

***December 12, 2012
Council Meeting - Teleconference***

Participants

Council Members: Brian Baird, Ray Lawton, Jay Reich, Scott Brittain, David Schumacher, Lindsey Jahn

Council Staff: Don Bennett, Jim Reed, Gary Larson

Guests: Michelle Janke and Matthew Landkamer, Coraggio Group; Chris Thompson, Independent Colleges of Washington; Ralph Ibarra, Diverse America Network; and Deb Merle, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges

Greetings and Action Items

Chairman Brian Baird opened the meeting at 10:30 a.m.

Action: Jay Reich made a motion to approve the preliminary meeting agenda. Lindsey Jahn seconded the motion. The agenda for the 12/12 meeting was unanimously approved.

Activity Update

Chairman Baird reported that he testified at legislative hearings in both the House of Representatives and the Senate on Friday, November 30. Baird summarized that the Legislature is hopeful and excited about the potential of the new Council to provide meaningful and valid improvement to all levels of education in Washington.

Baird also met with the Governor-elect's transition team leaders on December 11, talking about the Strategic Action Plan as well as offering any help the Council can give to the future Governor. He also gave them an update on the candidate search for the Executive Director position.

Strategic Planning Effort Update

Jim Reed of the Council staff began with his review of the materials that had been prepared and distributed to Council members prior to the teleconference. The first displayed the main

components of the Council's 2013 calendar, currently showing that the 10-year roadmap reflects there will be planning items associated with its development, as well as mandated reports to the Legislature and Governor, along with a third area of responsibility for reporting to the Council on statutory duties.

Jim then reviewed a planning schematic for activities tied to the 10-year roadmap, breaking out the five strategic action plan challenge areas (student readiness, affordability, institutional capacity and student success, potential for technology, and stable/accountable funding) and their respective planning activities. It is noted that there will be lead Council members and lead staff designated to each of the challenge areas to, in partnership, develop the planning activity scope and work plan for the development of the 10-year roadmap milestone recommendations. This progression would also include input from public outreach forums and stakeholders throughout the 10-year roadmap development process.

Jim then shared a more detailed proposed timeline for each of the action plan challenge areas, linking potential activities of both Council members and lead staff. The timeline provides a staggered approach and phased opportunity during the development of scope and work plan, review of draft materials and options, and adoption of recommendations throughout 2013.

Another item provided to the Council for review was a schematic linking specific activities to the individually scheduled Council meetings, with the assumption that meetings are to be held every-other month in 2013. Also noted on a month-to-month calendar, Jim displayed the 10-year roadmap activities throughout the year as well as mandated reports and annual reports to the Council on statutory program duties.

In looking at the timeline, Chairman Baird asks Jim how far in advance will the Council have a chance to be reviewing the roadmap report due to the Legislature prior to its submittal in December, noting that the Council members need time for deliberate planning and review prior to approval. Jim replied that on a mandated report, it can come before the members at numerous Council meetings, following the "rules of engagement" concept. If a report contains policy recommendations or fiscal recommendations, the Council would see it twice. If it is simply an informational report, then the Council would see it only once before it is released. Baird then emphasized that the Council members will need to be given enough time within the proposed timeline to allow for maximum input to the 10-year roadmap report.

Jay Reich asked about the mandated reports and whether they fall within one of the five challenge area topics. He emphasized that at least one lead Council member within a specific related topic should be involved in the mandated study early in its development. Don Bennett responded that

thought is being given to the division of labor among Council members, with each member developing a special knowledge of their particular interest areas while often overlapping into all topics.

Jim went on to note that, looking at the calendar, he suggests consideration of scheduling the May, July, and September meetings as full day meetings to accomplish the anticipated work to be done.

Discussion continued that several meetings may require two days and Chairman Brian suggested that, in those months with no regular meeting scheduled, a teleconference may be necessary to consider. Jim then referred to a suggestion to consider scheduling a Council retreat in October for discussion and integration of the various proposed roadmap recommendations for the five challenge areas that have been acted upon by the Council to date, and to then begin building the roadmap plan. The October retreat could also include discussion of budget priorities and the State Need Grant less-than-halftime study.

