



COUNCIL CONVERSATIONS

WASHINGTON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

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EXPANDING ACCESS TO EDUCATION IS KEY TO CLOSING GAPS, CREATING OPPORTUNITY

By Gene Sharratt, Ph.D.

To advance equity and create opportunity for all, we must expand access to affordable, high-quality postsecondary education. Regrettably, Washington continues to have deep and persistent gaps in education, income, and wealth, and these gaps are widening as our state becomes more diverse. As a result, the middle class is shrinking, and the fastest-growing segments of our population are the least likely to have the opportunities they need to succeed. Without immediate interventions, we risk failing the students who will become our future leaders.

Higher education has an important role to play in addressing these issues. Historically, African American, Latino, and Native American students are less likely than students from other racial and ethnic groups to enter and complete postsecondary education. In addition, only nine percent of students in the lowest income quartile complete a bachelor's degree by age 24.

The Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) is committed to increasing equity and inclusive access to postsecondary learning for all students. WSAC's Pave the Way conference, held October 5-6 in Tacoma, is a prime example of that commitment. The Pave the Way conference brought together postsecondary leaders, business partners, civic organizations, students, and faculty. Attendees discussed best practices, policies, and partnerships to advance equity, access, readiness, and support for underserved students throughout the P-20 educational system. Learn more about WSAC's college access and readiness programs on our [website](#).

2015 ROADMAP UPDATE SHOWS PROGRESS, IDENTIFIES NEEDS TO MEET ATTAINMENT GOALS

In December, the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) will release the 2015 Roadmap Update, its first progress report on our state's educational attainment goals, that by 2023:

- All adults in Washington, aged 25–44, will have a high school diploma or equivalent.
- At least 70 percent of Washington adults, aged 25–44, will have a postsecondary credential.

This report measures system-wide progress toward the goals, based on three core measures: high school graduation, postsecondary enrollment, and postsecondary completion. It also provides results for leading indicators that represent possible areas of improvement.

State statute directs the Council to propose ten-year attainment goals and to provide progress reports every two years. The 2015 Roadmap Update is the Council's first progress report. In alternating years, WSAC produces a short-term strategic action plan for meeting those goals.

The final draft of the [2015 Roadmap Update](#) will be posted online in preparation for the Council's November meeting.

HISTORIC TUITION LEGISLATION IMPACTS STATE PREPAID TUITION PROGRAM

Passage of this year's College Affordability Act has led to changes in GET, Washington's 529 prepaid college tuition plan. The Act, which lowers the cost of tuition at the state's public colleges and universities, affects some of the assumptions that GET pricing and payout models have historically been based upon.

GET's governing committee has responded by implementing short-term changes that, among other things, waive refund fees and delay new unit sales until a feasibility study to evaluate future options for the program can be completed. Customers who purchased GET units in recent years may also be eligible for an automatic refund of certain fees.

More details are available on the program website at get.wa.gov. Customers with account-specific questions are encouraged to call the contact center at 1.800.955.2318 or email getinfo@wsac.wa.gov.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: SPANISH-LANGUAGE RADIO BROADCASTS

The Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) is proud to partner with the state Commission on Hispanic Affairs (CHA) as a contributor to the [CHA radio](#) program *Conozca Su Gobierno*. On the show, CHA Director Uriel Iñiguez hosts state agency representatives who provide information and answer questions in Spanish. Listeners can call in and participate.

WSAC's segments focus on college access, affordability, and resources for our state's Spanish-speaking families. Topics covered by other agencies include how to protect yourself as a consumer, what you need to do to start a business, how to access health programs, and more.

Upcoming WSAC Broadcasts:

- 11/12 @ 10:00am – 103.3 FM & 92.1 FM (Wenatchee)
Streaming online at www.lanuevaradio.com
- 12/22 @ 11:30am – 1680 AM (Seattle), 91.1 FM (Yakima) & 91.7 FM (Skagit)
Streaming online at www.radioluzseattle.com and www.kdna.org
- 1/14 @ 10:00am – 103.3 FM & 92.1 FM (Wenatchee)
- 2/17 @ 10:30am – 1360 AM (Seattle)
Streaming online at www.elrey1360seattle.com

COUNCIL OF PRESIDENTS CELEBRATES 50 YEARS OF COLLABORATION AND SERVICE

By Paul Francis, Executive Director of the Council of Presidents

The Council of Presidents (COP) is an association of Washington's public baccalaureate degree-granting institutions. COP staff is presently leading and participating in a number of key initiatives. A select few include:

- Staffing the [Campus Sexual Assault Prevention Task Force](#), established this year in Senate Bill 5719.
- Updating our nationally-recognized [public four-year dashboard](#), alongside the Education Research and Data Center.
- Developing a statewide computer science transfer agreement that will greatly benefit students.
- Improving consistency and transparency with respect to advanced placement policies and other dual-credit/enrollment programs.
- Continuing to examine opportunities to reduce or eliminate duplicative state-level reporting requirements and regulations in order to increase operational efficiency.
- Updating WSAC's ten-year Roadmap.
- Continuing our work with more than [20 COP groups](#), ranging from education deans and financial aid directors to veterans directors and chief technology officers.

Woven throughout the fabric of COP is the belief that we work best when together. Collaborative efforts with our partners this year led to the development of the first ever [Joint Higher Education Legislative Agenda](#) that allowed us to successfully advocate for increased higher education funding in the 2015-17 operating budget. COP is committed to building upon existing partnerships in 2016 so as to benefit the students and families of our state.

During my time as executive director, I've strategically focused on improving our communications efforts to spotlight the life-changing teaching, learning, and research at our institutions. That portfolio now includes our updated [website](#), [Twitter account](#), [quarterly newsletters](#), and brand new [blog](#). Connect with us!

In 2017 the Council of Presidents will celebrate 50 years of dedicated service to six world-class public colleges and universities. Let's keep building pathways to success together for years to come.

COUNCIL MEMBER PROFILE: ERIC PATTISON, STUDENT MEMBER

What are your educational goals and plans for the future?

I am entering my sophomore year at Bellevue College as a chemical engineering student. I plan to work toward a doctorate in the field, specializing in elastomeric adhesive systems. Ideally, after college I would gain experience working in a lab as part of a team.

What do you hope to accomplish or focus on during your time on the Council?

During this term, I hope to actively and accurately represent the greater interests of students statewide. I intend to advocate for the identification and adoption of strategies tailored to minimize the impact of school transitions on student performance. This could prove especially advantageous for students and families affected by special needs.

Was there a teacher who particularly inspired you?

My high school engineering/technology teacher set a great example for students and faculty alike; Karl Ruff is a gem among educators. Occasionally, the entire class participates in simulations of industry that showcase state-of-the-art manufacturing processes like [Kaizen](#) and [Lean Plus](#). The ultramodern technology curriculum is kept current thanks to his motto, "Keep one foot in industry and the other in the classroom."

What is your favorite place in Washington State and why?

The Washington Park Arboretum has been a sanctuary for me to disconnect from my hectic life and experience nature freely. This urban oasis is a secluded area in the heart of a bustling metropolis, situated between Seattle's busiest commuter bridge and the quiet Madison Valley neighborhood.