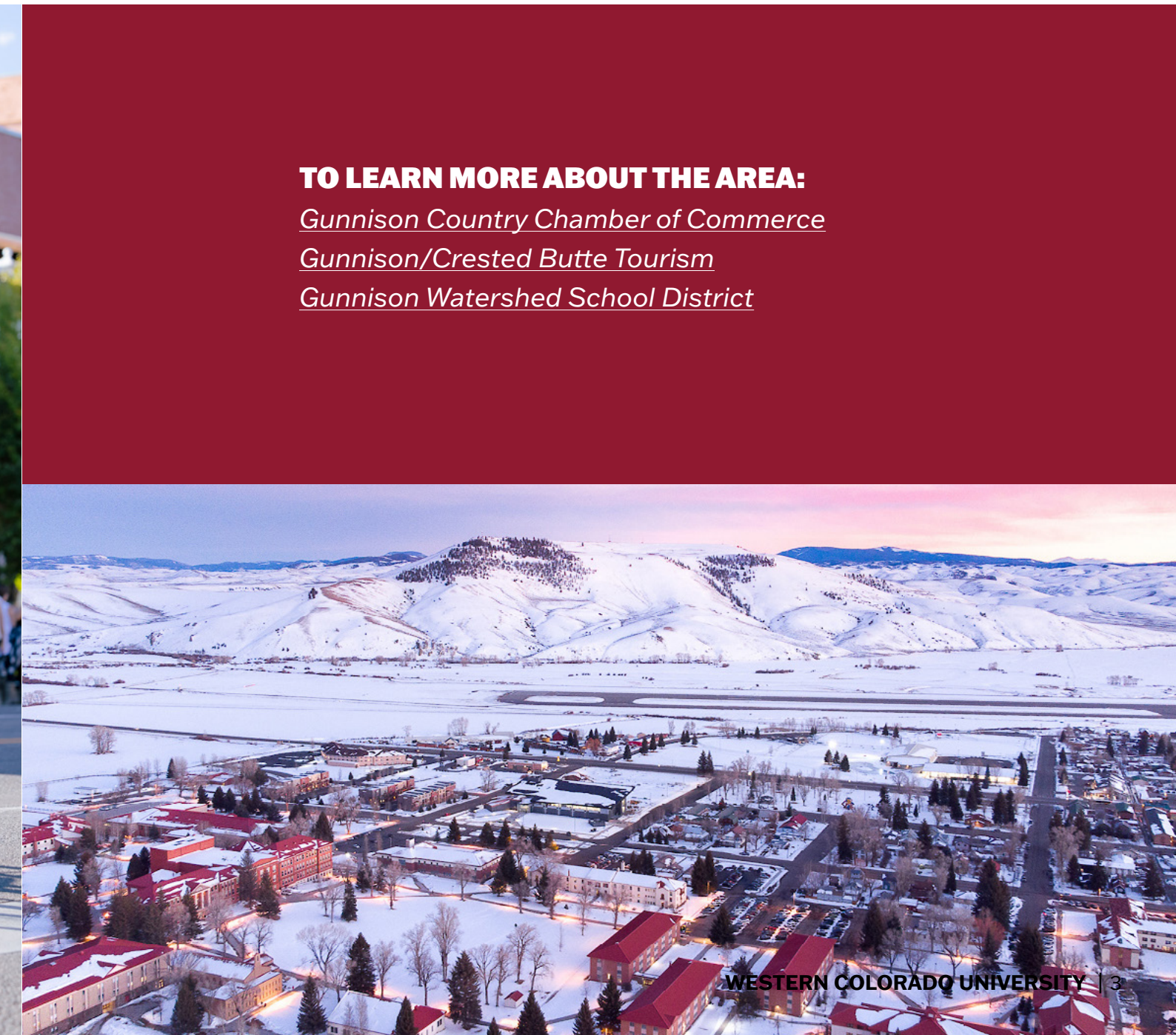
The Rocky Mountains and the Gunnison Valley are not merely a breathtaking backdrop; they are an integral part of the student experience at Western. Our institution is proud to have an incomparable sense of place, derived from faculty, staff, students, and our local community embracing the magnificent beauty of nature embedded in the Western

educational experience. This sense of place is a part of every person who joins the campus community. Students, faculty, and staff who choose Western possess the values of courage, growth, integrity, stewardship, and inclusivity. These qualities are developed and deepened through an experience focused on connection and relationships in classes with an average size of 17 students.

In the summer, the Gunnison River and the Blue Mesa Reservoir are playgrounds for rafting, swimming, fishing, sailing, and motorboating. Mountain bikers, hikers, and trail runners can explore 750-plus miles of singletrack trails, some easily accessible from campus. In winter, Crested Butte Mountain Resort, half an hour away, is bustling with skiers from all over the world. A free bus — with a stop on campus — transports students, faculty, and staff to and from the resort. Western is also a 40-minute drive

from the ski terrain of Monarch Mountain, situated on the Continental Divide. The University and the Gunnison Valley community have a symbiotic relationship with a rich texture of intellectual discovery and the vibrancy of student learning. The Gunnison Valley provides the University with opportunities for experiential learning and exploration. The University enhances the intellectual curiosity of the valley, broadens its diversity, and provides an array of enrichment and entertainment opportunities through lectures, performances, workshops, and athletic events.