Lastly, Jim referred to a chart reflecting the proposed internal staff report preparation process, outlining the approach to project planning, implementation, and completion processes. The goal is to be in the “project completion” stage at least fourteen days prior to a Council meeting, to then be able to provide agenda materials to Council members seven days prior to each meeting. To make this successful, staff will give a project sufficient attention at the “project planning” stage to really think clearly about the scope, the study questions, the methodology, and data analysis approach for each of the reports to arrive at a quality product.

Discussion followed regarding the rules of engagement concept and the importance of Council members being involved in not only policy-driven issues but in being advised of informational materials as well. In this context, Chairman Baird thanked all of the Council members for signing up for their areas of interest and that a chart has been developed and distributed of the results, showing that all areas of focus are sufficiently covered by members. He then mentioned that conversation will need to occur regarding the staffing teams to be assigned to each of the topic areas. Ray Lawton encouraged collaboration of efforts and progress when working on, producing results, and reaching conclusions from efforts by both Council members and staff within the various focus areas. Jay Reich suggested that thought be given to making sure that citizen members of the Council be adequately represented for each of the five areas of interest. Baird assured that there was at least one citizen member represented in all five focus groups. Reich took the opportunity to remind everyone of the commitment being made by all Council members – both in time and effort – to accomplish the tasks associated with each identified project. Discussion followed regarding the necessity of having a kind of “social contract” among all

those participating and going forward on Council activities and goals to include, as Don Bennett pointed out, various other agency staff associated with the Council, i.e., staff of the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, Council of Presidents, etc., in addition to the Council staff itself.

Update on Community Outreach and Communications Plan

Michelle Janke and Matthew Landkamer from the Coraggio Group reviewed the development of a schedule of dates proposed for the various cities to be visited during the statewide outreach activity, pending availability of Council members for each date. Also underway is the determination of invitees for each visit and the development of unique itineraries for each city. Invitations for participation will be sent out once the respective area stakeholders are identified. A sample spreadsheet prepared by the Coraggio Group was shared with the Council that displays a listing of potential stakeholders to be considered (Bellingham used as an example).

Ms. Janke then introduced various materials that may be considered for development for the outreach meetings, mentioning that the Coraggio Group has been working with Council staff to develop press kits as well as a possible “facts and feedback” card which could be shared with those participating at each of the outreach sites, providing facts about education in Washington State along with a mechanism for direct feedback.

Jay Reich proposed, keeping in mind the five focus areas in the Strategic Action Plan, that two or three key questions linked to each of the areas be prepared for incorporation into the conversations at every site visitation and that would guide meaningful input for ultimately building the 10-year roadmap.

Gary Larson of the Council staff addressed the communications/messaging strategies, noting the goal of not overlapping with the efforts of the Coraggio Group. It is proposed that Council staff concentrate on informing the respective areas’ media in advance of each community visit, attempting to identify and highlight topics/issues of interest as well as introducing who the Washington Student Achievement Council is and what has been assigned to the Council to accomplish. In the cases of both Seattle and Spokane, in particular, Gary proposed utilizing newspaper editorial boards and education writers. He also mentioned that he thinks it would be advantageous for Council members themselves to have conversations with various media contacts to expand area interest. Discussion continued regarding the division of labor between Council staff and the Coraggio Group, clarifying the development of meeting presentation materials and media outreach. Also discussed was the need to clearly define the message content for each forum for consistent, meaningful conversations and to draw input on the Council’s five major areas of interest from community stakeholders.

