

May 23, 2013 Council Meeting

Participants

Council Members: Lindsey Jahn, Ray Lawton, Scott Brittain, Marty Brown, Jeff Charbonneau, Maud Daudon, Paul Francis, Karen Lee, Susana Reyes

Council Staff: Don Bennett, Jim Reed, Aaron Wyatt, Blake Chard, Rachelle Sharpe, Randy Spaulding, Christy England-Seigerdt, Mark Bergeson, Daryl Monear, Noreen Light, Coke Putnam

Greetings and Action Items

Chair Lindsey Jahn opened the meeting at the Red Lion in Olympia at 8:45 a.m. Following introductions of each Council member, Ray Lawton took the opportunity to express the Council members' and staff's appreciation to Lindsey for serving as the Council's student representative as well as assuming the responsibilities of Council chair. He then presented her with a gift of a personalized engraved gavel.

Action: Marty Brown made a motion to approve the preliminary meeting agenda. Ray Lawton seconded the motion. The agenda for the May 23, 2013 meeting was unanimously approved.

Action: Marty Brown made a motion to approve the minutes as presented for the March 26 Council meeting as well as the minutes for the April 9 and May 6 Council teleconference meetings. Ray Lawton seconded the motion. The minutes were approved as drafted.

Visit from Governor Jay Inslee

Governor Inslee expressed his appreciation for the efforts of the members of the Washington Student Achievement Council, recognizing the contributions of not only the current membership but the quality input from prior members. He also acknowledged the accomplishments and vast experience possessed by Gene Sharratt who will be joining the Council staff as Executive Director beginning June 1.

The Governor conveyed that one of the most important responsibilities we have is to assure that the students in the state of Washington are provided a chance to take advantage of and receive quality education. He stated the need to align the educational systems with the new

economy and its opportunities – developing that alignment is what the Governor articulated as one of the major tasks of the Council.

He then conveyed that a second priority is shifting of a mission statement of our educational system from a K-12 system which had rural and agricultural roots to a high quality lifetime system where, throughout our lives, Washingtonians can have the opportunity to utilize the system to be more adept and flexible in our ever-changing economy. He encouraged working with the business communities and building partnerships to allow students to access the education and training needed to building successful careers. He encouraged efforts that may assist students to develop their “vision statement” to introduce the possibilities of achieving higher goals.

Mary Alice Heuschel, Governor Inslee’s Chief of Staff, then joined the Governor in expressing the full support and strong commitment of the Governor’s office for the work ahead for the Council. It was emphasized that the entire executive branch is supportive and available to work with the Council as well towards building a strong education system in Washington state. Mary Alice also spoke of the work being done towards completing the matrix of goals of “Results Washington” which will be finalized and shared in the near future.

Mandatory Report: Diversity Report

Mark Bergeson of the Council staff introduced several of the research staff who were team members of this project and worked jointly with the Washington Student Achievement Council to collaboratively prepared the report “*Educational Attainment: Diversity and Equity in Washington State Higher Education.*” Presenting the findings of the study were Sheila Edwards Lang, Vice President/Vice Provost for Minority Affairs and Diversity, University of Washington; Michael Tate Chief Diversity Officer and Professor, Washington State University; and Marc Robinson, Director of Culture and Heritage Houses (Office of Equity and Diversity), Washington State University. Mark reported that the research done for this project closely aligned with the work in progress to develop the 10-year roadmap as mandated by the Legislature.

The panel spoke of the swiftly changing demographics in Washington, noting that there are achievement gaps identified and becoming wider that currently exist in both the K-12 system and postsecondary education. They expressed three major factors contributing to the growing gaps: poor academic preparation, lack of social capital, and the rising cost of tuition and loan debt. The increasing diversity of citizens in the state implies the need to clarify the roles and responsibilities of educational sectors as well as that of business and government. They shared the need to work toward consistency of data and the ability to track and evaluate individual students who transition from high school to colleges and universities.

Overview of Roadmap Process

Jim Reed of the Council staff presented an overview of the roadmap development process, outlining that the first step was the preparation and approval by the Council of the 2012 Strategic Action Plan as mandated by the Governor and the Legislature which was then meant to guide the development of a 10-year roadmap due in December 2013. In the strategic action plan, the Council identified five critical challenges: student readiness, affordability, capacity and success, technology, and stable and accountable funding. Because some of those challenges are multi-dimensional, nine planning issues have been identified within the five challenges. Broken down within the student readiness challenge are the concerns regarding early learning needs of the pre-K population, outreach and support, alignment between high school and college admissions requirements, remedial postsecondary education, and college affordability. Within institutional capacity and success, Jim explained that this challenge included the need to review increased student demand for postsecondary education and the necessity to evaluate the assessment of skills, knowledge, and experience students will need to succeed after graduation. Along with capturing the potential of technology and the possibility of sustainable and accountable funding, these challenge areas are being studied and researched by nine established workgroups consisting of Council members, Council staff, and multiple stakeholder participants. Jim reported that a total of 102 professional contributors are involved in these workgroups. Each policy planning issue has been broken down into multiple phases: organizational phase, policy issues analysis phase, and roadmap actions analysis phase, to then lead to a set of roadmap recommendations to be approved by the Council and presented to the Governor and the Legislature in December 2013.

