

## October 26, 2012 Council Retreat

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### Participants

Council Members: Brian Baird, Constance Rice, Ray Lawton, Jose Gaitan, Marty Brown, Jay Reich, Scott Brittain, David Schumacher, Lindsey Jahn; Staff: Don Bennett, Belma Villa, Jim Reed, Rachelle Sharpe, Randy Spaulding, Christy England-Siegerdt

### Greetings and Action Items

Brian Baird opened the meeting at 8:30 a.m. He welcomed David Schumacher to the Council. Schumacher has been recently appointed Executive Director of the Council of Presidents. He succeeds Jane Sherman on the Council, representing the public four-year baccalaureate institutions.

Baird acknowledged the guests who were present in the room and several others who were expected to join the meeting later in the day.

- Ben Rarick, Executive Director, State Board of Education (SBE)
- Vi Boyer, President and CEO, Independent Colleges of Washington (ICW)
- Chris Thompson, Director of Government and Public Relations, ICW
- Betty Hyde, Director, Department of Early Learning (DEL)
- Bob Mendenhall, President, Western Governors University (WGU)
- Jean Floten, Chancellor, WGU-Washington
- Matthew Landkamer, Principal, Coraggio Group

*Action: Constance Rice made a motion to approve the preliminary retreat agenda. Jose Gaitan seconded the motion. The agenda for the 10/26 retreat was approved.*

*Action: Marty Brown moved to adopt the minutes of the 10/17 biweekly meeting. Jay Reich seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved as drafted.*

### Defining a Successful Student Achievement Council

Baird asked each member to define what success meant from his or her own perspective. *“If you look back four years from now and ask yourself: What did we change? What did we expect to accomplish and did we succeed?”*

Common aspirations surfaced:

- We leveled the playing field; we made things better. We helped to lift people up.

- We accomplished real consequential change that enabled every level of the pipeline to do its job. We changed outcomes.
- We succeeded in helping students aspire to education. Every kid had opportunity and gained substantive knowledge, skills and character.
- Four years from now we hope we'll be in the top 10 in the world with a data-driven, sustainable system -- with an education system that is aligned, accessible, affordable, accountable, and inclusive.

### **Strategic Action Plan: Key Topics and Issues**

The Council reviewed a preliminary working draft outline of the Strategic Action Plan in order to provide staff direction in developing the content for the Council's consideration in November.

Parts I and II of the outline introduce the mission and priorities of the Council, key issue areas and status updates. Part III is intended to explore additional issues and Council priorities for the 10-Year Roadmap in 2013. It will incorporate research data, examples of current successful initiatives and input from the Council's outreach efforts.

Members discussed the format, style, tone and content of the narrative, including ways of distinguishing it from past efforts. They weighed the effectiveness and the pros and cons of a problem statement, a call to action, a warning of a looming crisis; to make a powerful introductory message that would immediately grab attention and bring people in.

Key topics and issues discussed included:

- Gaitan: Show inclusivity and accountability; a data-driven Plan (Council's brand); need to float the draft out and get input from stakeholders.
- Rice: Include partnerships with business and the workforce and innovation of educational delivery.
- Reich: There must be alignment of all disparate elements; a holistic approach from Pre-K to higher education, including both public and private.
- Schumacher: What is the problem we are trying to fix? We are not just asking for increased funding.
- Brittain: Plan must be broad enough that we are not leaving something out.
- Brown: There is a lack of understanding about how complicated the system is. We need to tell a story; include the word "success" and acknowledge what's working.
- Baird: It's important to consider style, content and substance.

### **Key Education Issues and Priorities**

Bette Hyde, Director of Early Learning (DEL), spoke about the impacts of early learning on student achievement. Research studies show that high quality early learning programs have long-term positive benefits, not only increased math and reading skills but also social competence, college attendance and full-time employment in adulthood. Quality early childhood education can close the income gap, reduce health disparities and save taxpayers money through lower health and social costs.

Ben Rarick, Executive Director of the State Board of Education (SBE), spoke about engaging with the Student Achievement Council in framing a meaningful and accountable discussion on issues around Core to College and the assessment system changes that are likely to have a significant impact on both K-12 and higher education.

Chairman Baird invited both Hyde and Rarick to participate in all future Council meetings in order to maintain a continuing dialogue among the various education sectors.

Ray Lawton, representing the Independent Colleges of Washington (ICW) on the Council, showed a video clip of the 2012-13 ICW Factbook. Among the more significant facts presented are the following:

- ICW colleges confer one in five baccalaureate and advanced degrees awarded in the state.
- State spending per degree conferred at ICW colleges is 1/6 the cost at a public four-year.
- For every one dollar ICW students receive in state financial aid, ICW colleges provide \$12 in grant aid.
- Eighty percent of ICW graduates finish in four years.

Bob Mendenhall, President, Western Governors University (WGU), described how WGU came into existence. The idea was born in 1995 at a meeting of western governors chaired by Utah Governor Mike Leavitt. Confronted with the common problem of rapid population growth in an environment of limited public funding for education, the governors decided to create their own university -- one that would make maximum use of distance learning technologies coupled with competency-based outcomes. Thus, a private non-profit, self-sustaining online university was born.

Most WGU students are working adults with an average age of 36. To bring the WGU story to life, Mendenhall showed a video clip of two outstanding students giving their valedictory speeches at graduation -- both adults, both from under-represented groups.

WGU-Washington Chancellor Jean Floten said 70 percent of WGU Washington students are classified as under-served, with higher percentages receiving Pell grant. About 98 percent of employers rate WGU graduates equal to, or above, their counterparts who graduate from traditional, campus-based colleges and universities.

### **Framework for Approach to Targeted Issues: Goals, Outreach, Education, Communication**

The Council discussed the framework and targeted issues that would serve as a guide to staff in developing the strategic plan.

#### **Major Issues Areas - challenges and opportunities, multi-dimensional**

- Access: affordability, readiness, inclusiveness
- Best in world education: produce successful (qualified, contributing) graduates to meet economic needs
- System accountability (to students, families, businesses)
  - Outcomes: student success, relevance, define and clarify, quality
  - Trained professionals: supply
- Alignment / System Design: capacity. Innovation, integrations, leverage technologies

- Finance: efficiency
- Public awareness / public will

Strategic Plan: Jay Reich and Ray Lawton are the assigned Council leads, working with staff and Matthew Landkamer, Principal for the Coraggio Group, consultants for WSAC outreach.

### **Update on Other Activities**

Other deliverables: The Council discussed assigning one or two members to take the lead and work with staff on other key areas of WSAC responsibilities other than strategic planning. Gaitan suggested working with Bennett to get a better understanding of other agency deliverables, including timelines. Council members could choose specific areas of interest as designated subject matter experts to distribute responsibility among Council members. For future deliverables, materials would still be sent to all members but only those assigned would have responsibility for vetting reports and recommendations.

**Meeting adjourned** at 5:30 p.m.