

PRESS RELEASE: Western Washington University President Bruce Shepard announced Tuesday, February 26, 2013 that the university will offset possible cuts in federal financial aid to Western students.

Unless Congress acts by Friday, March 1, a series of automatic federal budget cuts, called sequestration, will occur. There would be impacts across the country, including possible cuts in federal financial aid to public universities like Western Washington University.

Shepard has announced that, should any awards of federal financial aid for the current (2012-13) or coming academic year (2013-14) be reduced as a result of federal sequestration, then the university will draw upon institutional reserves to provide equivalent current funding to offset those reductions at Western.

“The increasing likelihood of federal budget cuts is occurring at a time critical to our students and their families. Western students – those continuing and those anticipating coming — and their families are making financial plans for the next academic year. Western is also in the midst of awarding financial aid. Western is acting today to seek to lessen some of the uncertainty students and families may be feeling,” Shepard said. “This is the right thing to do. The university is strongly committed to our students’ success, and is constantly looking for ways to enhance access and affordability.”

Western sent a message today to Western students and parents letting them know of Shepard’s decision.

The university has also communicated with faculty and staff, updating them on possible federal cuts resulting in far fewer federal research grants, including in areas such as science, technology and health.

According to the 2013 U.S. News & World Report college rankings, Western is the highest-ranking public, master’s-granting university in the Pacific Northwest. Western also is ranked third among top public master’s-granting universities in the West, a region stretching from Texas to the Pacific. Western was the only public university or college from the state of

Washington on a recent U.S. News list of highly ranked universities that operate most efficiently.