Policy Background Briefings

Alignment of Graduation and Admission Requirements

Randy Spaulding of the Council staff introduced two team members of the roadmap workgroup who are studying alignment of graduation and admission requirements: Jane Wellman from the Western State for the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, and Linda Drake from the State Board of Education. Their presentation outlined that student preparation and successful entry into postsecondary education are not distributed evenly across all populations. Minority and low income students are less likely to successfully complete high school and less prepared to go on to higher education and training, leading to recognized preparation gaps. Planned changes are necessary in graduation requirements, increased funding of basic education, the implementation of common core requirements, and improvements in curriculum and student assessment. There is a need for students to be supported in their development of a high school

and beyond plan, to include the awareness of parents, educators, and school and district leaders to the needs of students to successfully meet the standards to enter postsecondary education. Also necessary is ongoing attention to college admissions standards and the minimum admissions requirements to maintain alignment with the skills of the graduating high school population. As a system, common core standards are essential for a smooth transition from high school to postsecondary education.

Affordability

Rachelle Sharp of the Council staff provided a brief overview of the highlights of the briefing paper prepared by the 16 members of the affordability workgroup. Rachelle began by expressing that affordability is a complex concept, encompassing the combination of legislative appropriations to public institutions, financial aid, the GET program and tuition policy, in addition to the costs of attendance with the expenses of books, room and board, transportation, etc. Studied by the workgroup were (1) the state vs. student share of the cost of instruction; (2) the ability of students and their families to pay for the costs of attendance; and (3) the financial aid and student borrowing options available for postsecondary education opportunities.

Rachelle then introduced Nate Johnson, Senior Consultant of HCM Strategists, who is assisting in the development of policy options and potential efficiencies regarding affordability. Nate brings to this study what some other states are doing with regard to policy reforms to assist in providing students a more affordable opportunity and expanded access for pursuing postsecondary education. With limited resources available, decisions for the allocation of those funds are key to student opportunities within various populations. Nate provided an overview of various national studies that have reviewed the impact and outcomes of aid to students and how decisions and policies have been made in targeting aid recipients, to include merit-based, low income, gender based, and high risk student aid to name a few.

Technology

Christy England-Siegerdt of the Council staff began by sharing that there are approximately 30 people on the technology workgroup representing all postsecondary sectors, K-12, and the business community. Guiding the workgroup were questions regarding how technology is currently being used in educating students, what are the best practices, and what are the criteria to determine the cost impacts of using technology as a learning tool.

Christy introduced Russ Poulin, Deputy Director for Research and Analysis of the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education's Cooperative for Educational Technologies. Russ

expressed that needed policies and effective practices are the emphasis of strength gained by utilizing technology in education versus the actual hardware itself. The pace of change and creativity is swiftly advancing the opportunities to incorporate technology in the classroom with the use of e-mail, I-pads, smart phones, web videos, etc. For students, the acronym “BYOD” (bring your own device) is becoming more prevalent in the classroom, making technology an added tool in educating students. However, studies have shown that at-risk and low income students are less likely to be adaptable to the widespread technology being used. Institutional partnerships, appropriate curriculum development and student and faculty support services are key in the incorporation of education technology.

Policy Options Reports

Early Learning

Randy Spaulding of the Council staff introduced two participants of the workgroup studying early learning activities as part of the readiness challenge in Washington state: Kathy Goebel, Policy Associate for Economic Development at the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, and Bob Hamilton, Deputy Director of the Department of Early Learning. Randy reviewed that the Council had received a background briefing on early learning at the March Council meeting and then reported that the workgroup’s efforts have led to the policy options presented in the May report, “*Student Readiness: Early Learning.*” He then provided an overview of the key early learning targets that were considered in forming policy recommendations: to increase access to high-quality programs; to improve the workforce; to have in place comprehensive assessment systems; and to ensure program accountability and effectiveness. One of the assessments being studied by the workgroup is how early learning effects positive academic outcomes for students and how those in turn have positive economic outcomes. One of the findings already evident from this study is that early learning is more effective if considered to continue through the 3rd grade versus a shorter time span. To support this effort, one of the policy options offered is to provide more parenting learning opportunities as well as to implement a strong professional development and compensation system for K-3 teachers. Another policy option suggests to expand P-20 data collections to then be analyzed to help support early learning program development.

