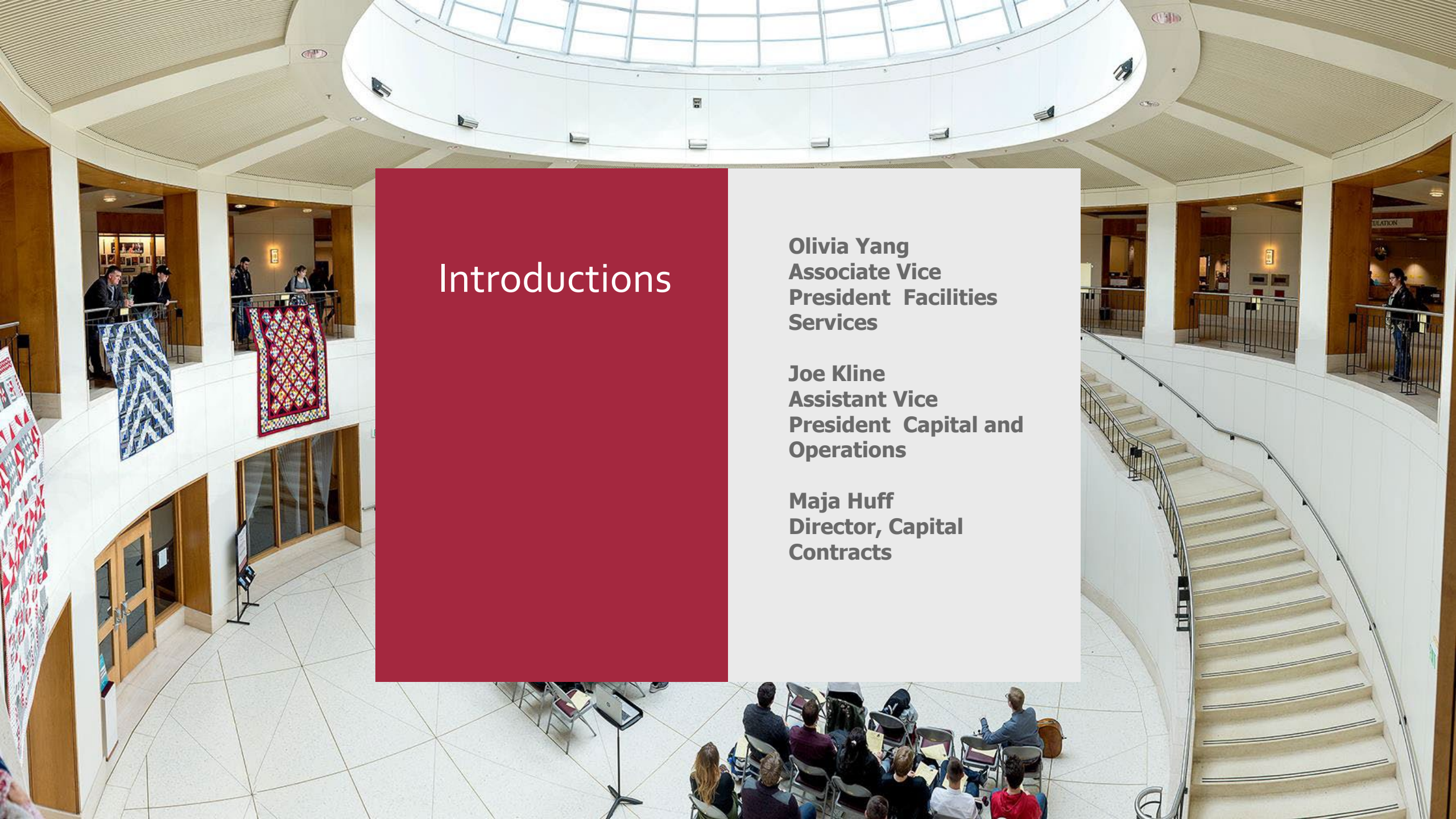
WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

