



# Connections

*December 18, 2020*

## MacKenzie Scott Grant

In a [blog post](#) on Tuesday, philanthropist MacKenzie Scott announced her financial contributions to 384 institutions around the United States. Our college was among those selected by Ms. Scott's team of experts. Her team took a data-driven approach to identify organizations with strong track records and great potential for serving diverse communities. From across the entire nation, a limited number of organizations were selected for grants, which is a tremendous validation of the work we do here at WWCC.

As I wrote in my email announcing this great news, this grant will help us to rise to the challenges posed by the pandemic, as we work to meet our students' needs during this extremely challenging time. It will also become the foundation for on-going investments in innovation. Please note that this does not address WWCC's budget challenges, enrollment declines, and other operational needs. What it does is provide resources so that we can find new ways to expand and enhance our educational offerings and support of students.

Having only recently received confirmation of this grant to the WWCC Foundation, the College plans to take the time necessary to make thoughtful decisions about how we will invest these dollars. We will do this in consultation with the WWCC Foundation's Board of Governors and the WWCC Board of Trustees, among other stakeholders. The college-wide strategic planning process will inform these discussions, as well. We should all take great pride in having been selected for this support.

## Weekly Highlight

The fall quarter ended this week, with significantly fewer students compared to last fall, as we all know. The good news is that those students who persisted were more likely to complete with a grade of C or better. At the same time, our over-all completion rates were down compared to last fall, indicating that students still need enhanced support. Of course we all must continue to grow as professionals and educators, and we can always find new and more creative ways to meet student needs; however, we should also pause to reflect on how much we have accomplished and how far we have come

in such a short time. There is cause for celebration, so congratulations, and a heartfelt thanks, to each of you reading this message. It has been a remarkably successful quarter, given all of the challenges that we have faced, and overcome. Kudos to us all!

## Walla Walla Valley Chamber of Commerce Community

### Award

Thanks to those of you who submitted a nomination for the WWCC/Walla Walla Valley Chamber of Commerce's community engagement award. There were a number of nominations, and all are deserving, although only one can be selected. Please stay tuned in January for the big reveal!

### Other quick takes

The VPI search continues and we anticipate campus forums to be held with the semi-finalists in early- to mid-January.

The Athletics department is preparing to welcome student athletes back to practice as soon as possible in the winter quarter. Protocols are established and all required precautions will be taken. It remains doubtful that a competitive season will take place this year, at least for several of the NWAC sports, but we know how much the athletes and coaches will get out of simply being able to work out together.

WWCC co-hosted (with CBC) a legislative outreach event on December 7th. Most of our legislators from the 9th and the 16th legislative districts were in attendance. They were delighted to hear from Shiloh Rowden, SGA President for Clarkston, and Becca Tibbetts, SGA Student Council Chair for Walla Walla. Many thanks to those two students who represented WWCC extremely well, and who impressed the legislators by telling their personal stories.

TRiO is seeking to serve as many as 80 additional students, so please promote their services to all eligible students. You may see additional flyers and banners (in Canvas, for example) and we appreciate your assistance connecting students with the support offered by TRiO.

**Board of Trustees:** The next Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 27th at 9:30 a.m.

### Looking Ahead

A group of faculty, staff, and administrators calling themselves “FAST” for (Fiscal Analysis Sustainability Taskforce) is meeting to review key financial indicators for all areas and programs on campus. This is a vital part of our thoughtful, inclusive, and intentional approach to developing our budget for next year. As part of this group effort, we also hope to gain insights into ways that we can adjust during the current fiscal year in light of the enrollment downturn we are experiencing. This FAST group is jointly led by Joshua Slepín, Lisa Chamberlin, and Nick Velluzzi, and includes faculty and others.

Comments or questions? Please email [Connections@wwcc.edu](mailto:Connections@wwcc.edu)