



Sustainability, Equity, & Justice Fund

SEJF Grant Application 2024-2025 Academic Year

This SEJF grant application is for all fund requests, regardless of grant size. Please fill out the application completely, utilizing additional space as appropriate. Supplemental documents may be added in the appendix at the end of the document. For questions about the application, reference the SEJF Grant Proposal Toolkit or ask a program representative.

Submit your completed application (including signatures) by emailing it to the SEJF Grant Program Manager, Zinta Lucans. Applications must be signed by your advisor, all project team members, and stakeholders, for them to be reviewed. Email: lucansz@wwu.edu.

During the 2024-2025 academic year, only grant requests between \$500.00-\$35,000.00 will be accepted. Applications will be reviewed by the Associate Director of the Sustainability Engagement Institute for alignment and completeness and then provided to the SEJF Committee. The committee will review the grant application, receive your presentation, and approve or decline the funding request.

Project title	Multicultural Business Scholar's Association (MBSA): Leaders of Color Initiative
Funding amount requested	\$13,000
Deadline you are submitting for (Fall, Winter, Spring)	Winter 2025
SEJF program representative signature (all project teams must work with an SEJF representative prior to submitting the application)	Zinta Lucans

SECTION 1: Project Concept.

a. Statement of Purpose:

Summarize your project idea, including a problem statement, in 1-2 sentences.

As a club at the Carson College of Business and Economics (CBE) at Western, we at the Multicultural Business Scholars Association (MBSA) aim to address the disproportionate lack of Black, Brown and Indigenous People of Color conscious representation and aid accessibility within the CBE by creating opportunities for students of color to learn, connect, and develop as professionals and as a community. Through the Leaders of Color Initiative, we want to work towards building a cultivated emphasis on authentic and diverse cultural expression, celebration, and empowerment for our club members and community.

b. Project description:

Describe your proposed project in detail, including a description of costs associated with the project.

Currently in the CBE, there is a critical absence of healthy BIPOC representation, community, and leadership development with our culturally unique needs being centered and empowered. This is not only affecting retention but the actual registration of BIPOC students into the school of business as whole. While there are different elements contributing to this current state, we aim to be one that overcomes this disconnect through building and fostering a new initiative that provides resources and community to students of color at the CBE that takes their backgrounds and cultures in mind, encouraging and empowering them to embrace their identities as a strength, while teaching and exploring professional development skills and experiences.

The MBSA started back in 2019 and was put into a “frozen” status when all the members graduated. It was created by a group of students of color at the CBE who wanted to create a space where other BIPOC students can come together and build community and professional connections, while supporting each other in their studies since they all shared similar classes, and even the same majors at times. This club and the space they created was needed as the CBE can be a very isolating environment for students of color because of the low representation. It brought people together.

Starting in Winter of 2023 we worked to build a new board and bring the club back to continue their legacy and become motivated by all the great work and impact they had on student’s experiences here. We also expanded our horizons to include and encourage students of color outside of the CBE to come meet fellow BIPOC students and learn valuable professional skills.

The Leaders of Color Initiative would help our goals of community building and professional development through hosting events in spaces both on and off campus where we educate and explore the vibrant world of BIPOC business, cultural history and identity, professional development resources, connections, practices, and overall empowering fellow students to lean into their unique authentic selves in order to reach their potential. The future goal would also be towards cultivating a community that has the potential to remain strong for years to come, and a network for students to be able to lean on after graduation in pursuit of their careers.

Three of our founding board members are now seniors this year and we know from experience that we would have really benefited from a program like this when we were underclassmen. That’s what initially motivated us to come together and work for this initiative. The school of business can be a very isolating and excluding experience for a student of color because of the current cultural norms surrounding the various fields in business. This leads to a lot of BIPOC students dropping out or even avoiding pursuing a business major in the first place. This further deepens the cycle we are seeing and are experiencing today. We’ve held our first meetings and workshops starting in May of 2024 and have already seen the impact holding space for our communities does for their self-belief systems, including our own.