WSU DB Demonstration Projects <$2M

Capital Projects Advisory Review Board

October 2,2025



Introductions

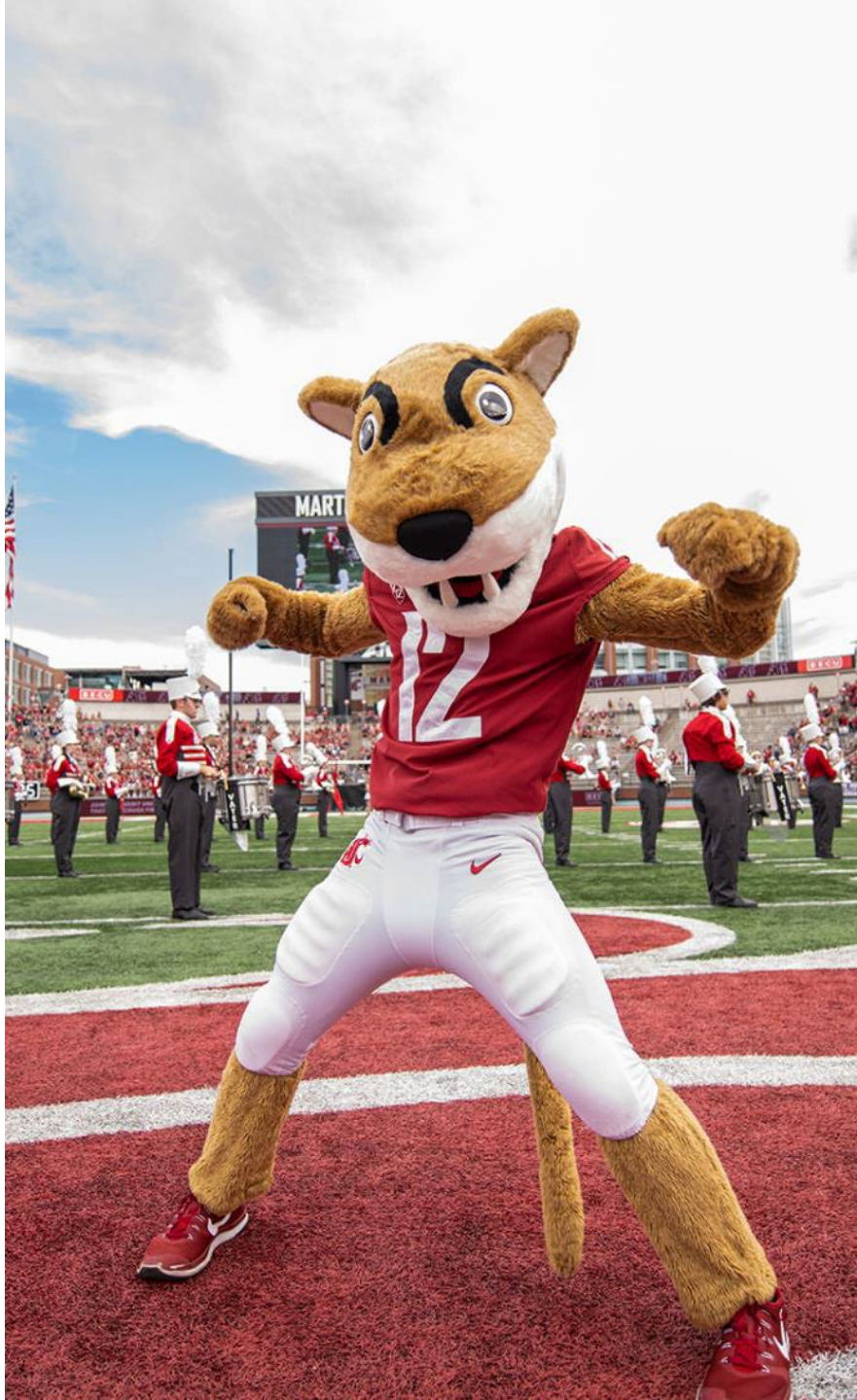
Olivia Yang
Associate Vice President Facilities Services

Joe Kline
Assistant Vice President Capital and Operations

Maja Huff
Director, Capital Contracts

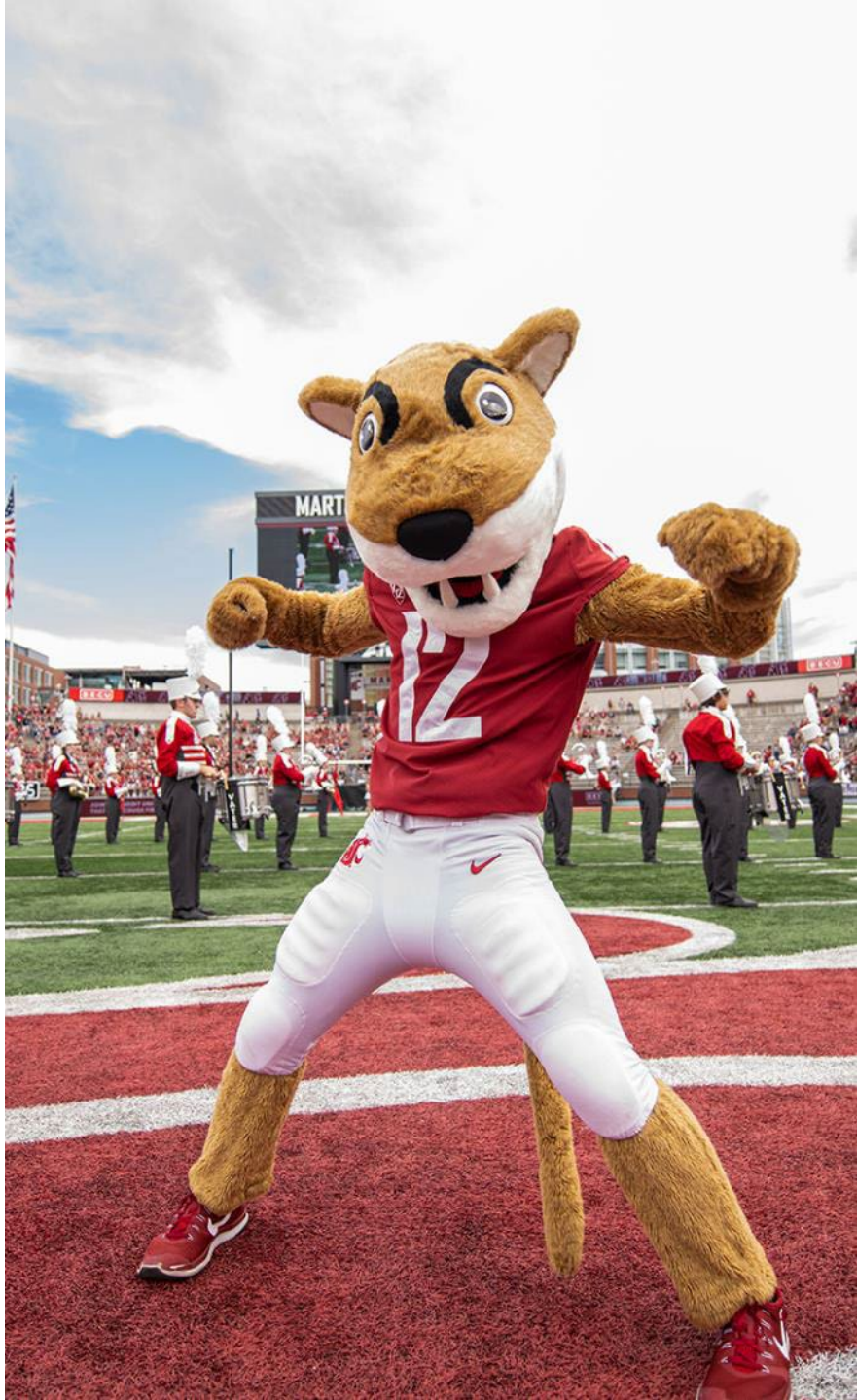
WSU's Journey to Design-Build

- WSU has progressed from GCCM to Traditional DB to Progressive DB over the last 15 years.
- WSU's goal is to deliver the most program within the funding available to our clients.
- WSU believes the DB process can maximize value from project definition through close-out.
- Having completed 35 DB projects so far (6 < $2M) (12 < $4M), with an additional 25 DB projects in progress or procurement, WSU believes applying DB principles to smaller projects will lead to better value for the university.



