

Week 2 Legislative Update January 19-23, 2015

Senate Work Sessions

In the **Senate Higher Education Committee** meeting on January 20, Maud Daudon, the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) Chair and CEO and President of the Seattle Chamber of Commerce, presented the [WSAC Strategic Action Plan](#), which forms the basis of WSAC's legislative agenda for 2015. Daudon, presenting with Gene Sharratt, Executive Director, and Maddy Thompson, Director of Policy and Government Relations, thanked Chair Bailey and members of the committee for supporting higher education and requested continued support in 2015 to make progress on the state goals for education attainment.

The committee heard from Rachele Sharpe, WSAC's Senior Director of Financial Aid, on the [State Need Grant report](#). Recommendations to the Legislature include:

- Close the funding gap to serve more students.
- Establish the state's policy goal and improve predictability.
- Make the less-than-half time enrollment category permanent.

Eleni Papadakis presented on the Workforce Board's regulation of private career schools. Papadakis noted that the recent issues surrounding Corinthian-owned Everest Colleges were less severe at the six campuses in Washington due to relatively stringent oversight in place in this state.

A fourth presentation focused on the State Auditor's Office audit of the University of Washington's use of dedicated local and operating fee accounts.

Committee meeting materials can be found [online](#).

Proposal to Improve Coordination of the State Need Grant and College Bound

On January 21, the **Senate Ways and Means Committee** held a work session focusing on higher education budget issues. The work session included information on the Governor's budget proposal related to improving coordination between College Bound (CB) and the State Need Grant (SNG). Paula Moore of OFM explained that the Governor's budget builds off the current policy to coordinate SNG- and CB-award packaging. The coordination rates vary by sector and by school. The Governor's proposal will create a centralized step through WSAC and assumes a saving of \$23 million that would be reinvested in SNG.

Rachele Sharpe (WSAC) explained that the requirement to serve CB students first reflects the way the program was designed, where CB is an early commitment of the State Need Grant (SNG) and then CB fills the gap to the maximum award based on public tuition plus a small book stipend of \$400. This proposal would have WSAC set aside SNG funding for CB students and then distribute it following student enrollments. No CB students would be affected by this change; only the funding source would be altered. Since the savings to the CB program would be re-invested in SNG, it is not anticipated that

the unserved population would grow as a result of this change. Kay Lewis of the University of Washington and Scott Copeland of SBCTC presented their perspectives on the issue.

A panel on tuition-setting authority included comments from Marty Brown, WSAC member and Executive Director of the State Board for Community and Technical College, who noted that the Legislature retains authority to set the tuition cap for community and technical colleges. Tuition is \$4,000 throughout the community and technical college system and has remained at this level since 2013 due to the tuition freeze imposed during the last two legislative sessions. Brown noted that no new state funding and no tuition increase is a reduction because the colleges do not get any inflation increase for the non-employee related costs. These costs amount to \$22 million for the next two years based on 2 percent inflation. Another link to tuition is compensation increases. Historically, the state has provided compensation increases through the general fund. This is not the case in the Governor's budget proposal.

Paul Francis, WSAC member and Executive Director of the Council of Presidents, emphasized that instead of focusing on who should be setting tuition we should be focusing on providing stable and predictable funding to allow our students to receive a high quality degree at an affordable cost. He said one of the major impediments to stable and predictable funding is constantly changing tuition policies every few years. In the last few years tuition was set as a percent of the cost of instruction, there was a 7 percent cap on tuition, institution tuition-setting authority was authorized, and tuition was connected to Global Challenge State funding.

Francis stated that tuition policy is largely driven by the budget and that public higher education institutions in Washington experienced some of the largest decreases in funding in the nation between 2008 and 2012. This resulted in the Legislature allowing double digit increases in tuition during those years. Only one institution exercised tuition-setting authority and only for one year. He thanked the committee for the investment made in higher education in 2013 to reverse that impact. He said that what has changed is that students now shoulder the majority of the cost of attending a university and that this is the basis for the joint request of the public baccalaureate institutions of \$198 million proposal that would, among other things, hold tuition steady for another two-year period.

Austin Wright-Pettibone, representing the Associated Students (University of Washington), stated that tuition policy should take into account affordability while maintaining quality. Wright-Pettibone emphasized that the best form of financial aid is low tuition. He stated that tuition-setting authority should be returned to the Legislature and college should be defined as affordable when a student can attend school working a maximum of 20 hours a week during the school year and 40 hours during the summer can graduate without debt.

Committee meeting materials can be found [online](#).

College Affordability

On January 21, the **House Higher Education Committee** held a work session on college affordability. Rachele Sharpe (WSAC) presented on the State Need Grant and the College Bound Scholarship program. The SNG presentation outlined the changes in program policy over time. Sharpe noted that the SNG is a critical strategy for meeting the state's education attainment goals. The committee reviewed

the Interactive Affordability Model, developed jointly by UW Professor Jim Fridely in partnership with WSAC. The model is designed to show the relationship between state funding, tuition policy, and the impact on student debt. Representatives of the state's students' association presented on the impact of tuition on affordability and emphasized that increasing hours of work to afford college can negatively impact student success.

Committee meeting materials can be found [online](#).

Postsecondary education needs of the computer science and maritime industries.

On January 20, the **House Higher Education Committee** held a work session on degrees and credentials that lead to good jobs. The session focused on computer science and maritime education and careers. Presenters included Dave Wallace of the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board; Michael Schutzler of the Washington Technology Industry Association; Microsoft recruiter Becky Tucker; Google Manager Lysandra Donigian responsible for Tech Student Outreach in North America; and Henry M. Levy, Wissner-Slivka Chair and Department Chairman, Computer Science & Engineering, University of Washington. Several speakers outlined the high need for computer science graduates with annual demand outstripping supply of graduates from our state's higher education institutions. Professor Levy asserted that what distinguishes the Seattle Washington is the 48,440 "Software Developers, Applications" and the 7,560 "Software Developers, Systems Software" which are more, in total, than Silicon Valley. In 2014 UW awarded 300 computer science degrees and are funded to grow to 375. He said they would like to reach 600. He noted also that 30 percent of CS students in their program are female. Of the 30 percent of transfer students from community and technical colleges, 40 percent gain baccalaureate degrees in CS. More than three-quarters of our students are Washington residents, and more than three-quarters of the CS graduates remain in the state.

Maritime Industry presenters included Joshua Berger, Washington Maritime Federation; Ann Avary, Center of Excellence for Marine Manufacturing and Technology; Peter Granger, WA Sea Grant / University of Washington; and Wendy Brant, Safe Boats International.

Committee meeting materials can be found [online](#).

Healthcare

On January 22, the **Senate Higher Education Committee** held work sessions on Washington State University and University of Washington medical school education proposals, the health care workforce shortage, and graduate medical education.

Committee meeting materials can be found [online](#).

Hearings

On January 19 the **House Education Committee** held hearings on two bills ([HB 1031](#) (Johnson) and [HB 1081](#) (Sullivan)) that would expand College in the High School (CHS) beyond grades 11 and 12 to the 10th grade. The proposals are similar except that the Johnson proposal also extends the requirement

that CHS-participating school districts provide general information about the program to all students and their parents and guardians in grade 9 in addition to grades 10 through 12.

On January 20, **House Higher Education Committee** held hearings on a bill that would create the Washington advanced higher education loan program ([HB HB1030](#) (Johnson)) and another bill that eliminates the parent or guardian approval requirement for the College Bound Scholarship pledge ([HB 1236](#) (Ortiz-Self)).

Please see our [Week 3 Schedule](#) for upcoming committee meetings and hearings.