Update on Executive Director Search

Chairman Baird acknowledged that the Council's search committee – including himself, Constance Rice, Marty Brown, and José E. Gaitán – contacted a company named Diversified Search who has spoken with each Council member in addition to multiple stakeholders to discuss the parameters of the position of Executive Director that has been publicly posted. To date, 150 names have been identified and reviewed – it is a broad, national sample that has been pared down to approximately 20 candidates. Currently, the goal is to choose five individuals for prospective interviews by the Council, leading to a choice of three for submittal to the Governor's office, hopefully by mid-January. Baird emphasized how important confidentiality is with regard to all the applicants throughout this process.

Baird then reminded members that there are two high-level Council staff positions currently being advertised – Communications Director and Governmental Relations Director – and he invited Council members to consider teaming with staff in the review of applications received. Scott Brittain indicated an interest to participate in this process.

Meeting adjourned at noon.

November 28, 2012 Council Meeting

Participants

Council Members: Brian Baird, Jay Reich, Ray Lawton, José E. Gaitán, David Schumacher, Scott Brittain, Lindsey Jahn, Constance Rice

Council Staff: Don Bennett, Jim Reed, Gary Larson, Karen Moton-Tate, Rachelle Sharpe, Randy Spaulding, Christy England-Seigerdt

Guests: Chris Thompson, Independent Colleges and Washington; Karen de Villa, Northwest Education Loan Association; Cynthia Swenson, Antioch University/Seattle; Annette Anderson, University of Washington/Bothell; Robert Corbett, University of Washington/Seattle; Steve DuPont, Central Washington University; Wendy Rader-Konofalski, Washington Education Association; Paul Francis, Council of Presidents; Ralph Ibarra, Diverse America Network; Lyle Jacobsen, Fiscal Consultant

Greetings and Action Items

Brian Baird opened the meeting at 9 a.m.

Action: Jay Reich made a motion to approve the preliminary meeting agenda. José E. Gaitán seconded the motion. The agenda for the November 28, 2012 meeting was unanimously approved.

Action: Jay Reich made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 14, 2012 Council meeting. José E. Gaitán seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved as drafted.

Strategic Action Plan

Jay Reich introduced the draft Strategic Action Plan as a guide to address the long-range issues which are thought to be critical to improving the education system in Washington State. He emphasized taking this “on the road” as a first effort to lay out a planning process to shape the

future by identifying a variety of issues which are thought to be critical to improving the quality of our education system.

Reich spoke to the five critical obstacles to student achievement and levers for fundamental change identified in the draft Strategic Action Plan: readiness, affordability, institutional capacity and student success, potential of technology, and stable funding. He emphasized the daunting challenge to the Council to address these issues and the work that lies ahead.

Chairman Baird asked for input from the Council regarding the content of the draft Strategic Action Plan. Lindsey Jahn, student member of the Council, shared that she had favorable feedback from students with whom she had shared the draft action plan proposals.

Constance Rice commended the volunteer subcommittee who crafted the draft Strategic Action Plan as having done an exceptionally good job while keeping with the deadline. She said her viewers felt the tone and direction were right on point in terms of the issues to be addressed. One critique she mentioned was the use of the term “at risk” students and volunteered the term “vulnerable youth” as a better reference. She also mentioned that as one of the partners in this effort, DEL should be mentioned.

Ray Lawton spoke of two people with whom he shared the draft plan – one was a retired 3rd grade teacher and the other a career educator within the state and who is now an administrator at Whitworth University. He said that with their diverse backgrounds they both felt encouraged at the Council’s recognition of needing to be nimble and effective in approaching the educational needs of the state.

Discussion then turned to proposed revisions to enhance the text of the draft Strategic Action Plan to include changes in wording in the introduction of the plan, adding the sentence in the third paragraph to acknowledge past efforts to enhance the success in Washington State’s education system:

This “Action Plan” acknowledges the extraordinary efforts made by educators and administrators every day in a variety of institutional settings to provide education throughout Washington. ***But, well-meaning efforts of so many people in this state have not produced the needed outcomes.*** This Action Plan does not begin with the premise that any one component of the education system has failed or that the needs of any one sector are more important than the needs of others. Indeed, there have been notable successes at various institutions and within various parts of our educational system that deserve our recognition. We should view the successes of our students with great pride.