Bob Hamilton then answered a question from the Council: “How early is early?” Bob’s response was it begins when a child is born and that there are currently 450,000 economically, culturally, and regionally diverse pre-K children in our state. Providing services for those children helps build a strong front end of a life-long learning system for our population.

Kathy Goebel introduced discussion that suggests day-care facilities are no longer just baby-sitting children and need to be looked at more as instructional facilities, requiring that the staffs have the necessary skills and incentives to provide a quality learning environment. She indicated that many efforts are already in place with the partnerships of community colleges and community-based organizations to help provide services enhancing the quality of neighboring child-care facilities.

Assessment of Skills, Knowledge, Experience

Ray Lawton of the Council began by stating that it's becoming evident that this state's industry is not sharing clearly what they need from higher education. Necessary is the ongoing assessment of the skills and knowledge required by our businesses from the students coming out of our education system. This challenge has led the workgroup's efforts. Daryl Monear of the Council staff then introduced members of the workgroup who have been concentrating on the assessment of student skills and their knowledge and experience. Included on the panel were Jane Sherman, Associate Director for Academic Policy, Council of Presidents; Bryan Wilson, Deputy Director, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board; and Jan Yoshiwara, Deputy Executive Director for Education, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

Daryl reported that the focus of this study is to prepare students for success in a modern, ever-evolving society and assuring graduates have obtained key career skills. It was suggested that identifying and responding to the skills needed may require cross-institutional coordination and the collection of employer feedback. Improved assessment of students' knowledge, skills, and experience is key at the institutional level to partner with developing their career pathways and expand opportunities for work-integrated learning.

Jan Yoshiwara referred to the efforts of this challenge as seeking the alignment of higher education's capacity with the needs of the state's economy. She shared with the Council some of the efforts being done at the community college level over the years by working with employers and attempting to provide effective job/career preparation programs. Jan specified that, in addition to employers and institutions teaming to minimize the skills gap in the state, it is also necessary to include strength and support from government as the third sector of the team. Jane Sherman acknowledged that within the higher education sector how important it is for the community college and baccalaureate institutions to align for a smooth transition for students to have the opportunity to pursue a higher level of education in our system – in both skill-based programs as well as in liberal arts. Bryan Wilson then introduced the conversation of

also needing to recognize established skill standards and certifications necessarily specific for various occupations. He pointed out that an important element to the overall process of providing timely education opportunities to potential students is to have a mechanism to inform students in the form of career guidance of what the current needs in the labor market are and where to pursue the necessary training.

Remedial Education

Marty Brown of the Council opened the presentation regarding remedial education with the statistic that, by 2020, at least 64 percent of our population will require some form of higher education. And he noted that statistic is probably higher in Washington due to the composition of local industry. The population that potentially needs remedial education are not only students coming straight from high school but is made up largely by those re-entering higher education years into their adult lives to keep pace with job requirements. This leads to the two challenges being addressed by the workgroup studying remedial education: reduce the number of recent high school graduates requiring remedial education and the need to accelerate the progress of students in remedial/transitional studies into college-level courses.

Noreen Light of the Council staff then introduced Emily Lardner, Co-Director, Washington Center for Improving Undergraduate Education at The Evergreen State College, who is a member of the remedial education workgroup. One of the observations of the workgroup is the necessity to redefine remedial coursework to be identified as college transitional studies. Skills assessment and pre-placement advising could assist students as early as 8th grade and give their families the awareness to help guide the students' high school experience to eliminate the need for remedial instruction as they enter postsecondary education. Continued, rigorous coursework available to high school seniors can assist students in making a seamless transition to college-level work.

From the perspective of a teacher, Emily Lardner stated there are concerns about assessing students' ability to learn, primarily due to the diversity of our population, and how to approach developing strategies and techniques to teach and encourage students at assorted levels. She also expressed the need to develop incentives to draw highly skilled instructors for those students who require transitional studies to succeed in college-level studies.

Discussion and Review of Listening Tour

Aaron Wyatt, Council staff Communications Director, provided a brief overview of the intent and findings of the Council's 2013 Listening Tour that stemmed from the five challenge areas

identified in the 2012 Strategic Action Plan: readiness, affordability, capacity and success, technology, and funding. Beginning January 2013, the Council embarked on nine visits statewide with the assistance of the Coraggio Group on a listening tour. Over 200 people attended these events, representing 113 organizations along with interested Washington citizens. An overview of each city's visit is displayed on the Council's web site, listing attendees and the themes derived from the audiences present. The six primary resulting themes include: collaboration and innovation, socioeconomic considerations, flexibility in approaches, make changes carefully, systems approach, and funding. Also available for review on the web site are newspaper articles relating to the listening tour and comments from editorial boards.

The meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m.