Gunnison County (pop. 17,300) has three main municipalities: Gunnison, a city with a population of about 6,800; Crested Butte, a town of about 1,700; and Mt. Crested Butte, population of about 1,000. Gunnison is 200 miles southwest of Denver, the state's capital.



TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE AREA:
[Gunnison Country Chamber of Commerce](#)
[Gunnison/Crested Butte Tourism](#)
[Gunnison Watershed School District](#)



The Position

Reporting directly to the President of the University, the VPA/ED leads with vision, creativity, and strategic purpose and collaborates across the campus to create an environment that will inspire donor investment and engage alumni. The VPA/ED is responsible for all fundraising activities, including providing leadership to the Foundation Board of Directors and the Foundation's operations, and ensuring strong stakeholder engagement. The person in this position will oversee the University's

development team (6 members) and alumni relations team (2 members), serve on the senior leadership team, and work in close partnership with campus leaders, academic deans, the director of athletics and the Foundation's Board of Directors to develop a culture of active participation and empowerment in fundraising activities. The VPA/ED will collaborate with and serve as a member of the President's senior leadership team, helping to set and implement the strategic direction of the University.

Essential Duties & Responsibilities

Fundraising: Major Giving, Corporate & Foundation Relations

- Maintain a dynamic portfolio of high-value prospects; cultivate, solicit, and close major and principal gifts
- Identify and cultivate strategic corporate and foundation partnerships and support
- Work closely with the University President and key campus leaders, Vice Presidents, Deans, and fundraising committees in all phases of advancement and campaign leadership activities
- Develop and execute prospect strategies for the University President and Foundation Board of Directors

WCU Foundation Board Support & Operations:

- Guide the WCU Foundation Board of Directors in the operation of the Foundation and execution of all fundraising functions
- Lead the Foundation staff and board to develop and execute effective annual, major, planned gift, and corporate and foundation relations programs
- Oversee investment and asset management, compliance with donor intent, gift and fund management, donor acknowledgement, and gift stewardship
- Develop strong working relationships with members of the Board of Directors

Lead the Office of Advancement:

- Lead the Office of Advancement including Alumni Relations and Development teams
- Develop and implement a comprehensive advancement plans to strengthen constituent relations and increase fundraising results
- Provide vision and strategic direction for all aspects of the Advancement Office and establish and track key performance metrics

Strategic Partnership & Stakeholder Engagement:

- Identify and cultivate strategic partnerships with corporations, foundations, and other stakeholders aligned with the University's mission and objectives
- Develop and implement strategies to enhance Western's brand, expand its reach, and drive positive impact through partnership
- Collaborate with campus stakeholders to build and maintain relationships that secure financial support, internships, and drive critical resources to Western

How **Success** for the Vice President Will Be Defined

The Vice President of Advancement/Executive Director of the WCU Foundation will lead the advancement operation of the University, including fundraising and alumni outreach and engagement to achieve new and increased levels of philanthropy. The VPA/ED’s near term priorities to achieve success will be focused on the following:

- #1 Deliver the successful completion of the Elevate Western campaign and chart a bold roadmap for our next transformational effort to substantially increase philanthropic support
- #2 Inspire our alumni as passionate champions of our mission, increasing their campus participation and giving
- #3 Expand our reach and resonance by building deep, purpose-driven relationships with non-Western alums, foundations and corporations in the Gunnison Valley, the state and beyond

- #4 Further cultivate a culture of philanthropy where all stakeholders become fundraising advocates across campus and within the Foundation
- #5 Provide leadership, direction, and mentoring for the Advancement team
- #6 Foster advancement best practices and incorporate trends and new technologies as appropriate.

Professional **Qualifications** & Personal **Characteristics**

Minimum Qualifications

- Bachelor’s Degree
- Solid understanding of all aspects of the advancement profession and the full donor life cycle
- Experience providing leadership and direction for direct reports and fostering team success
- Demonstrated track record of significant personal success in donor cultivation, solicitation, acquisition, and stewardship of major and principal gifts
- Relationship builder with strong skills in collaboration and building productive partnerships
- Excellent oral and written executive communication, negotiation, and presentation abilities, with the capacity to engage and inspire diverse stakeholders, including board members and prospective donors
- Passion for Western’s mission and a commitment to making a positive impact on society
- 5 years of progressively responsible fundraising experience in diverse and complex organizations, including leadership of a development team

Preferred Qualifications

- Advanced Degree
- CFRE (Certified Fund Raising Executive)
- Record of accomplishment in securing major gifts and managing relationships with donors
- Experience with capital and/or comprehensive campaigns
- Experience in strategic partnership development and local/regional/national networking within the government, foundation, corporate, nonprofit, and community sectors
- Financial acumen
- Knowledge of advancement best practice strategies and industry trends
- Knowledgeable about advancement technologies and the use of AI in fundraising
- User of data and analytics to drive advancement strategy, resource allocation, and results
- Experience working with a foundation and supporting volunteer leaders
- 5 years of direct experience in higher education fundraising



Strategic Plan Goals

#1

Enrich the Western experience and improve well-being for students, faculty, and staff

Western strives to provide a learning and working environment where students, faculty, and staff feel valued and all have the opportunity to thrive and succeed. Western will be a desirable place for diverse people to authentically work, learn, express, collaborate, and grow.