There is both a present and historical precedent of BIPOC related efforts at the CBE. The CBE has now started to vocalize that they wish to platform and center BIPOC voices and the BIPOC experience at the school overall. This is to combat the low retention rate and stories/exit surveys given by students of color going through the space. They have identified the need as well but don't have any figures to create a specific and focused direction for these students. That's where MBSA's Leaders of Color Initiative comes in – to share and create that direction towards growth. We as an organization are inspired by students and faculty who came before us.

The project itself entails using the funding to support costs for paid speakers, culturally relevant educational nights with presentations and cultural food, and renting spaces in town for workshops and networking events.

The Leaders of Color initiative can be broken up into two distinct sections:

- **Creating professional development opportunities:**
We're hoping to bring in speakers on a monthly/quarterly basis to present on their areas of expertise, whether they're business owners, alumni, or other kinds of community members. By doing so, attendees will not only gain valuable professional development experience, but they'll also start to see themselves more represented in the kinds of careers they're interested in.
- **Hosting cultural and community building events:**
We want to cultivate a sense of belonging and acceptance, empowering our communities of BIPOC students to explore and embody their cultural heritage through expression and education. This creates a support system and safe space where one can go and know they will feel at home and understood, while also learning about their peers' history and heritage through these community building events.

We also plan on hosting community engagement sessions, which touches on both our goal of creating professional development opportunities, as well as hosting cultural and community building events. We plan on touring businesses, multicultural kitchens, meeting business owners, and other related professional excursions. While it's crucial to support activities happening on campus, it is equally important to actually get out into the community and see how businesses are run on a day-to-day basis. A small amount of funding is reserved for these trips, whether there is a need to rent out community space, or for other related expenses.

We've also set aside a small amount of the budget for miscellaneous expenses associated with running our club meetings, in order to provide more support for our MBSA members. Clubs don't currently have access to much funding from the university, so we feel it's important to provide some buffer money for the members to use, as it relates to this project's goals. Expenses might include things such as printing outreach materials, providing snacks for special club meetings, etc.

Specific speakers and events have purposely not yet been finalized, since a mission of MBSA is to be adaptable to the needs of its current members. We aim to align potential speakers and professional excursions with the interests and fields of study that students are expressing at club meetings. Using our connections through faculty within CBE, as well as to local business owners, there is already an ongoing list of potential ideas on where to start.

c. Goals:

What are the goals and desired outcomes of your project?

As mentioned above, The CBE has historically struggled with BIPOC inclusivity and representation, an issue they have been wanting to address more intently in recent discussions. We aim to fill this gap by creating BIPOC-led opportunities for professional growth and development with the perspective of cultural empowerment and enrichment. In the end, we aim to create a connected and flourishing student of color professional presence in the CBE and Western.

We aim to achieve these goals:

- Improve sense of belonging and representation for BIPOC students in and around the CBE
- Increase retention of students of color at the CBE
- Build community and hosting space for BIPOC students to come together and uplift each other
- Provide educational and professional development opportunities that have a lifelong impact for careers and professional relationships
- Connect and bring departments together, rather than having them continue as silos

d. Student impact:

How does this project directly impact the Western student community?

As mentioned before, the CBE has been experiencing lower registration and retention rates for students of color. Through the Leaders of Color Initiative, we have the opportunity to reach hundreds of students in and out of the CBE to create an environment of healthy culturally centered learning and development, while also as a legacy program potentially reaching thousands of future BIPOC Western students by them seeing the success of an Initiative like this in this space. This hopefully directly impacts students by motivating them to explore or pursue their professional and personal development and growth, which hasn't always been historically an accessible goal in this context.

The program will allow students to come together through representation and engagement on campus. The project aims to develop a sense of identity and confidence for students to be able to flourish as professionals once they graduate. It also allows for the greater student population to have a better understanding of the unique perspectives and cultures of their peers on campus leading to a more connected and cohesive student body.