WSU Small DB Projects List (previous)

- Bustad Vivarium Renovation and Building Controls Replacement
  - DB Team: Quality Contractors | Design West | MSI | Apollo
  - Initial GMP $1.75M
  - 1 team responded to the Q, 1 Proposal
- Building Automation System network and Panel Upgrades
  - DB Team: MacDonald-Miller
  - Initial GMP $1.45M
  - 3 teams responded to the Q, 2 invited to the P
- Eastlick Teaching Labs Renovation
  - DB Team: Walker | NAC
  - Initial GMP$2M
  - 5 teams responded to the Q, 3 invited to the P
- Bustad HVAC Service Equipment Elements and Controls Upgrade
  - DB Team: MacDonald-Miller
  - Initial GMP $1M
  - 3 teams responded to the Q, 3 teams invited to the P, 2 withdrew
- Demolish Troy-Wegner Bridge
  - DB Team: N. A. Degerstrom | Exeltech Consulting | Talisman Construction
  - Initial GMP $688K
  - 2 Teams Responded to the Q, 2 Teams invited to the P



WSU Small DB Projects List (updated)

Electrical Infrastructure Upgrade

DB Team: Valley Electric

Initial GMP $3.63M

4 Teams responded to Q, 3 invited to the P

Chilled Water and Metering Renewal

DB Team: Millig

Initial GMP $3.82M

5 teams responded to Q, 3 invited to the P

Roof Replacement on Various Buildings

DB Team: Missoula Sheet Metal and Roofing | Palouse Design Associates

Initial GMP $1.53M

2 teams responded to Q, 2 invited to the P

Multiple Requirements at the WSU Research & Extension Centers and WSU Tri-Cities

DB Team: Leone & Keeble | Architects West

Initial GMP $2.46M

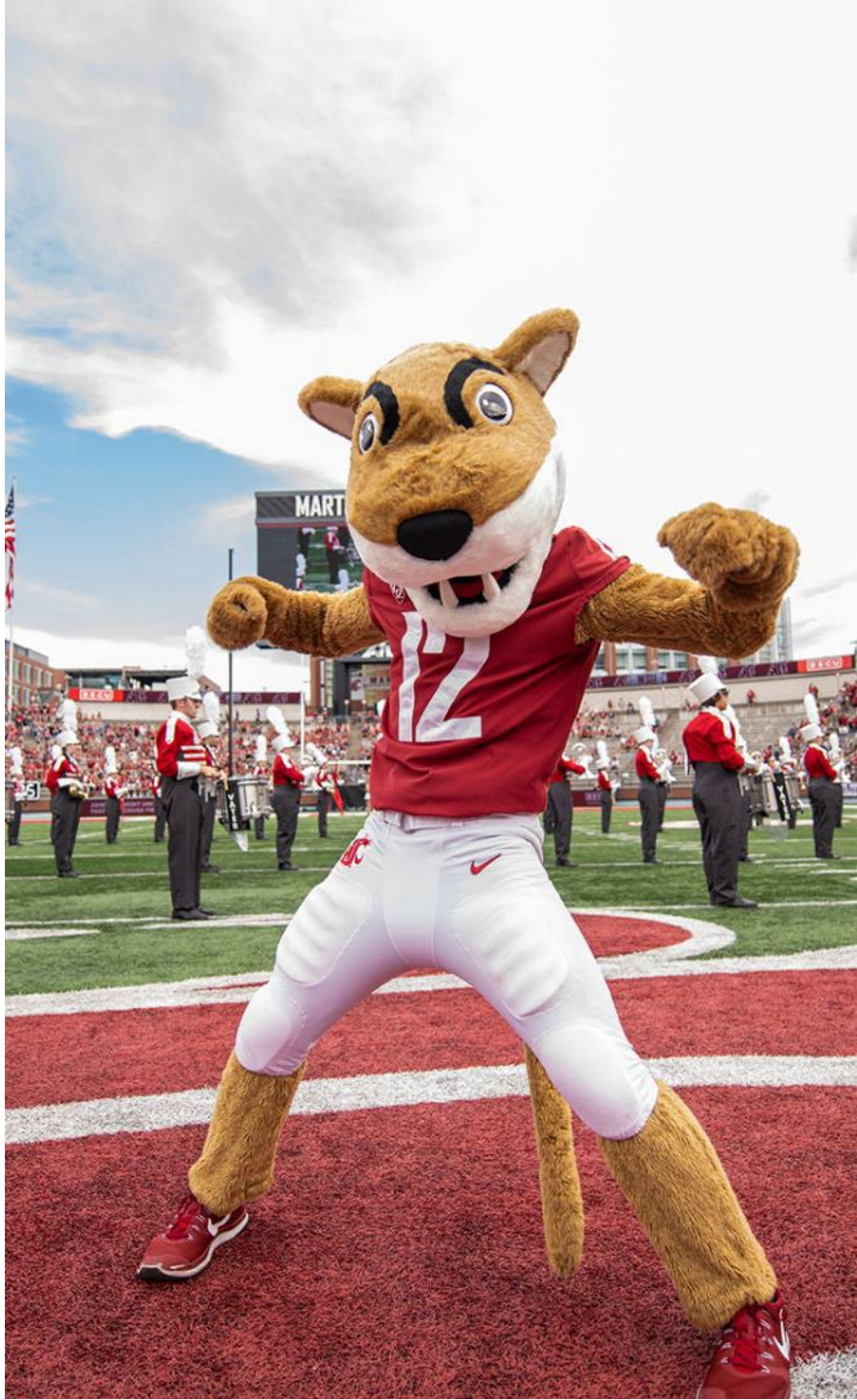
4 teams responded to Q, 3 invited to the P

