

WEBSITE CASE STUDY

Central Washington University

Building Advancement Capacity for Campaign Readiness

Project focus	Building Advancement Capacity for Campaign Readiness
Service areas	Advancement assessment, campaign readiness, board training, grants strategy, strategic planning, campaign feasibility

Overview

Central Washington University engaged The Ostara Group at a pivotal point in its advancement growth. Under the leadership of Scott Wade, Vice President of University Advancement and Executive Director of the CWU Foundation, the university was preparing for a more coordinated approach to alumni engagement, fundraising, foundation strategy, and campaign planning.

The Need

The university needed an evidence-based roadmap to strengthen alumni engagement, improve donor strategy, align internal partners, and prepare the culture, capability, and capacity required for its next stage of fundraising growth.

Ostara's Work

- Began with a comprehensive advancement program review and campaign readiness assessment.
- Examined advancement operations, alumni relations, annual giving, major giving, planned giving, corporate and foundation giving, staffing, communications, internal alignment, and campaign readiness.
- Interviewed campus leaders, advancement staff, alumni, donors, board members, and university stakeholders.
- Reviewed advancement materials and benchmarked CWU against peer and aspirational higher education institutions.
- Returned for a grants strategy assessment and board training, strategic planning and a campaign feasibility study.

Assessment Focus

Focus area	What Ostara assessed
Culture	Campus-wide understanding of philanthropy and the role of university leaders, deans, faculty, board members, alumni, and donors.
Capability	The skills, systems, planning tools, and practices needed to support stronger fundraising performance.
Capacity	The staffing, infrastructure, processes, and investment required to sustain increased giving.

Recommendations

Ostara recommended stronger campaign visioning, deeper cross-campus engagement, clearer advancement planning, increased alumni engagement, improved donor communications, better use of data and metrics, stronger moves management, and targeted staff capacity investments. The work gave CWU clear, evidence-based recommendations its team could act on.

Outcome

CWU implemented most of the recommendations. Those changes helped the university move from assessment to action. CWU strengthened its advancement infrastructure, clarified its path toward campaign readiness, and built a more coordinated approach to engaging alumni, donors, volunteers, and campus partners. For a public university committed to access, opportunity, and student success, the work connected advancement strategy to institutional vision and gave leaders the information, structure, and confidence needed to prepare for a comprehensive campaign.

Client Testimonial

"The Ostara Group gave Central Washington University exactly what we needed at a pivotal moment for our advancement program.

As we prepared for our next stage of fundraising growth, Ostara helped us assess our readiness with clarity and discipline. Their team listened carefully to our staff, board members, university leaders, alumni, and donors. They also helped us understand how our advancement program compared with peer institutions and where we needed to build capacity for long term success.

What stood out most was the practicality of their work. Ostara did more than identify challenges. They gave us clear, evidence-based recommendations our team could act on. Their assessment helped us focus on the culture, capability, and capacity required to strengthen alumni engagement, improve donor strategy, align internal partners, and prepare for a comprehensive campaign.

I valued their honesty, experience, and respect for our institution. Their work helped us see both our strengths and the

investments required to grow. I would recommend The Ostara Group to any college or university seeking a thoughtful partner for advancement assessment, campaign readiness, and practical fundraising strategy.”

Scott Wade

Vice President, University Advancement
Executive Director, CWU Foundation
Central Washington University