#2

Improve student affordability and access

Demographic shifts toward more diverse, less affluent, and first-generation students require the University to ensure that a Western education is financially attainable.

#3

Enhance the quality and value of a Western degree

The Colorado Commission on Higher Education's (CCHE's) 2023 Strategic Plan focuses on ensuring that students receive a positive financial return on their educational investment, backed by data suggesting economic mobility is a central reason for post-secondary learning. Western will be responsive to the expectations of Colorado citizens and our students by demonstrating the value of a Western degree.

#4

Ensure financial strength and support enrollment growth

Students are at the heart of Western's mission and are the key driver of fiscal stability and growth. In an increasingly competitive market, balancing enrollment growth with a focus on academic excellence and responsible fiscal management is paramount.

LEARN MORE

about our principles and timeline:
western.edu/strategic-planning

Western's Strategic Plan, Mission, Vision, & Values

Western Colorado University has an unwavering commitment to providing an exceptional educational experience to all students, and we take pride in the values that inform our collective vision. With the Rocky Mountains as our laboratory and the Gunnison Valley as our community, our location offers a unique value proposition for a public institution. Western is a premier provider of rigorous, immersive education and champions intellectual exploration, critical thinking,

and integrity, all while inspiring innovation. We offer an inclusive and personalized academic experience that enhances the lives of our students and their communities, now and into the future.

We do this with Western's values of courage, inclusivity, and integrity to promote growth in all Mountaineers as we provide stewardship for our community and world.

About Western

Western Colorado University offers a distinctive educational experience for bold, curious learners. With more than 100 areas of study—from STEM and business to the arts and humanities—students have the freedom to explore their passions while preparing for meaningful careers. Western combines academic rigor with accessibility, bridging the gap between cost and a student’s ability to pay.

Known for its small class sizes, hands-on learning, and access to the outdoors, Western fosters a supportive, high-impact environment. Faculty are experienced professionals dedicated to mentoring students who go on to make contributions across Colorado and beyond.

Founded in 1901 as the Colorado State Normal School, Western was the first college on Colorado’s Western Slope, focused initially on teacher education. Over time, it evolved into a comprehensive four-year institution emphasizing liberal arts and professional studies. In 1923, it became Western State College, marked by the creation of the iconic 420-foot “W” on Tenderfoot Mountain—a symbol of school pride that remains central to campus traditions.

Western’s school colors—crimson and slate—represent the Paintbrush flower and sage of the Gunnison Valley. Its original mascot, the fawn,

symbolized grace and alertness. In the 1950s, the Mountaineer became the official mascot through a student contest, further cementing the school’s adventurous spirit.

The University has steadily expanded its academic offerings, adding new programs in engineering, nursing, and other fields that meet the needs of today’s workforce. Western launched its first graduate programs in the 1920s and reintroduced them in 2007 after an 18-year pause. These programs are now mission-driven, faculty-designed, and tightly connected to industry, emphasizing real-world learning and professional development. Graduate enrollment has doubled in the past decade.

In 2012, Western’s name changed to Western State Colorado University to reflect its growth and quality of education. It was simplified to Western Colorado University in 2019. This progression mirrors its expanding impact and commitment to excellence.

Athletics have long been a part of Western’s identity. Located at nearly 7,800 feet, Western has the highest NCAA-sanctioned athletics program in the country. The University has produced Olympic athletes and national champions in skiing, cross country, wrestling, and other sports.

In recent years, Western has added state-of-the-art buildings such as the Paul M. Rady School of Computer Science & Engineering Building, the Borick Business Building, the Mountaineer Fieldhouse, and a significant renovation of Mountaineer Bowl. Four transformational gifts have resulted in the Paul M. Rady School of Computer Science and Engineering, the Clark Family School of Environment and Sustainability, the Rady Family Sports Complex, and the Geiman Scholars Program.

Through an innovative partnership with the University of Colorado Boulder, students in the Rady School of Computer Science & Engineering can earn a nationally ranked engineering degree while benefiting from small class sizes and project-based learning on Western’s campus.

In nearly 125 years of service, Western has grown to offer over 100 areas of undergraduate study and nine graduate degrees while providing students with transformative academic experiences that prepare them to lead in their fields and communities.

QUICK FACTS

- Public University featuring liberal arts, sciences, and professional programs
- Coed residential campus that serves approximately 4,000 students through residential, hybrid, and online programs
- Located in picturesque Gunnison, Colorado, in the heart of the Rocky Mountains
- Undergraduate and graduate programs in 100-plus areas of study
- More than 25 majors, nine graduate programs, over 30 accelerated degree programs, and partnerships with other state schools





Student Experience & Campus Life

Western’s students come from all backgrounds and ages, often with a common goal: a success-driven learning experience that will enhance their contribution to the world and their ability to lead a meaningful life. Students, faculty, and staff who choose Western possess the values of courage, growth, integrity, stewardship, and inclusivity. With an average class size of 17 students, these qualities are deepened through an academic experience focused on connection and relationships. They pursue academic excellence in a wide range of areas — from Exercise & Sport Science (ESS) and research in our High-Altitude Performance (HAP) Lab to conservation issues in the Clark Family School of Environment & Sustainability.