Kruegel-Kmac Demo

DB Team: Quality Contractors, LLC | Coffman Engineers

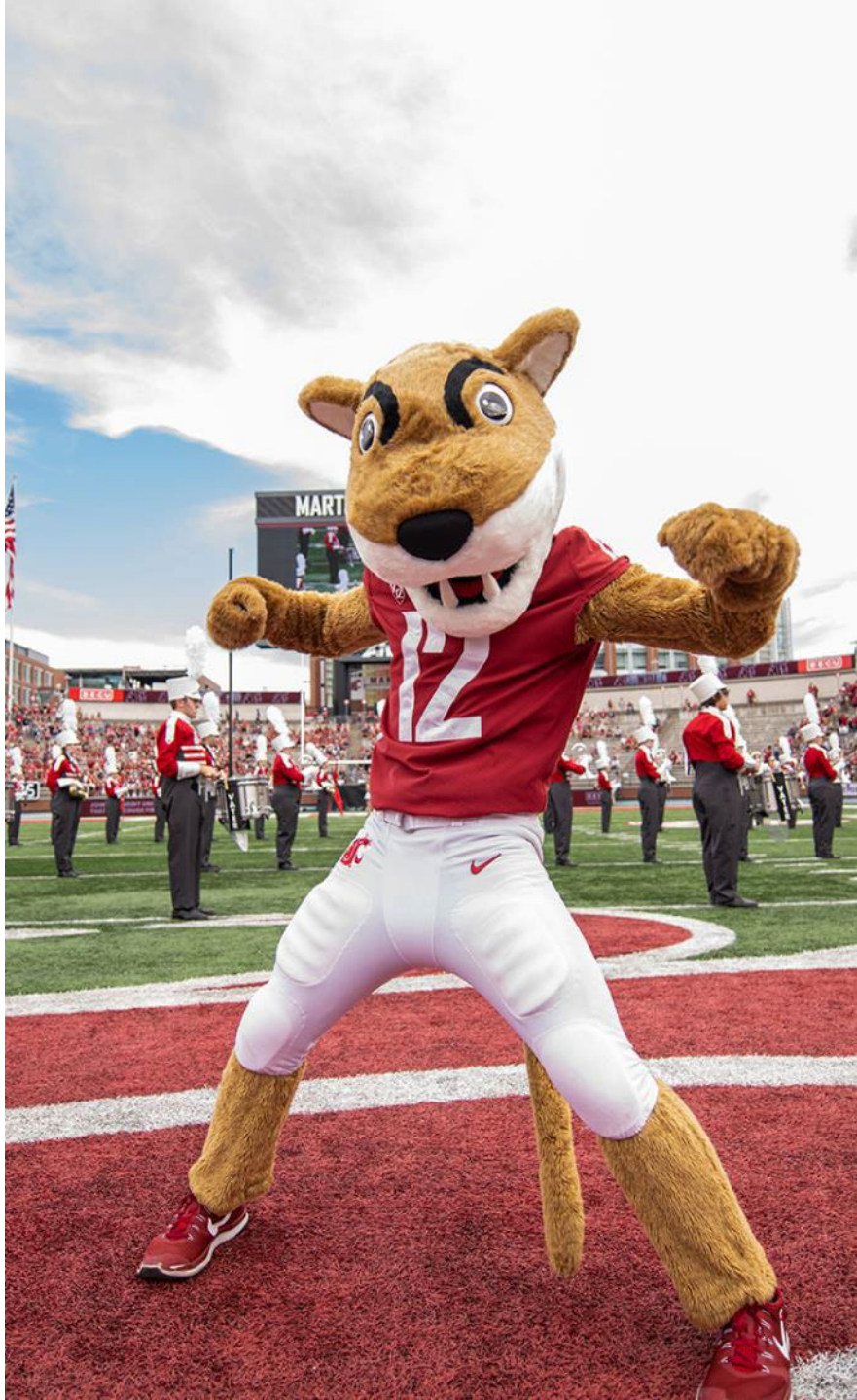
Initial GMP $2.65M

5 teams responded to Q, 3 invited to the P



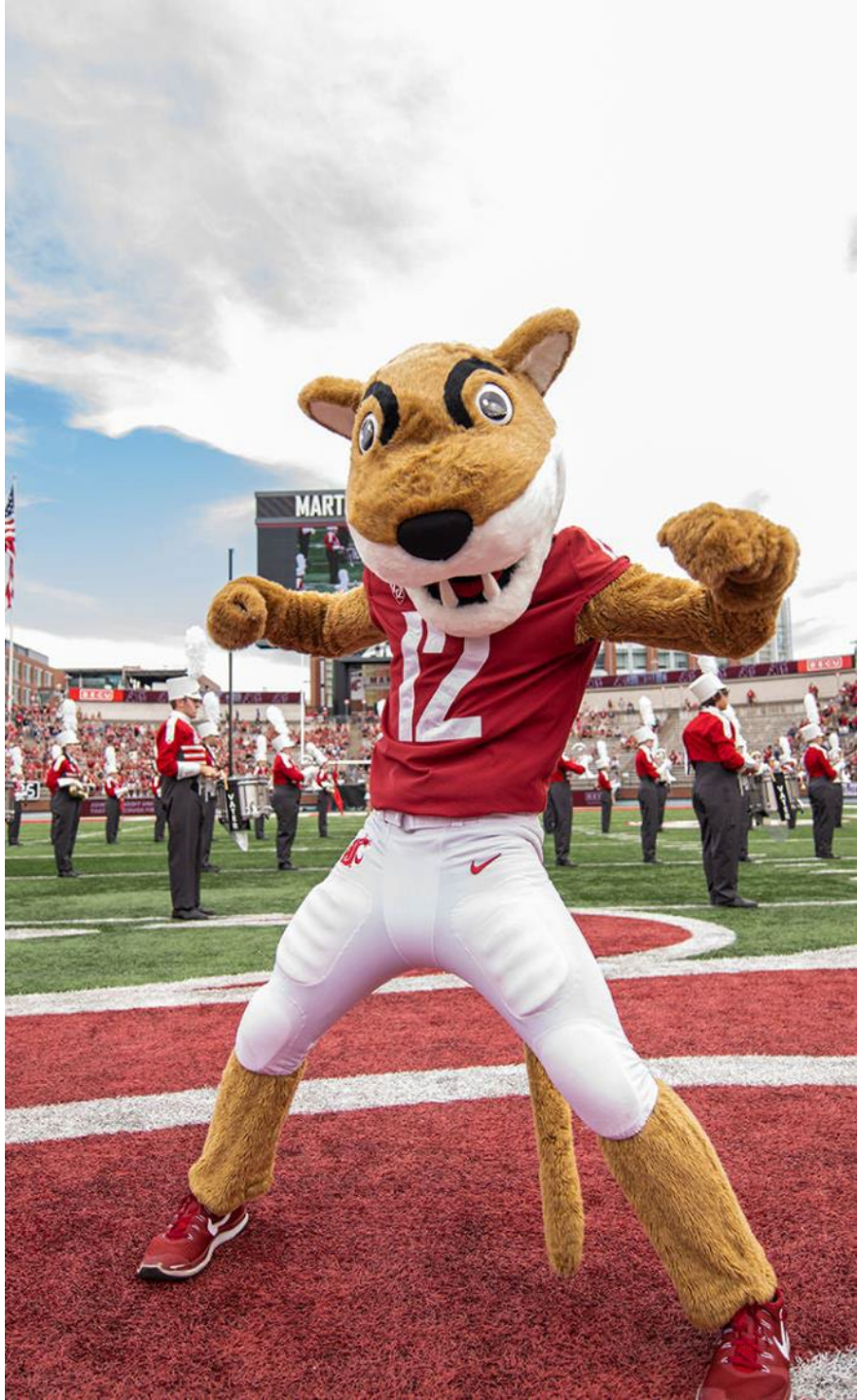
WSU Small DB Projects List (updated)

- Pullman Campus Safety Enhancement
  - DB Team Walker Construction | MSI Mechanical & Electrical Engineers | M&M Harrison Electric Co
  - Initial GMP $2.2M
  - 6 teams responded to Q, 3 invited to the P
- New Indigenous Health
  - DB Team Graham | DLR Group |Akana