In our experience at Western, other departments do not yet house programs like this, so it has historically been up to students of color as individuals to navigate these spaces alone, seeking community. Among everything else you deal with as a student, this is very isolating and stressful work. We want to change that by creating a space and making it easier for these students to find us and discover that there is a space where people like them come together to support one another and learn leadership and life skills.

It's important for us to emphasize as mentioned earlier, that even though the MBSA is housed in the CBE and centers professional development, it is connected and involved with many other student of color organizations and clubs on campus. We believe that these professional development skills are important to creating confidence and agency as a leader in one's life, regardless of their field of study. So, we collaborate with clubs like Latine Student Union, BIPOC Music Club, and Educators of Color to name a few and share our knowledge with one another. Our membership is diverse in areas of study because we encourage everyone to hold space on these topics and enrich their community.

e. Education and outreach plan:

How do you plan on promoting your project on campus? How will the Western community learn about your efforts? Is there an educational component to your project?

We have a social media account and are connected to various student led organizations on campus like Out in Business, Latine Student Union, Black Student Union, Mixed Student Organization. Our board members also have strong ties to CBE faculty that are already in support of our club and are promoting it thus far. There is a major educational component to the project in terms of professional and personal development education with an emphasis on cultural celebration and education.

We will be able to and have been teaming up with departments in the CBE for overall promotion like official Western social media accounts reposting and sharing our events and information surrounding our initiative while also having small in class presentations and word of mouth communication. Three of our board members are Marketing majors that work as Marketers on campus with support from faculty, so we feel confident about this stage of the program.

f. **Metrics:**

How will the impact of this project be measured? What are quantitative and/or qualitative metrics that can be tracked?

We will be measuring the impact of our initiative through primarily our membership and turnout involvement and collecting feedback from the students and stakeholders throughout the school year, to be able to design more of the initiative to their needs and what they communicate.

As the programs go on and develop, we'll measure how many people become members and show up to our events, becoming more involved and embracing roles in the department and the school. We'll also collect personal testimonies through digital survey methods and with consent filming promotional material as testimonials of their experiences further growing the program by communicating to other students of color that there is a space for them in the CBE lead by fellow BIPOC peers.

The resulting metrics and data can inform us on how to better develop and improve upon the model of the initiative, which reinforces the need-based system by keeping communication frequent and open. This way we can also measure our impact and growth as an on-campus club and organization through this initiative's efforts. While meeting the needs of this student population, the data would also allow us to learn ways to meet new unearthed needs of personal and professional development accessibility that the program can uncover as we go.

g. **Lasting impact:**

What is the longevity of this project? How will it impact sustainability, in the long-term, on campus?

We hope to set the precedent here of student support and empowerment of all the diverse cultural heritage that exists on campus. This project helps support an organization led by students of color with these backgrounds to uplift the communities with resources and real-world engagement and experience. A sentiment that will carry itself forward as when we start to see students graduate through this program, they become pillars and resources to new students entering it. Ultimately, it creates a sustainable cycle of opportunity for students of color.

Our dream is that this project's efforts grow into neighboring departments across campus, inspiring a more inclusive change in these spaces' cultures, one that empowers and supports the experience of our students and faculty of color by creating an understanding support system and building and bringing community together. Our hope is that Western is ultimately able to recruit and retain more students of color moving forward through the space this and other projects like this would create. This impacts sustainability by supporting well-being and social justice, two of the pillars we talk about in the next section.

h. **Ownership & post-SEJF-funding plan:**

Which individual, office, or department is taking ownership of this project? Identify the post-SEJF-funding plan: if the project is to be continued, how will it be funded?

Current and future board members of the club will take on the roles to run the initiative, while finding new students that become board members as time goes on through an election process. Lucas Senger, our Advisor and a Professor at the CBE, has made sure to keep the history and efforts of the MBSA alive and well.