In the text on page 8 of the draft, outlining the conventional approach to college affordability through financial assistance, an additional inclusion was suggested:

None of these three conditions now exist. Specifically: (1) tuition, as discussed above, has increased dramatically, much more than the rate of inflation and growth in personal and family incomes; (2) the number and proportion of students needing financial aid has grown dramatically; and (3) the lack of the same state resources that led to the steep rise in tuition also limits the ability of the state to adequately mitigate the price of attending college. Clearly, a new paradigm to complement the traditional model is needed. ***The Council will review the current model of financial aid and explore options to address affordability.***

And, in the chart on page 13 – “Preparing the 10-Year Roadmap” – the planning activity segment on affordability was strengthened by the suggested additional language:

The Council will review the current model of financial aid and examine new options to address affordability. The Council will explore feasible strategies to reduce the amount or cost of course credits students need to purchase at the institution at which they will graduate by honoring course credits earned in high school, on-line, or through work experience.

Jay Reich acknowledged the suggested changes to the text and indicated that he and Jim Reed of the Council staff would incorporate these edits appropriately to the narrative of the draft Strategic Action Plan. He then suggested a motion be made to move to accept the Plan as amended. Constance Rice moved to approve the Strategic Action Plan as amended, seconded by Scott Brittain. The motion was unanimously passed.

Praise by Council members was then given to Jim Reed for his outstanding efforts in helping to develop the draft Strategic Action Plan document and working with Council members to craft a plan for progress in determining education issues to be address by the newly formed Washington Student Achievement Council.

Scott Brittain expressed his appreciation of the potential that the efforts of the Council with its Strategic Action Plan will bring a smoother alignment for students in their transition from K-12 to future educational goals. He also shared the praise of his reviewers of the plan.

It was noted that, to develop this initial Strategic Action Plan, Council members reached out to seek input from such entities as Microsoft, Washington Roundtable, and Puget Sound Energy to help build on Washington’s education system to best serve and train future employees of this

state's industries. The Council discussed the need for public outreach and the necessary collection of relationships among education stakeholders to "do business differently" to tackle the state's complicated education issues and for the Council in its new configuration to go forward with its statutory assignments and missions.

Discussions then turned to the near-term anticipated deliverables from the Council, with Jim Reed noting that the Council and its staff have less than a year to develop a 10-year roadmap to be delivered to the Legislature prior to its 2014 legislative session.

Enthusiasm was expressed in the concept of a statewide outreach plan to solicit public input to assist in developing a roadmap proposal. Jay Reich emphasized the need for the Council to obligate itself to more than a "thoughtful effort" but to commit to meeting with the public throughout the state and consolidate their input, collaborate and encourage communication with various groups, and to realize and appreciate the hard, complicated issues facing the education system in this state. Both Constance Rice and José E. Gaitán underscored the needed partnerships for action among stakeholders and citizens and the need for a systematic collection of relationships to modify the conduct of business from this point forward.

Outreach Planning

Don Bennett began the discussion concerning the Council's proposed statewide outreach plan, the coordination of Council staff, and the resource allocation needed to accomplish the scheduling and workload. He then introduced Michelle Janke of the Coraggio Group, a consulting firm contracted to assist in this activity, to outline the preliminary outreach plan. Ms. Janke shared with the Council a draft set of talking points derived from the Strategic Action Plan to help guide conversation while visiting the different areas of the state. She also shared an outline of "next steps" to consider in establishing the locations and timeline of the proposed outreach activities, with suggestions of what kinds of sectors and groups the Council might want to consider as participants. She spoke of potential outreach to editorial boards, utilizing technology to survey stakeholders and interested parties, touring institutional campuses, and scheduling small focus groups along with larger forums. She mentioned the understood urgency of these activities and the short timeline for planning the numerous visitations proposed for January and February statewide. She also acknowledged that these efforts will be ongoing for the Council as it develops relationships with community focus groups and partnerships with stakeholders and area leadership.