  - Initial GMP $1.05M
  - 6 teams responded to Q, 3 invited to the P
- 25-27 Roof Renewal on Various Campuses
  - DB Team Missoula Sheet Metal & Roofing | Palouse Design Associates
  - Initial GMP $3.81M
  - 4 teams responded to Q, 3 invited to the P
- Cougar Football Complex Locker Room Renovation
  - DB Team Quality Contractors | Design West Architects | AECOM
  - Initial GMP $2.3M
  - 4 teams responded to Q, 3 invited to the P



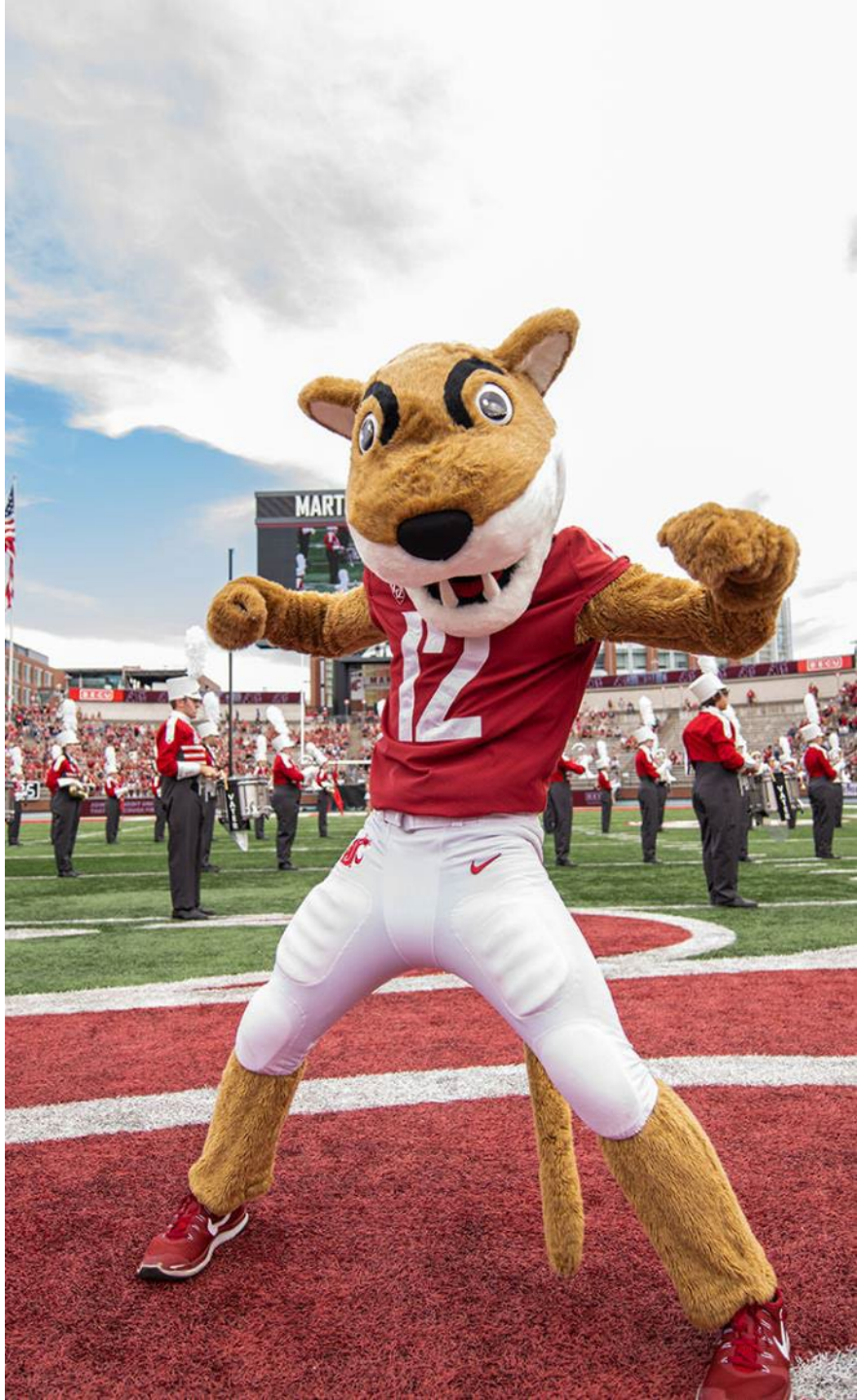
WSU Small DB Projects List (pending)