With the funding of the SEJF we can use that support and resources to create more connections and establish a strong foundation for the Leaders of Color Initiative that will help legitimize our efforts in the eyes of other funding sources.

There are also future grants that we aim to collaborate with once this 1st year of funding cycle with the SEJF passes, such as the Spratlen Diversity and Inclusion fund, that focus on cultural change and BIPOC student leadership.

SECTION 2: Sustainability Impact.

a. How will your project positively support each of the four pillars of sustainability at Western? Explain the connection to at least three of the four pillars.

1. Create economic vitality; 2. Promote well-being; 3. Protect the environment; 4. Uphold social justice.

1. Create Economic Vitality – Through the Leaders of Color Initiative, we address the unique and unmet needs of a population on campus through fostering a healthy presence of engagement and representation. In the end, this creates more economic vitality and accessibility for the students in their skills learned through the organization and for Western in having an established and known program on campus for more active and potential future students, in terms of enrollment and support from the community and donors.

2. Promote well-being – The MBSA fosters a community through emotional and communal engagement; we promote well-being through mental health discussions about cultural and ethnic identity and the unique struggles that come with that in the scholastic and professional world.

3. Uphold Social Justice – Being a BIPOC organization, our leadership comprises of students of color on campus with varying cultural backgrounds. With our own histories and experiences, we aim to uphold social justice through the lens of us as a community. We’re focused on showcasing, promoting, empowering and celebrating cultural excellence as well as education, representation and diversity.

b. How will your project positively align with Western’s Sustainability Action Plan (SAP)? Please determine how it advances one or more of the ten SAP chapters by connecting it to a specific objective. For information on the SAP, please refer to the Sustainability Engagement Institute’s website (sustain.wvu.edu) or ask a program representative. The ten SAP chapters are:

1. Built Environment
2. Campus & Community Engagement
3. Curriculum and Research
4. Dining Services
5. Grounds
6. Investments
7. Procurement
8. Student Life
9. Transportation
10. Waste

Primary chapter and objective in alignment: _____ Student Life _____

Explanation:

One of the SAP Chapter’s statements on the Student Life Chapter’s goals says, “This Student Life Chapter describes the cultivation of dynamic and supportive living and learning environments where students engage as leaders and learners in creating a sustainable future at WWU.”

Specifically, objective 3.1 focuses on “cultivating student capacity and efficacy in creating positive change in

sustainability.”

To us as the MBSA and the Leaders of Color Initiative, this chapter truly and most wholly encapsulates and aligns with our goals for our organization. With an emphasis on creating a sustainable future, we want to build the foundation of an environment that not only celebrates and educates about our differences, but also prepares students for a life beyond college.

Additional chapter(s) of alignment and explanation, if applicable:

Campus & Community Engagement: The funding would be allocated towards these workshops, resources, events, and programs mentioned before, for the sake of getting the local community on and off campus engaged and raising awareness about our BIPOC student population and their unique heritage and insights.

SECTION 3: Project Participants.

Project Advisor (Faculty or Staff) Student proposals must include a staff or faculty advisor. The role of the advisor is to assist the team during the development, implementation, and post-implementation stages of the proposal process.

Project Lead: There must be a team lead designated for the project. This individual is expected to serve as the communication liaison for the project.

Financial Agent: The project must have someone with budget authority to manage funds for all purchases. Should funds require transfer, this individual will have to provide a FAST Index and Activity Code to the SEJF Program Coordinator. Financial agents must be permanent staff and/or faculty members on campus, and cannot be student employees.

*Important note: expenditures become the responsibility of the grantee if not all grant conditions are met. This includes final reporting requirements. If you are unclear what the requirements are, please contact an SEJF representative. Your signature below indicates an understanding of this note.