Outside the classroom, our students participate in NCAA Division II athletics, Mountain Sports, and sports clubs. Regardless of major, they are part of music ensembles, the Western Theatre Company, and Mountaineer Media. Additionally, Western offers a robust student government and more than 50 clubs, further enhancing students’ collegiate experience. We know people of different backgrounds bring various experiences and perspectives to the classroom and community. We strive to foster a respectful, welcoming educational and social environment and take a firm and unyielding stance in support of diversity, inclusivity, scientific inquiry, and creative expression.

17
Average Class Size

74%
Retention Rate

51%
Six-Year Graduation Rate

291
Undergraduate Degree Completions (2023-24)

ATHLETIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS

15
Team National Titles

121
Individual National Titles

1,178
All-American Honors

98
RMAC Team Championships

University Stats at a Glance (Fall 2024)

3,568

TOTAL STUDENT
HEAD COUNT

STUDENT ENROLLMENT



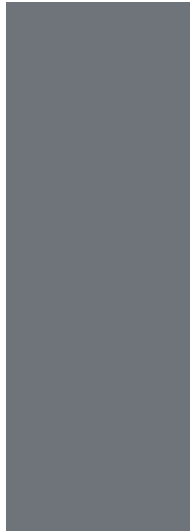
- 44% Undergraduate Degree Seeking
- 37% Concurrent Enrollment
- 11% Graduate Degree Seeking
- 8% Non-Degree Seeking

52%



identify as
FEMALE

45%



identify as
MALE

3%

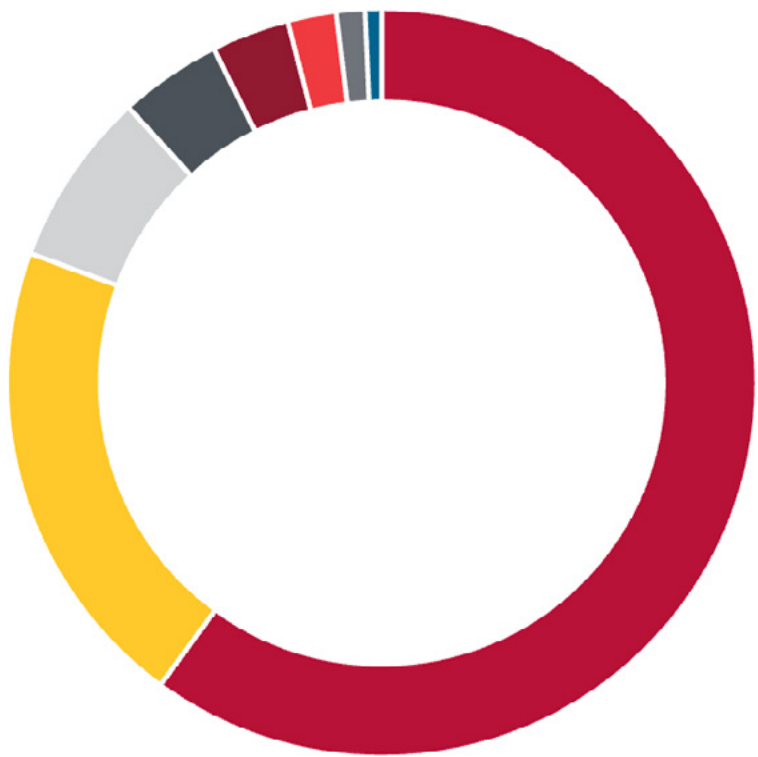


not
reported

FIRST GENERATION STUDENTS



ETHNIC DIVERSITY



- 65% White
- 16% Hispanic
- 7% Unknown/Other
- 4% Black or African American
- 3% Multiracial
- 2% Asian
- 2% American Indian or Alaska Native
- 1% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

Western
students are
from almost
every county
in **Colorado**

50 states & **17** countries

ARE REPRESENTED

80%
of Western Students
Receive Some Form of
Financial Aid

74%
Retention Rate
for First Year Year
Students

Financial Information

Western's FY2024-25 total budgeted operating revenue is **\$81.7 million**. This includes:

- **\$24.4 million (30%)** from undergraduate tuition and fees
- **\$24.7 million (30%)** in state appropriations
- **\$9.5 million (12%)** from sources with restricted use (federal and state financial aid, Rady School support, etc.)
- **\$15.4 million (19%)** from auxiliary sources (residence halls, facility fees, food service, bookstore, conference services, etc.)
- **\$7.6 million (9%)** from graduate tuition and fees

Western's FY2024-25 total budgeted operating expenditure is **\$81.2 million**. This includes:

- **\$38.9 million (48%)** in faculty and staff compensation
- **\$21 million (26%)** in general operating expenses (department operational support, student employment, travel, utilities, etc.)
- **\$13.7 million (17%)** in scholarships and fellowships (including federal, state, and private support)
- **\$6 million (7%)** in debt service payments
- **\$1.5 million (2%)** in strategic initiatives

UNDERGRADUATE YEARLY COST OF ATTENDANCE (FY25-26)

	Colorado Resident	Nonresident
Tuition	\$7,476	\$20,928
Required Fees	\$4,034.57	\$4,034.57
Optional Fees	\$450	\$450
Double Room	\$5,626.89	\$5,626.89
Board (15-Meal/Week Plan)	\$5,455.91	\$5,455.91
Total Annual Cost	\$22,593.37	\$39,495.37

About the Western Colorado University Foundation

The Western Colorado University Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing the mission and goals of Western Colorado University. Established in 1975, the WCU Foundation serves as the primary channel for private support, fostering philanthropic stewardship in partnership with the University. The WCU Foundation empowers student excellence for lifelong success by supporting Western Colorado University through fundraising, donor engagement, and resource management.