- Veterinary Teaching Hospital and Animal Disease Biotechnology Facility Tenant Improvement (Contract sent to Contractor)
  - DB Team Mangum Construction | Castellaw Kom Architects
  - Initial GMP $4M
  - 6 teams responded to Q, 3 invited to the P
- 25-27 Building Automation Infrastructure Renewal (Not Yet Selected)
  - DB Team Selecting 9/12/25
  - Initial GMP $1.46M
  - 2 teams responded to Q, 2 invited to the P
- Mt Vernon Construction Greenhouse Kit (Not Yet Selected)
  - DB Team Selecting 11/14/25
  - Initial GMP $695K
  - Responding teams yet to be known.
- Vancouver District Utilities (Not Yet Selected)
  - DB Team Selecting 12/5/25
  - Initial GMP $2.16M
  - Responding teams yet to be known.



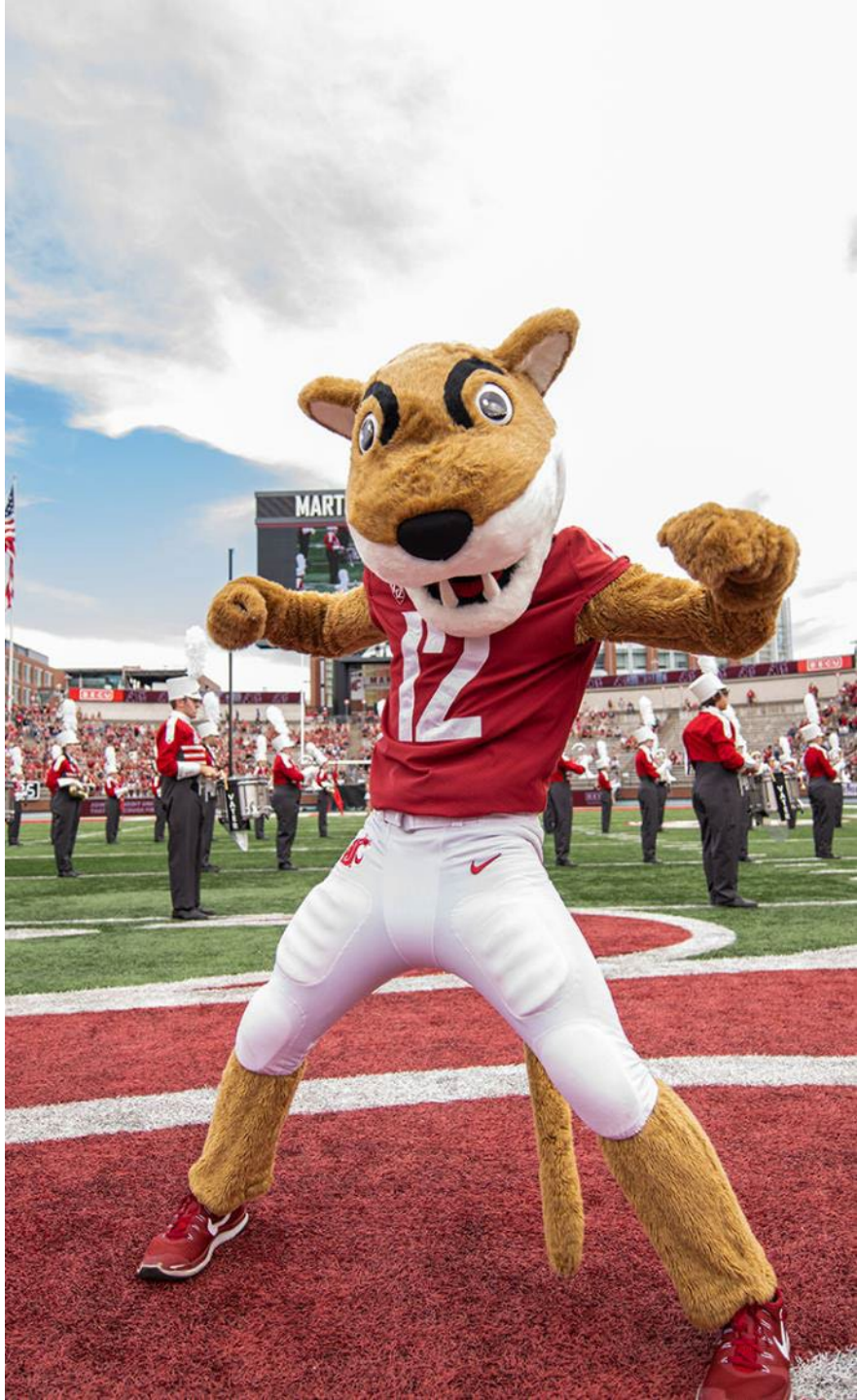
Selection Phase Lessons Learned

- Based on the number of RFQ responses, we need to up our advertising and outreach effort.
  - Earlier outreach seems more important than broader outreach, although both good. Average 3.8 responses to RFQs.
- Need to find ways to de-mystify the DB process for smaller firms. (maybe training/presentations with partnerships through AGC/DBIA/etc)
  - Having experience as a sub on previous DB projects seems to be good indicator of success for new/small DB firms.
- Smaller contractor/design teams need more clearly defined deliverables from the owner, and potentially the opportunity to fix errors or omissions during the RFQ&P phases (and maybe even after selection but pre-award). Especially with regards to inclusion plans, inclusion results, design schedules, Fee definitions, GC requirements, and 'Cost of the work' definitions.
  - WSU has incorporated Pre-RFQ and Pre-RFP meetings where we can tailor the presentation to the DB firms we expect to propose on the project. When requested, WSU is prepared to share 'generic' forms and templates to help teams develop their Q and P responses and not have to guess what we are looking for.
- Small DB seemed to be a good way to address emergent issues like our pedestrian bridge demolition need.
  - WSU has worked to develop an even more 'scaled down' selection process and contract documents to allow for quick reaction to urgent needs (donor funding, state grants, research grants, etc)