Role	Name	Department/College: <i>Students provide major/minor and expected graduation quarter/year</i>	Position: <i>faculty/ staff/ student</i>	Western email address	Signature to verify agreement
<i>Team Advisor</i>	<i>Lucas Senger</i>	College of Business and Economics, MBA	Faculty	sengerl@wwu.edu	Lucas Senger
<i>Team Lead</i>	<i>Kevin Garcia</i>	Marketing Grad: Spring 2025	Student	garci31@wwu.edu	Kevin Garcia
<i>Team Member</i>	<i>Hanad Adam</i>	Marketing Grad: Spring 2025	Student	adamh@wwu.edu	Hanad Adam
<i>Team Member</i>	<i>Lucas Burke</i>	Accounting Grad Spring 2026	Student	burkel7@wwu.edu	Lucas Burke
<i>Team Member</i>	<i>Caleb Zazueta</i>	Accounting Grad: Spring 2026	Student	zazuetc@wwu.edu	Caleb Zazueta
<i>Financial Agent</i>	<i>Renee Gayden</i>	Administrative Assistant	Faculty	troutnr@wwu.edu	Renee Gayden

SECTION 4: Project Timeline.

- a. Describe how your project will progress, both before and after the approval of your proposal. Outline all tasks that are required to complete the project, including all the means in which you will promote the project on campus, in the table below. Insert additional rows, as necessary.

Task	Timeframe	Estimated Completion Date
Use of grant funds for Bi-Weekly club meetings (Food, Speakers, dinner events, workshops)	8 months	December 2025
Confirming reservations for outreach events, catering, speakers.	1-2 months before each event	December 2025
Club Promotion on campus via flyers and club collaboration	1-2 months before each event	December 2025
Collecting testimonies from Members of MBSA	Spring Quarter	December 2025

- b. **When is the planned project completion date? This is when SEJF staff will be checking in and requesting a Final Report and a Final Expense Report.**

December 2025

SECTION 5: Project Stakeholders.

- a. **Does your project involve labor/participation or require permission from organizations, departments, or individuals on campus?** Who will be impacted if this proposal is implemented? All stakeholders must provide a signature of approval for this project. *Note: Only stakeholders internal to WWU must be listed.*

Stakeholder Name	University Department and Position	Involvement in Project	Stakeholder signature of approval
Lucas Senger	College of Business and Economics, MBA	Advisor to MBSA. Has given crucial advice and references	Lucas Senger
Renee Gayden	College of Business and Economics, Program Coordinator	Financial Advisor	Renee Gayden

- b. **Does your project propose a temporary or permanent facility or property modification?** If so, is a Project Owner Form attached to the appendix of this application? Please ask a program representative for this form.

It does not.

SECTION 6: Project Budget.

Provide an itemized list of the budget items required for this project. Include equipment, construction costs, publicity, labor, and any other costs.

Budget item	Cost per Item	Quantity	Total Cost
Paid Speaker Fees: We will be Paying WWU Alumni, multicultural business owners, and other figures to speak at meetings and events.	\$1000	5-6 per school year	\$6,000
Renting Spaces for Workshops and Locally Driven Community Events: Touring businesses, Multicultural kitchens, meeting owners.	\$1000	3 per school year	\$3,000
Culturally Relevant and Informative Food Nights. Catering, inviting student businesses to prepare food and offer services at events.	\$500	5-6 per school Year	\$3,000
Miscellaneous Meeting Supplies and Student Resources	1	1	\$1,000
Total project budget			\$13,000

The SEJF program encourages the identification of additional funding sources to augment SEJF funds, though it is not required. List pending, approved, and denied applications for funding from other sources, along with amounts requested from those sources.

Additional funding source(s), if applicable	Status	Amount
Spratlen Diversity and Inclusion Fund	Applying	\$2,000
Total of all other funding sources		\$2,000

Total funding amount requested from SEJF	\$13,000
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If the project is implemented, will there be any ongoing replacement, operational, maintenance or renewal costs? If yes, has a source of funds been identified to cover those costs? This must be communicated to the appropriate stakeholder.

Ongoing cost	Amount/year	Responsible Stakeholder	Signature
N/A			

SECTION 7: Appendices.

Provide any additional documents, references, or information here.