Celebrating **50 Years** of Giving

In 2025, the WCU Foundation is celebrating its 50th anniversary. The Foundation is a 501(c)3 and is the primary depository for private gifts supporting Western Colorado University. In the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, the Foundation raised more than \$12M from 3,500 contributions including charitable donations and in-kind gifts. In the same year, the Foundation provided \$6.6M in support to the University through academic and instructional programs, scholarships, and in-kind donations, including a record-breaking \$1.6M in scholarship support. The WCU Foundation currently has more than \$40M of assets under management.





Elevate Western Campaign

The Elevate Western Campaign launched in July 2019 with an aspirational goal of raising \$80M. The campaign was built upon four funding pillars:

- Promote Student Access and Success
- Engineer Colorado's Future
- Build our Competitive Edge
- Foster Academic Excellence

The Elevate Western Campaign has inspired extraordinary support and generosity – surpassing \$90M in gifts to date!

Thanks to our dedicated donors, we've seen transformative successes, especially the completion of the Mountaineer Bowl at the Rady Family Sports Complex and the creation of 80 additional scholarships, doubling the annual awards since the campaign began. We have surpassed expectations on these critical pillars and

created a lasting impact for our students and the University community.

There remain vital opportunities to shape Western Colorado University's future, particularly in the pillars of Engineer Colorado's Future and Foster Academic Excellence.

These pillars represent critical investments in our growing engineering programs and new nursing program, both of which will play a key role in meeting regional workforce demands and elevating Western's academic offerings.

Additionally, we will focus on completing the funding needed to launch the "Gunnison Valley Promise" which will support our local students by offering a tuition-free education regardless of their financial capability.

BY THE NUMBERS

CAMPAIGN TO DATE

\$90 Million

Campaign
Dollars Raised

19,688

Campaign
Gifts Made

7,740

Campaign
Donors

LEARN MORE

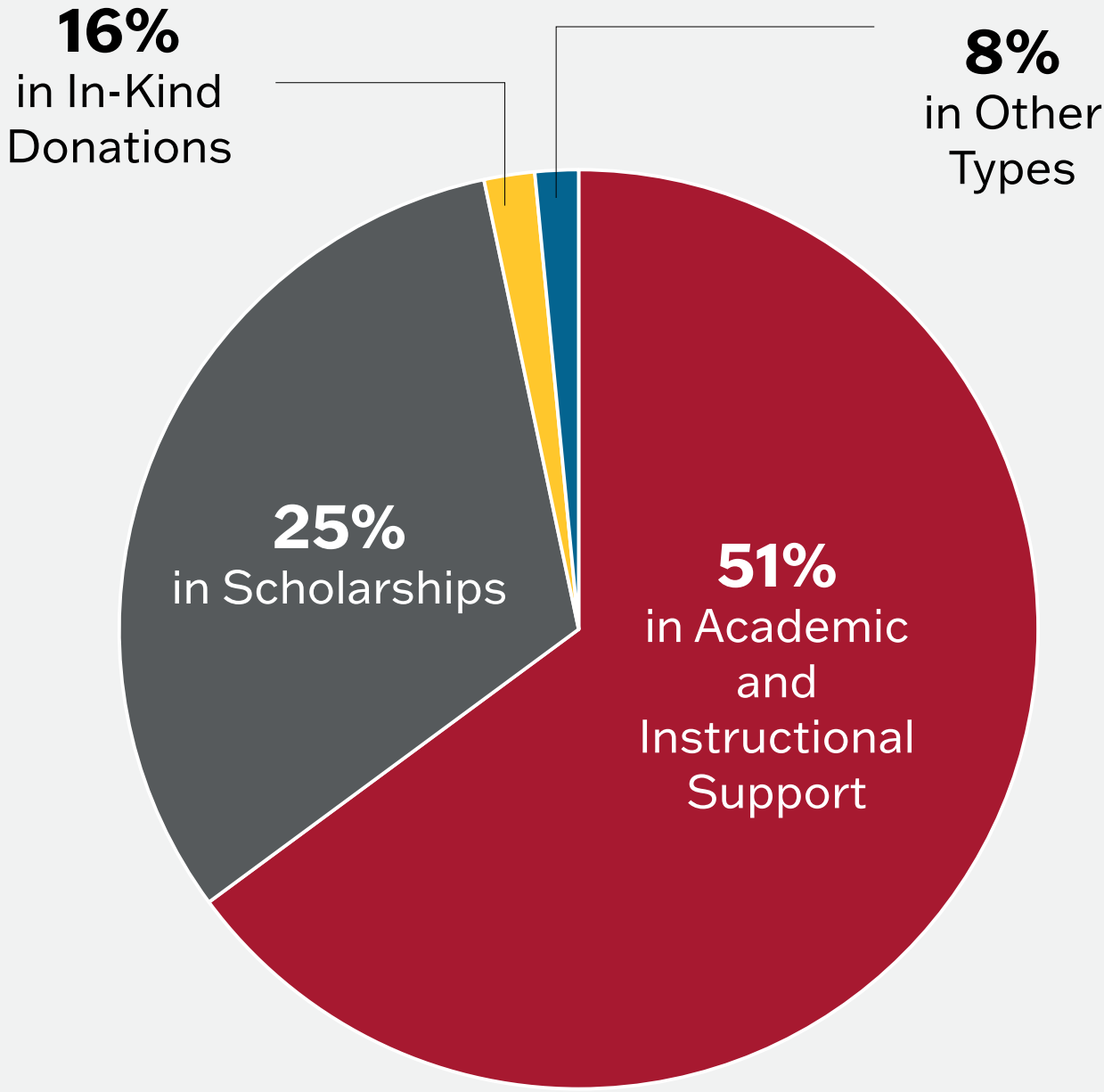
about the WCU Foundation see our [2023-2024 Report of Appreciation](#)