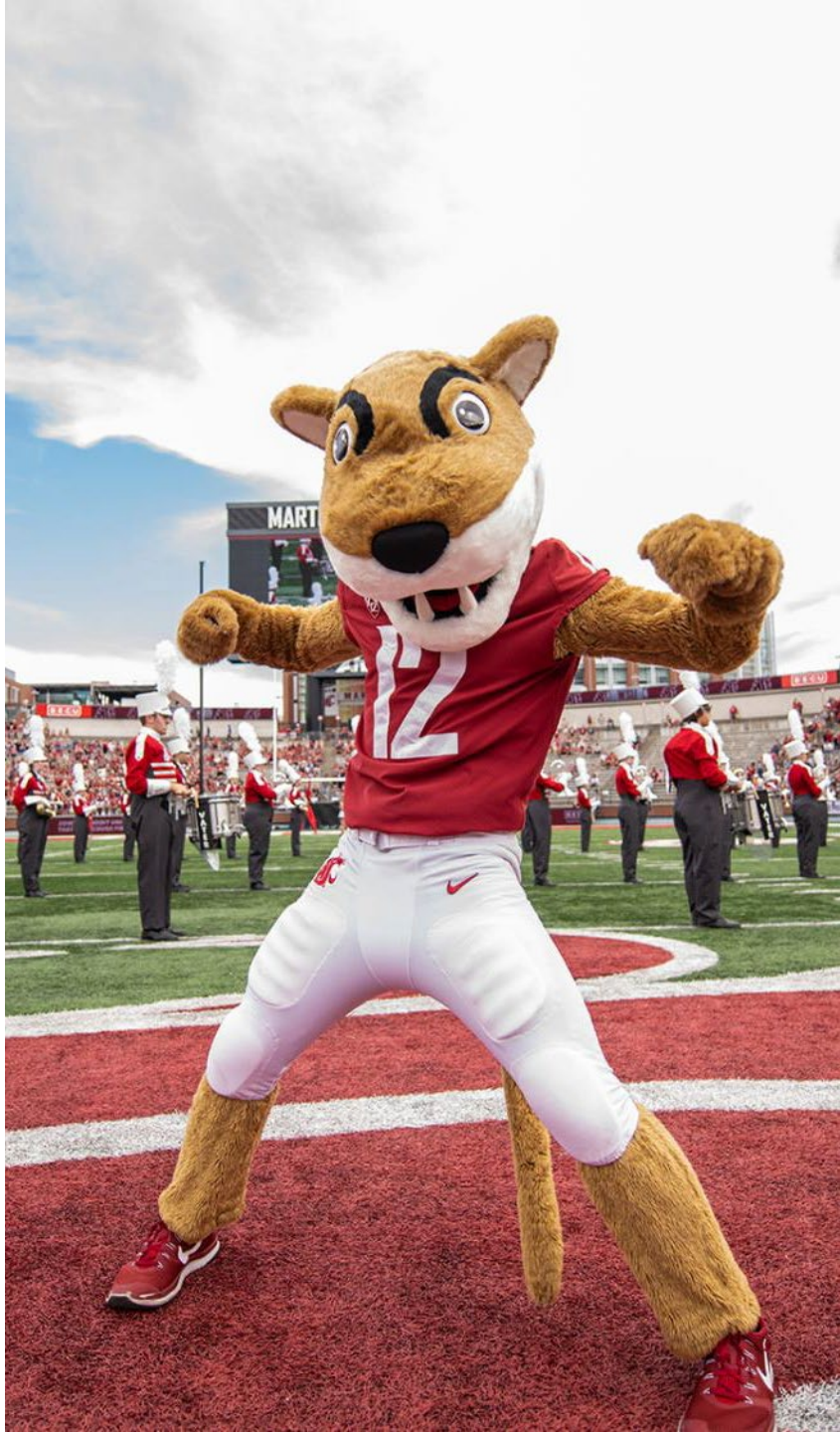
Design Phase Lessons Learned

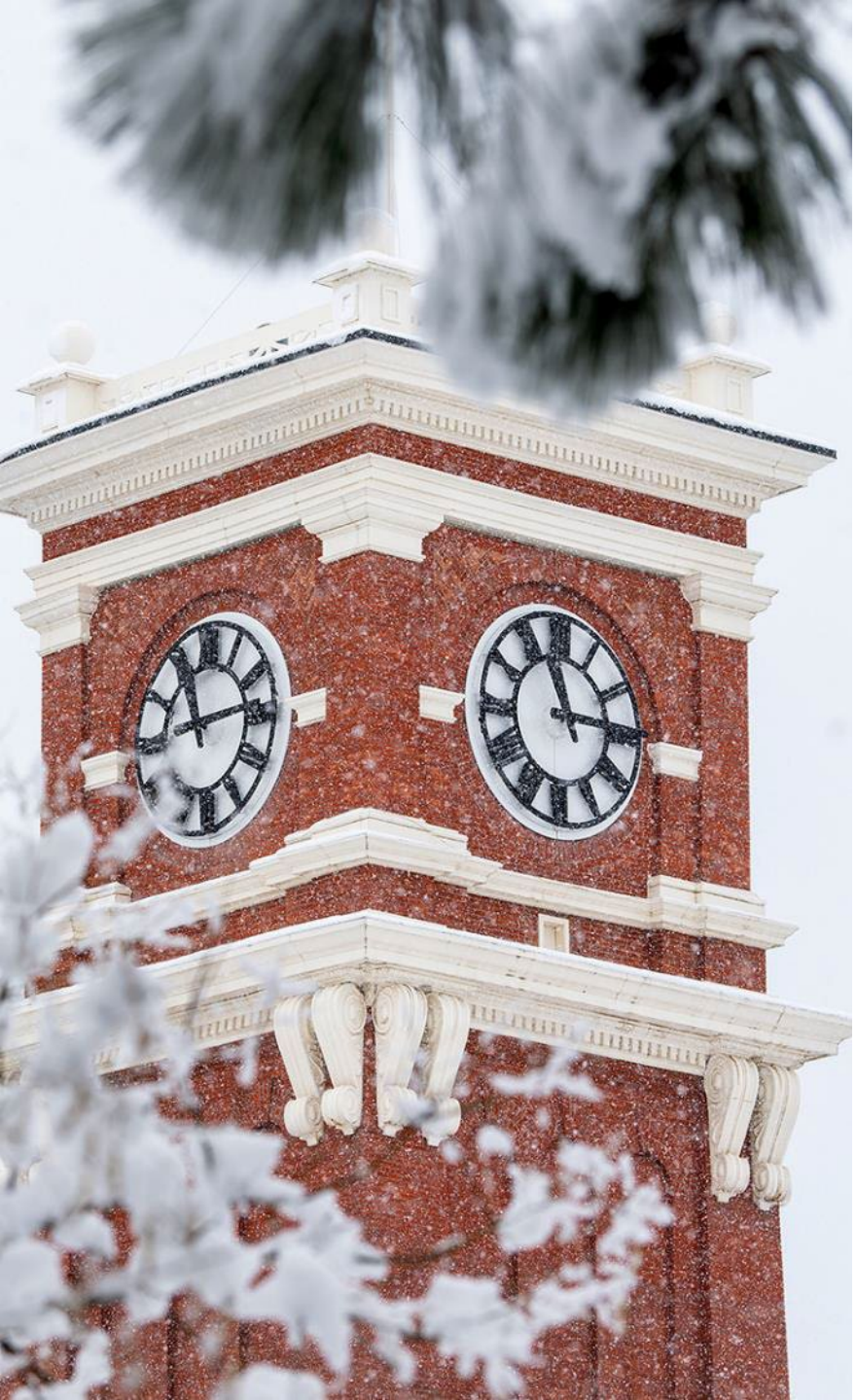
- Smaller firms needed some help in defining when and what design submittals were necessary during the design/permitting process. It is easy for an owner to take this for granted.
  - WSU has made an effort to address these requirements in the Q&P and made special effort to discuss these in the Pre-Q&P meetings. We also work with the AHJ's in advance if this is new to that jurisdiction.
- Teams struggled early to fully integrate the owner in the design process in a collaborative way. This slowed things down a little initially but was eventually overcome and things moved more quickly.
  - Owner has to make clear how much design influence they want to have. Can be difficult for small/new DB teams to get away from SD, DD, 50%CDs, etc. DB design tends to be a much more iterative process with permitting as milestones.
- DB teams were hesitant to share problems as they came up.
  - Developing a collaborative environment for the full DB team can be challenging for those firms who haven't been involved in something similar. Owner must be prepared to deal with bad news without overreacting.



Construction Phase Lessons Learned

- Quick pay strategies may be more difficult to implement due to DB Team having less elaborate accounting systems and support.
  - Upfront planning with prime DB team can allow for creative ways to enhance quick pay strategies. Strategies include flatter subcontractor structures, well communicated invoicing schedules, and offset pay application substantiation. Most important is for owner to pay within the normal 30 day window as that is how many downstream processes are setup.
- Getting new DB teams to embrace a more collaborative method of problem solving during construction was challenging (especially for those with a long history of hard bid experience). The contractors generally didn't want to share problems until they had developed all of the reasons it wasn't their fault.
