WASHINGTON HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD

November 2011

**Draft Minutes of September 29, 2011 Board Meeting**

**Board members present**

Charley Bingham
Roberta Greene
Bill Grinstein
Earl Hale, Vice Chair
Jesus Hernandez
Paul Ishii
Addison Jacobs
Sam Shaddox

**Welcome and introductions**

HECB Vice Chair Earl Hale opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. and asked members of the Board to introduce themselves.

**Minutes of June board meeting approved**

**Action: Jesus Hernandez** moved for approval of the minutes of the Board's June meeting. **Bill Grinstein** seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

**New degree programs approved**

The Education Committee reviewed the programs listed in the consent agenda and recommended approval of the new degree program proposals.

**Action: Bill Grinstein** moved for approval of ***Resolutions 11-20 and 21*** adopting two new degree programs:

- **UW Seattle, Ed.S. School Psychology (Moderate Degree Change),** ***Resolution 11-20***
- **UW Tacoma, M. Accounting,** ***Resolution 11-21***

**Addison Jacobs** seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

**State Economic and Revenue Forecast: Impact on Higher Education**

Arun Raha, Executive Director of the Economic and Revenue Forecast Council, reviewed the September update to the state economic and revenue forecast for the 2011-13 biennium. He explained factors that led to his projection of another $1.4 billion drop in state revenue over the

balance of the 2011-13 biennium. (That projection prompted the Governor to direct higher education institutions and other state agencies to propose additional program cuts and to call the Legislature into a November special session.)

Hale said higher education institutions need a longer forecasting timeframe to deal with issues such as program development, hiring of faculty, and planning of specialized facilities. Raha said he would develop a forecast extending to 2015 by February of next year.

Representatives from the state's public and private colleges and universities discussed the impacts of additional reductions in state funding. Unless Washington finds a way to adequately fund public higher education, it will risk falling even farther behind in its effort to broadly raise educational attainment, they said. Failure to substantially increase the percentage of Washington citizens who complete a postsecondary education certificate or degree would seriously undermine the state's future societal and economic development and vitality.

Mike Reilly, Executive Director of the Council of Presidents, said expanded tuition-setting authority has enabled public baccalaureate institutions to maintain current service levels, but masked the reality of deep cuts in state General Fund support for higher education. The state's current $31 billion biennial budget appropriates less money for higher education than the $12.7 billion 1989 state budget did, Reilly said.

"We need significant increases in students with postsecondary credentials to meet the economic needs of our state, and we are just simply not on that path." The system stabilization that has been achieved through recent painful tuition increases would be thrown "completely out of the water" by additional budget cuts, he said.

Charlie Earl, Executive Director of the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, said record enrollment demand at the two-year institutions is likely to persist as long as the economic downturn continues. The number of FTE students served has grown from 140,000 to 162,000, but only about 8,000 of them have been served by adding new faculty.

The two-year institutions are handling the brunt of the overload through efficiency measures such as increased class sizes and by eliminating classes and academic programs with low student demand or declining job prospects after graduation. However, the problem for the two-year colleges is how to sustain effective education in the face of continuing budget cuts, Earl said.

Despite efforts by college faculty and administrators, an estimated 20,000 to 25,000 students will not be served by the state's community and technical colleges through 2013, Earl said. An additional 10 percent budget cut in response to the latest revenue shortfall will add another 18,000 to the list of those not served.

Violet Boyer, president and CEO of the Independent Colleges of Washington (ICW), which advocates on behalf of private, non-profit colleges in the state, said all sectors of higher education – private, public, two-year, four-year and research institutions – must be considered as interdependent, especially in times of scarce resources. More efforts are needed to create and support collaboration, especially at the transition and transfer points.

Another primary state role is to equalize opportunity for low-income students through student aid, Boyer said. Students attending private schools can do so with manageable levels of student debt in part because of the traditionally strong financial aid programs offered in Washington. However, increasing numbers of K-12 students whose parents did not attend college are seeking

admission to private colleges, making continued support for the State Need Grant and outreach programs such as GEAR UP and the College Bound Scholarship doubly important. Otherwise the state risks losing a generation of potential college graduates, she said.

"If we continue to under-fund higher education and under-fund the State Need Grant, we will lose that generation; and we will also drive up health care costs, we'll drive up unemployment rates, and we'll drive up incarceration costs," Boyer warned.

## Master Plan Update

A Master Plan Advisory Committee composed of leaders from higher education institutions, state agencies, the Legislature, business and non-profit groups has met several times to work on updating the 2008 Strategic Master Plan. The master plan's main goals are to increase educational attainment, promote economic development and innovation, and monitor and fund higher education for results.

The committee's proposed next steps for continued progress on the goals will be presented and discussed at the Board's November meeting and forwarded to the Legislature for consideration during the 2012 regular session once they have been approved by the Board.

The 2008 plan covered a 10-year period, setting ambitious degree production goals. However, the state's ability to achieve these broad educational attainment goals has been hampered by the continuing economic downturn, which has forced the state to cut higher education funding.

Two panels composed of business, community and higher education representatives offered thoughts on how to focus scarce state resources to increase educational attainment in Washington.