Donor Impact (FY 2023-24)

Thanks to the continued generosity of our donor community, Western Colorado University is creating more opportunities than ever for students to thrive. Philanthropic support is shaping experiences inside and outside the classroom—fueling academic programs, unlocking access through scholarships, and fostering a vibrant, connected campus. Together, we’re building a stronger future for Mountaineers and the communities they go on to serve.

\$6,645,468

Total Support to WCU



Scholarship Stats

72%
of Awards Were Made to
In-State Students

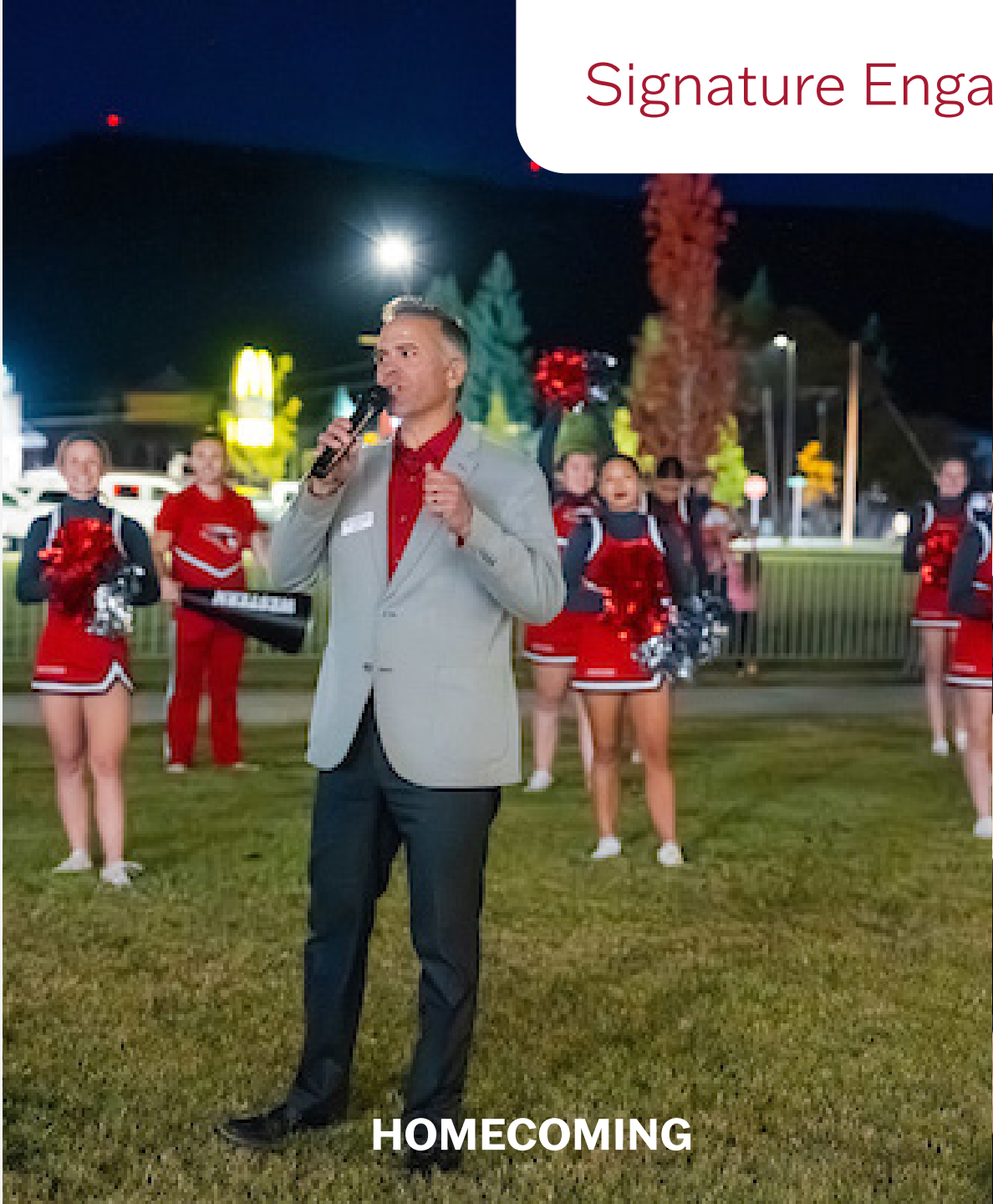
31%
of Awards Were Made
to First-Generation
Students

