

# Beyond the One-time College Visit to a Sense of Belonging on Campus



Heather Paton (GEAR UP) and Bridget Galati  
(Western Washington University)

# Who are we?



**Bridget Galati**

Director, Compass 2 Campus



**Our Students**

Always at the the  
heart of our work



**Heather Paton**

GEAR UP Site  
Coordinator

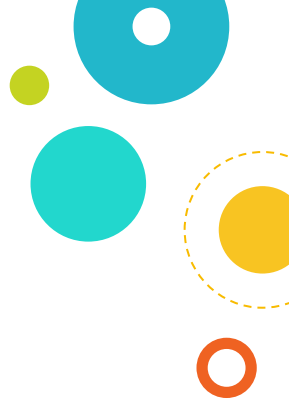



## Session Objectives

- ◎ Learn how we partner with our local university
- ◎ Learn how to build impactful mentoring programs
- ◎ Learn how we structure weekly college visits



# Agenda

1. Who we are and the North 2 Western story
  2. Current GEAR UP students share their experiences
  3. How weekly college visits work
  4. Q & A
- 
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Western Washington University  
Bellingham, Washington

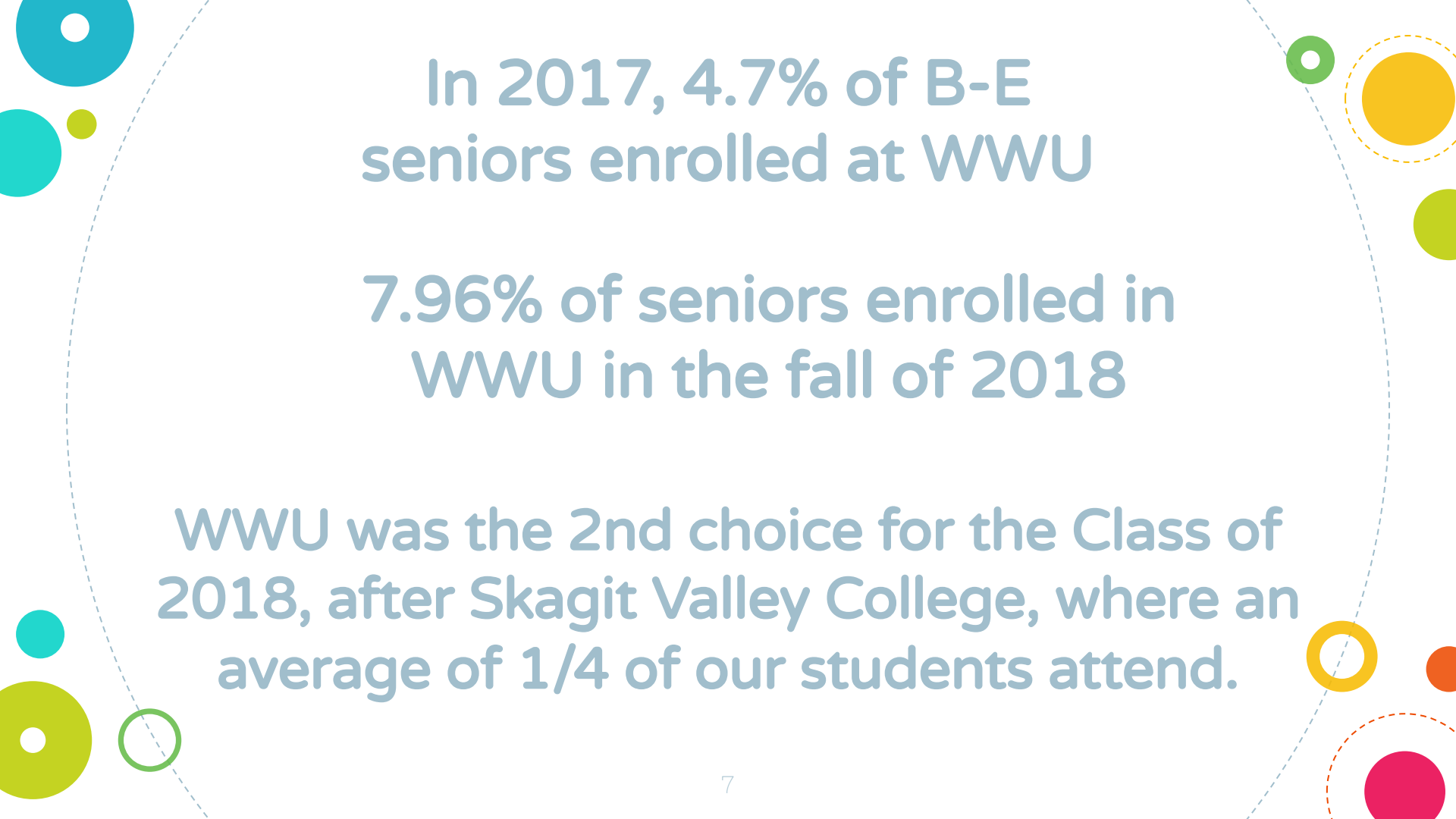




Skagit Valley





A decorative graphic featuring a large, light blue dashed circle that frames the text. Scattered around the perimeter of this circle are various smaller circles in solid colors (teal, yellow, green, orange, pink) and some with dashed outlines. The text is centered within the dashed circle.

In 2017, 4.7% of B-E  
seniors enrolled at WWU

7.96% of seniors enrolled in  
WWU in the fall of 2018

WWU was the 2nd choice for the Class of  
2018, after Skagit Valley College, where an  
average of 1/4 of our students attend.