Discussion then ensued regarding how to implement lean processes for distributing Council resources for these activities, the broadly diverse demographics of the areas to be visited, and how to best extract input from the citizens of Washington regarding the educational needs of the state and the five specific concentrations of interest outlined in the Strategic Action Plan.

Also discussed was the necessity to consider, in addition to the outreach activities, the division of labor and attention to the overall responsibilities and duties of the Council throughout the next year and develop a working timeline to accomplish all tasks. José E. Gaitán then shared a draft chronological listing that he and Don Bennett prepared of foreseeable Council projects, assigned statutory duties, and activities through 2015 for members to review. Don suggested that first a series of regular Council meetings be established, then the Council could build agendas for those meetings and establish a framework to accomplish the required assignments and priorities. Also underway during the month of December, the Coraggio Group will be working with Council members to determine availability for their participation in the various outreach activities to be scheduled statewide.

Executive Director's Report

Don Bennett outlined a few activities scheduled for December, to include developing a calendar for 2013 Council meetings – at least six scheduled meetings through the end of the year, possibly every other month. This would allow adequate preparation time in between to develop those materials associated with building a 10-year roadmap as well as other statutory reporting responsibilities.

Chairman Baird emphasized the need for Council staff to have a process in place to assure that Council members receive documents well in advance, allowing sufficient time to review and provide feedback prior Council action. He went on to say that he feels virtually everything prepared and distributed on behalf of the Council needs to have the necessary review and approval of content before being released and circulated.

Don Bennett responded with that being the staff's goal as well, in concert with ongoing attempts to respond to additional assignments that may come, such as legislative requests during session along with statutory requirements and reporting schedules. Don also noted that staff regularly participate in various workgroups consisting of members from other agencies, such as the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, Board of Education, etc., to achieve completion of other directives received.

Discussion continued regarding the processes of preparation and review by Council members and the importance of having an opportunity to review and endorse materials prior to the necessary Council action. With each member having specific areas of interest, it was pointed out that the distribution of labor could be logically divided among them.

Don Bennett also spoke of a couple of Council staffing positions currently needing to be filled – Communications Director presently being staffed in the interim by Gary Larson, who has extensive experience in the media field, and a Governmental Relations position – both to be

posted in the near future. Karen Moton-Tate, the Council's Human Resources Director, distributed draft job announcements for Council members to review prior to posting. The question was posed as to who makes the hire, with Chairman Baird responding that statutorily it is the Executive Director that ultimately makes the final decision.

With regard to the search for Executive Director, Don Bennett clarified that he would not be among the three candidates that will ultimately be given to the Governor for consideration. He stated that he feels it is most appropriate for this new Council to be able to search for fresh leadership nationwide for the best qualified candidates to be considered to serve with complete confidence of the Council in the future. Acknowledging that serving as Director during the last couple of transitional years has been both challenging and rewarding, he indicated that he would be happy to return to the Deputy Director position for which he was hired in 2007. Chairman Baird thanked Don for his role in providing strong leadership and continuity of agency services during this time of transition.

Update on Executive Director Search

Chairman Baird indicated that there was a search committee formed, consisting of himself, Marty Brown, Constance Rice, and José E. Gaitán, who contracted with Diversified Search. Lonnie Taylor, staff of Diversified Search, joined in via telephone to update Council members of their activities to date. The national search started on November 2 and thus far they have spoken with over 90 individuals responding to the position description, which has been posted on their web site and with the Chronicle on Higher Education. Mr. Taylor expressed that it has been advantageous having conversations with Council members as well as with education stakeholders, education administrators, employees of government agencies, and business leaders in Washington State as they discuss the necessary background, education, and skills necessary of potential candidates. He indicated that the month of December will be concentrated on screening and interviewing those individuals who show interest in and are qualified for the position, conduct video interviews, and then to prepare candidate profiles of the top five candidates to be discussed with the Council. He shared that their end goal for this search is to have well qualified candidate profiles, to include career paths and resumes for the Council to review and conduct interviews to keep with the timeline of having three choices for consideration by the Governor in January.