\$3,324
Average Total
Scholarship Amount
Recipient Received in
Privately Funded Dollars

325
Active Privately Funded
Scholarships

300+
Students Received
Privately Funded
Scholarships

Signature Engagement Events



HOMECOMING



MOUNTAINEER GALA



ALUMNI SKI WEEKEND



MOUNTAINEER GIVES DAY

About Alumni Relations

Alumni Relations at Western Colorado University is a vital part of the university's advancement strategy, strengthening lifelong connections between Western and its graduates. For our 30,000+ alumni, being a Mountaineer doesn't end at graduation—it's a lifelong identity.

From mentoring students to sharing stories at Homecoming, alumni play a key role in shaping Western's future. The Alumni Relations team fosters meaningful engagement through programs that are both personally fulfilling and institutionally impactful. We view alumni contributions holistically—through time, talent, testimony, and treasure—all aligned with Western's goals for financial growth, enrollment, and student success.

Whether it's offering career guidance, participating in events, or sharing their Western experience, alumni help drive the university forward. Signature initiatives like Homecoming,

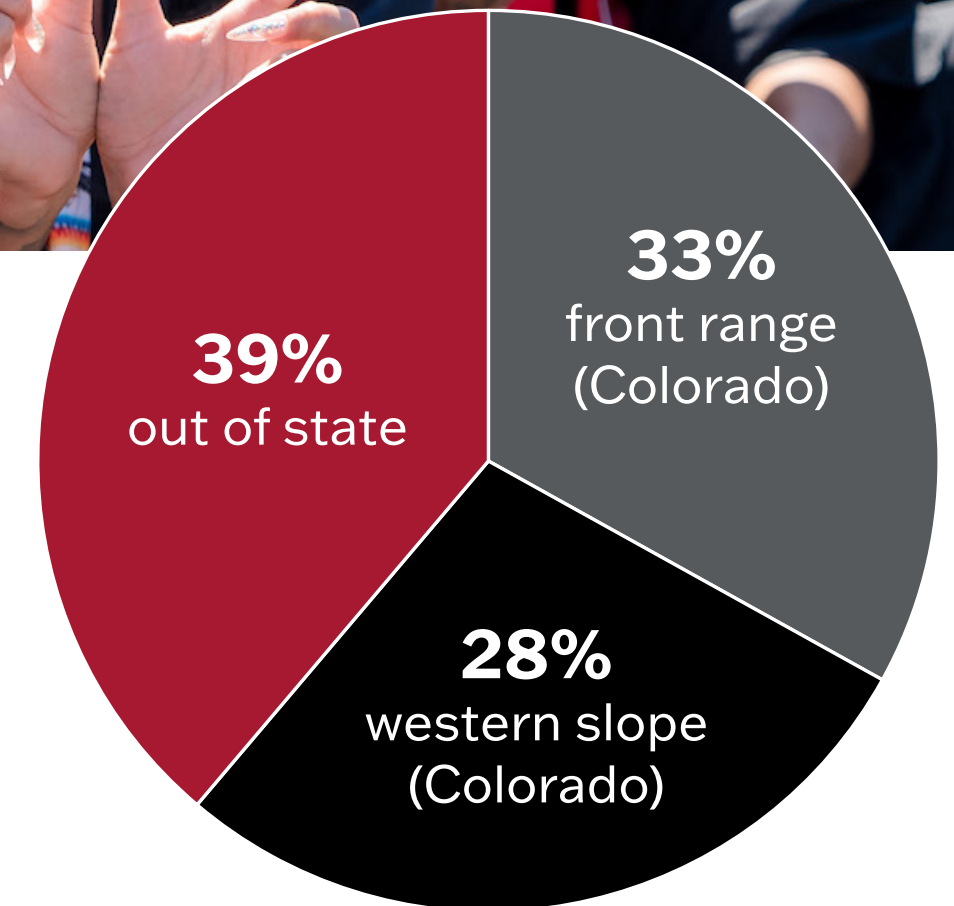
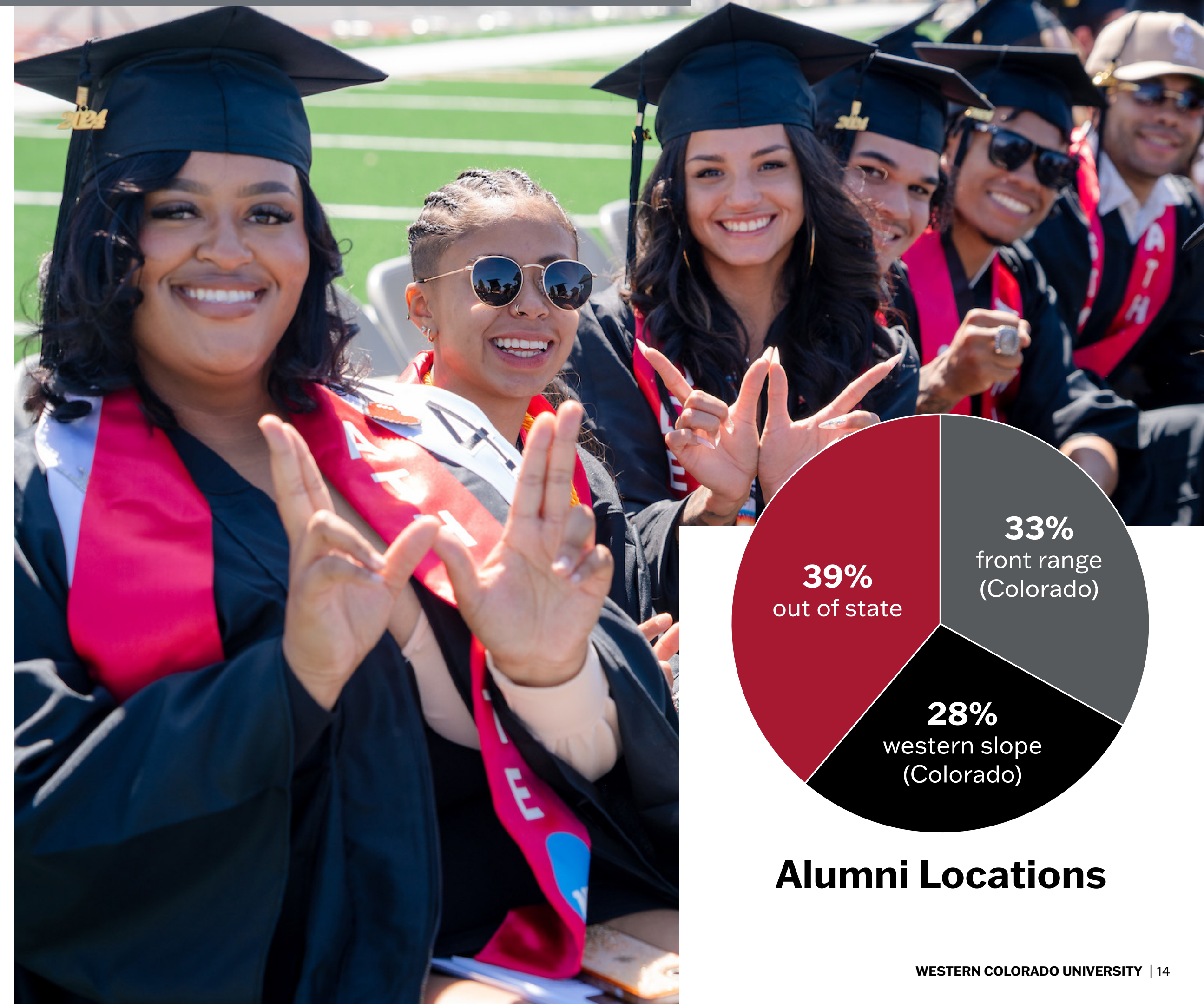
regional networking events, the Alumni Advisory Council, and The Westerner magazine are essential touchpoints to build community and connection.