Low-income and BIPOC students are underrepresented at WWU

Demographics	Western Washington University	Burlington-Edison High School
Race/ethnicity	29% BIPOC (10% LatinX)	49% BIPOC (41% LatinX)
Income level	\$112,000 median annual family income  21% from the bottom 60% (\$80k or less) 3.5% from the bottom 20% (\$26k or less)	48% FRL: Under \$48,000 a year for a family of four





Who are ya'll? Turn & Talk

Introduce yourselves - where you are from, your role

Think of the most memorable/most impactful college visit you have been a part of. What made it so?

If you haven't gone on a college visit recently, describe how you would hope it would be.

A decorative graphic featuring various colored circles and rings. On the left, there is a large teal ring, a smaller teal circle, an orange circle, a yellow ring, a pink circle, a green circle, and a large lime green circle. On the right, there is a yellow circle, a teal circle, and a small lime green circle. Some circles have dashed outlines in matching colors.

## GEAR UP Students share their experiences

- © Zoom in GEAR UP students
- © As you listen to the GEAR UP students, what stands out to you?

The background is white with a large, faint, light-blue dashed circle. Various colorful geometric shapes are scattered around: a large lime green circle at the top left, a teal circle with a white double quote inside at the top center, a large teal ring at the top right, a yellow circle at the middle right, an orange circle at the bottom left, and several smaller circles in green, orange, pink, and teal. A large orange ring is partially visible on the right side.

“

What clarifying questions do you  
have after listening to our GEAR  
UP students?

# Compass 2 Campus: Increasing access to higher education



*Mentoring for Change*

The background features a large, light blue dashed circle that frames the central text. Scattered around this circle are various solid-colored circles and arcs in shades of green, yellow, orange, red, and teal. Some circles are small and solid, while others are larger or form partial arcs. A teal circle containing a white double quote is positioned above the first paragraph.

“

What if students experienced a college visit not just once, but over multiple times during the year? Would they feel a stronger sense of belonging? Would they be more likely to go on to college?

Why are more students not choosing Western Washington University when it can be an affordable, 4-year option?



July  
2017



Nov  
2018



June  
2018



2018-  
2019

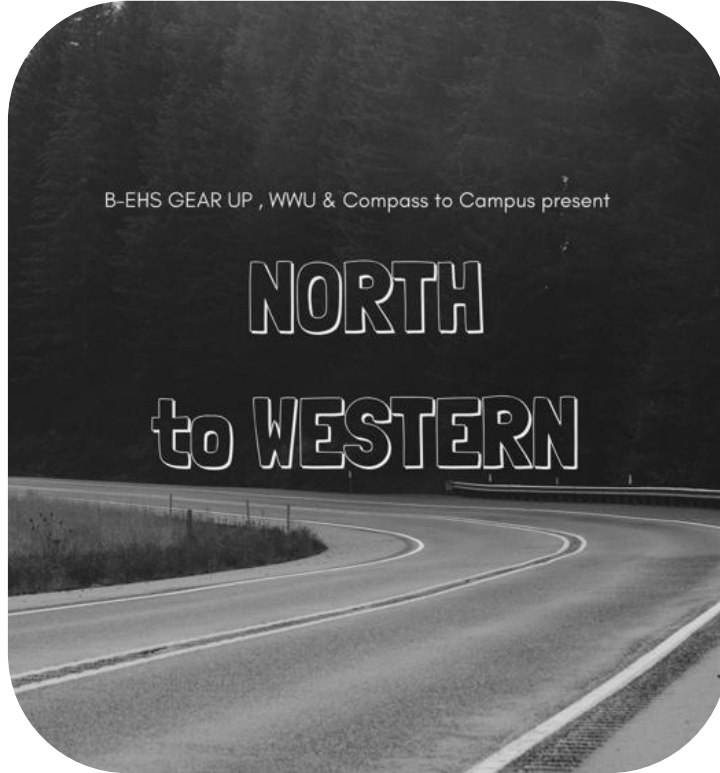
2019

March 2020

Hoy



All the Iterations of our Program



## Logistics for Weekly College Visits

- ◎ Transportation
- ◎ Permission slips
- ◎ Staffing
- ◎ Budgeting
- ◎ Meals



# GEAR UP Field Trip Expectations





**Building impactful  
mentoring  
programs and  
training college  
student mentors**

- ◎ **Recruitment:** Word of mouth, social media, partnerships
- ◎ **Training:** Service-learning courses
- ◎ **Support:** College success as well as college access



## Structuring weekly college visits

- ◎ Typical agenda each week with C2C mentors:
  - ◎ Admissions presentation
  - ◎ Campus activity
  - ◎ Dinner in dining hall with mentors
- ◎ Remote homework help weekly with C2C mentors  
(New! Covid silver lining)



## Challenges and opportunities

- ◎ Sustainability
- ◎ Finding (and keeping) the right North 2 Western mentors
- ◎ COVID challenges
- ◎ Data Collection



*“I want to go to college”*

- ⦿ 50% agreed
- ⦿ 50% strongly agreed

*“I feel comfortable when I visit a college campus”*

- ⦿ 60% agreed and 40% strongly agreed

*“How do you feel when you think about going to college?”*

Most common answers were:  
*excited, positive, happy and stressed*

*“I can easily see myself on a college campus”*

- ⦿ 40% agreed
- ⦿ 30% strongly agreed



## Small group breakouts

- ◎ What is your current approach to college visits?
- ◎ Who are potential partners for more frequent visits?  
What resources are available to support this partnership?



Questions?

Heather Paton:

[hpaton@be.wednet.edu](mailto:hpaton@be.wednet.edu)

Bridget Galati:

[bridget.galati@wwu.edu](mailto:bridget.galati@wwu.edu)