Following Mr. Taylor's overview of their role in the search efforts, discussion centered on the future interaction the Council's search committee will have working with staff of Diversified Search, helping to narrow down the number of candidates and reporting to the full Council the progress that is being made.

Studies for Council Review

Chairman Baird introduced discussion regarding the preparation and distribution of informational reports that have been requested by the Legislature with due dates pending. He indicated how important it is that the Council have an opportunity to fully understand the nature of the study, the data collection sources and process, and have adequate time to review these reports and approve the contents prior to them being submitted to the Legislative and/or Governor. Two studies to be reviewed during this Council meeting are the Higher Education Loan Program and the College Bound Scholarship.

Higher Education Loan Program Study

Rachelle Sharpe of the Council staff provided an overview of the higher education loan program (HELP), which was authorized in 2009 but not funded. HELP is intended to provide low-cost loans and related loan benefits to eligible Washington students pursuing degrees, while avoiding duplication with available federal loan programs. The authorizing proviso asks for the Council to provide a legislative report outlining finance and design options to administer this program. As outlined in the proviso, a workgroup of financial aid administrators, higher education stakeholders, and financial advisors was formed to help identify viable program design options and alternatives for initial and ongoing funding to sustain the HELP program. The report presented to the Council contains details of the workgroup's research and proposed options.

To assist in the review of this study, Rachelle Sharpe introduced Lyle Jacobsen, a financial consultant with a long-time history of state service, who had been temporarily hired to assist in the development of this report. Mr. Jacobsen introduced the finance options that were outlined in the study, to include the possibility of revenue bonds or the potential financial support through private lenders. Also introduced was Karen de Villa of the Northwest Education Loan Association, who shared some of the background data collections used for this study, to include information drawn from the 20 other states who offer student loan programs similarly designed to complement federal programs.

Council discussion followed, to include the uniqueness of the proposed loan program and how best to review the options, taking additional time to develop a solid understanding by members of the report's contents and the feasibility of this loan's sustainable operation.

College Bound Scholarship

Rachelle Sharpe presented general informational materials regarding the College Bound Scholarship, prepared to not only inform Council members of the program but also for potential presentations to the Legislature. She provided a general overview of the scholarship's purpose and its intended populations to be served, with data reflecting current and extended

predictions of student participation. The program was established in 2007 to provide an early commitment to low-income families and children in foster care. It involves the Council's ongoing partnerships with each of the state's education service districts, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the College Success Foundation. Detailed student progress criteria have been established, with both on-line and hard copy applications available in 10 languages. To date, over 100,000 applications have been submitted by 8th grade students for this scholarship. The College Bound award amount varies for each student, dependent upon which sector the student enrolls. It is designed to pay for tuition and fees, along with a \$500 book allowance. In 2012, the first cohort of applicants who signed up for the scholarship amounted to just less than 16,000 students. Ongoing observation of cost models developed by Council staff as well as tracking revenue projections help monitor the sustainability of funding for this scholarship.

Discussion continued regarding the approach to funding issues of this program as well as institutional capacity to absorb this new cohort of students. Praise was given to this scholarship program as an avenue for assisting student access and success to what was before an ill-prepared, underserved population.

Other

Concluding discussion of this Council meeting centered on the role of Council staff as presenters of substantive data to outside constituents in a timely manner or responding to a given due date, such as to legislators and legislative staff, versus the distribution of materials reflecting Council policy and potential recommendations affecting the state's overall education system.

In closing, Chairman Baird shared his plans to send a letter to Governor Gregoire, thanking her for her role in establishing the Washington Student Achievement Council, as well as a letter to Governor-elect Inslee, congratulating him on his successful election.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:40 p.m.