  - Expectations for problem solving must be clearly established at the beginning, and should be reinforced as the DB team is built.
- WSU uses a GMP vs lump sum contract. Our smaller contractors had some issues adjusting to a 'substantiated' cost of the work billing methodology vs a % complete methodology. This caused some issues as we reconciled with the auditor at the end of the project.
  - WSU has found that doing a pre-audit somewhere around the 50% complete timeframe and addressing issues makes the final audit much easier.





A few initial thoughts on small Design-Build

Should everyone try this – No (Not Yet)

- The owner should have significant experience with design-build before bringing inexperienced teams into the process.
  - Owner should have a well developed Design Build culture that the DB team can acclimate into. Would not recommend this process as a first DB experience.
- Smaller dollar values can be indicative of shorter project timelines, requiring more intensive time commitments from the owner.
  - Need to indicate to proposers that the initial level of effort required from the DB team is often more intense early in the project.
- Significant thought and work is required to modify large DB contracts to be useful for small DB projects.
- It's not really clear at this point whether using DB on small projects will increase our small business utilization rate.
  - WSU has had had limited success increasing small business utilization on small DB projects, but it does offer more opportunities due to the RFQ/P inclusion plan and more flexibility in choosing design and trade partners. WSU's small business inclusion rates may have more to do with our location (limited small business pool) than than lack of advertising or outreach efforts.

Questions