The business panel was composed of:

- David Fisher, former chair, WA Roundtable Education Committee, The Partnership for Learning, and the Academic Achievement and Accountability Commission
- George Scarola, Senior Advisor, League of Education Voters
- David Zeeck, Publisher and President, The News Tribune

Fisher suggested taking a hard look statewide at how to gain maximum results from programs that create job opportunities. We need to work with employers to find out what the companies need from students as future employees, he said. Important decisions need to be made. Does the state want to have one world class program or two to three very good programs? Is having a dozen duplicate programs in multiple colleges in the state's best interest?

Scarola said the HECB has a huge an opportunity to lay down the marker for what the state needs to do in the next few years as it works to help its successor agency identify the trends that matter most. "This is not the time to mince words," he advised the Board.

Scarola suggested four major goals:

1. Expand who gets served. Align K-12 graduation requirements with college admissions. Live up to College Bound. Increase student transfers.

2. Produce more math and science instructors and STEM graduates. Pay the instructors more, Scarola said. Bring business leaders to the table to help design better STEM programs; give business leaders incentive for participation. Speak up about it.

3. Monitor higher education completion rates and demographics. Students are not completing because they spend so much time in remediation. Find a way to embed remediation within credit bearing courses. Organize scheduling to make courses available to working citizens.

4. "We are never going to fix a broken education system with a broken tax system. Our legislature needs to be able to put taxes in place to bring in revenue, and that cannot be done as long as there is a 2/3 vote requirement."

There once was the presumption the state should fund college for the common/ social good of the state, Zeek said. That is probably one reason people are willing to tax themselves, but that concern has gotten narrower. Colleges have been turned into huge bureaucracies and lobbying organizations in their quest for more funding, he said.

"We need to find a way to wash out inefficiencies in the system and to make this work; universities cannot be as huge as they are. They need to be free of regulatory responsibilities so they can focus on the business of teaching."

Perhaps state funding should be shifted directly to students and away from universities, he opined. "Let them decide how they want to use it; maybe give more to students going into STEM and engineering degrees."

Institutional comment was offered by the following representatives:

- Mike Bogatay, Executive Director, Washington Student Association
- Ahmadou Seck, former student body president, St. Martin's University
- Melonie Rasmussen, faculty member, Pierce College
- Lloyd Butler, Interim President, Pacific Northwest University
- Paul Herrick, faculty member, Shoreline Community College

Bogatay: There isn't really a continuous plan for how we move someone through the system. Our state is lagging in the nation. We're one of, or in the minority of states as far as not having a statewide plan for career and college planning. On the high school level, our colleges have very limited ability to provide advising to students.

Seck: Without State Need Grant, a lot of students would not be able to continue their education. We need to re-think the aid model to make it more accessible to students, especially with rising tuition costs.

Rasmussen described the highly successful Open Course Library project at Pierce College where she was the lead in designing open courses and educational resources with open textbooks that cost less than $30. She noted that because the community colleges are open to all, there is no reading requirement to get in the door, which makes remediation a big issue for the two-year colleges.

She said the most important thing is to ask the students for something in return; a quid pro quo for the services delivered and for the state paying for their education. Something back in return might be as simple as helping to develop a continuous plan to for students to move through the system. For instance, recent college graduates who received some sort of a grant could go back to the schools and help students who come from the same economic or social backgrounds to move through completion.

Butler related how his school, Pacific Northwest University, got started as a result of a community-based grassroots effort. He and his friends shared a common dream to produce primary care physicians who would actually live and practice in smaller communities. They pooled their resources together and a school was born. He said the state going forward can do itself some benefit by really emphasizing public/private partnerships.

He expressed concern that "with the state changing the way we do business here and the HEC Board being replaced, I don't know exactly what that means for starting new programs. This could end up becoming more of a political process."

Herrick established an Online Course Library program at Shoreline Community College. Together with a colleague he co-produced a series of ten-minute instructional videos available to students for free on YouTube. The course comes with an e-textbook for $29.95.

Herrick was quick to caution, however, that despite the success of online programs, the Board must be careful not to think that one size fits all. Like Rasmussen, he sees the value in hybrid classes where students meet in a classroom setting and online classes.

**Public Comment**

Faculty and student representatives offered comment. Jonathan Russell, Associated Student Government senator at Clover Park Technical College, described the student demographics in his school: youth fresh out of high school and older students seeking retraining and workforce development. Having lost his job, gone back to live at home, and currently in school to prepare himself to get back into the workforce, Russell's focus is on helping his fellow students navigate the system and making sure students don't fall through the cracks through the recession.

Khurshida Begum, Associated Student Body president at South Puget Sound Community College, shared her personal story, echoing the value of students "giving back" to their school and their community, as Rasmussen had talked about. "I really would like to see us giving back (financial assistance) …to make us work for it, so we can be out there in the community, partnering up with elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools."

Three faculty union representatives: Bernal Baca, AFT Washington/ AFL-CIO; Carla Naccarato Sinclair, WEA WA Higher Education Chair; and Kevin Asman, AFT WA, spoke about the important perspective that faculty members bring to statewide discussions on higher education, accountability, and budget cuts.

They urged the Board to find ways to include the stakeholders and to draw on the faculty and students for the innovation that they can bring because, in Asman's words, "…we are in the classroom every day. And we are the ones who are dealing with the anxieties of the impending

cuts. We're the ones who are dealing with the issues of increased tuition and stress that that brings to the lives of our students."

Naccarato Sinclair said state leaders need to come up with ideas of revenue for higher education, not cuts.

**The meeting adjourned at noon**.