Capitalizing on the unique strengths of the Western community, we're always exploring new ways to keep Mountaineers engaged - through regional meetups, webinars, career panels, and storytelling. The next Vice President of Advancement will lead these efforts, strengthening alumni ties and expanding their role in advancing Western's mission for generations to come.

"My professors were amazing. Altogether, they all have different strengths and that brought so much to the program. My biggest inspiration was that so many different aspects could come together to form this really unique program."

Emily Hawgood, '21

MA in Exercise and Sport Science



Alumni Locations



The Position

Compensation Package & Application Process

The annual salary range for this position is competitive at \$190,000-210,000, and commensurate with prior experience. In addition, WCU offers excellent shared contribution medical and dental insurance and retirement plans, generous paid time off, and access to other University benefits, including (after one year of employment) free Western tuition for dependents and opportunities to apply to a national tuition exchange program for dependents.

Western Colorado University is an equal opportunity employer and welcomes all applications, including those from applicants with disabilities and veterans.

APPLICATIONS AND NOMINATIONS

The Search Committee will begin a review of applications in early July and continue its work until an appointment is made. To assure full consideration, application materials should be submitted by July 7, 2025, to the AGB Search portal at: [WCU VP for Advancement/ED, WCU Foundation](#).

To apply for the Vice President of Advancement and Executive Director of the WCU Foundation position, candidates are requested to submit the following:

- resume or CV;
- a letter of interest that addresses how the candidate's experiences and qualifications connect with the required/preferred characteristics and priorities as expressed in this position profile; and
- contact information for at least three references (to be contacted with candidate's permission at a later date).

In compliance with the Colorado Job Application Fairness Act, in any materials you submit, you may redact or remove age-identifying information such as age, date of birth, or dates of school attendance or graduation. You will not be penalized for redacting or removing this information.

Nominations and expressions of interest in this position are encouraged. Please direct them to WCUAdvancement@agbsearch.com or the AGB Search consultants listed below.

Kimberly Templeton, JD, Principal
kimberly.templeton@agbsearch.com
540.761.9494

Andrew Bowen, MA, Executive Search Associate
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JOIN US ON
**OUR SIDE OF THE
MOUNTAINS**



WESTERN
COLORADO UNIVERSITY