

November 18, 2015
Saint Martin's University
Olympia, Washington

MINUTES

Members attending:

Maud Daudon, Marty Brown, Jeff Charbonneau, Paul Francis, Karen Lee, Gil Mendoza, Susana Reyes, Eric Pattison.

Staff attending:

Gene Sharratt, Aaron Wyatt, Alan Hardcastle, Becky Thompson, Beth Ahlstrom, Crystal Vaughan, Gray Sterling, Emily Persky, Katie Sandridge, Lexi Shankster, Maddy Thompson, Marc Webster, Marcie Sample, Randy Spaulding, Rachelle Sharpe, Sarah Weiss, Steve Thorndill, Weiya Liang, Kristin Ritter.

The meeting was called to order at 8:40 a.m. by Chair Maud Daudon.

Consent Agenda

Motion was made by Jeff Charbonneau to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.
Motion seconded by Marty Brown.
Motion carried.

October 15, 2015 Meeting Minutes

Motion was made by Jeff Charbonneau to approve the minutes.
Motion seconded by Paul Francis.
Motion carried.

Greeting

Dr. Roy Heynderickx, President, Saint Martin's University

Dr. Heynderickx provided a welcome to the Saint Martin's University campus. He specifically thanked the Council for their work focused on early childhood to post-secondary learning.

Saint Martin's was founded in 1895 and is in its 120th year of operation. The school has several successful programs including business, engineering, nursing, and teaching. The school is proud of their small class-size ratio. There are 1300 students at the main campus which includes 500 soldiers and their families from Joint Base Lewis-McChord.

Executive Update

Gene Sharratt, Ph.D., Executive Director

Since the last Council meeting, Student Financial Aid staff attended multiple conferences and provided trainings. Recent events include the Washington Financial Aid Association (WFAA) fall conference in Tacoma, the National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs (NASSGAP) in Washington D.C., the 2015 Blueprint for Success Conference in Los Angeles, legislative workgroup sessions on higher education affordability and governance in Maryland, and the Reach Higher - FAFSA Completion convening in Washington D.C., in which Gil Mendoza, Weiya Liang, Rachelle Sharpe, Maddy Thompson and Sarah Weiss participated.

Academic Affairs staff travelled across the state to present updates on WSAC activities and listen for what might be on the radar as concerns from stakeholder groups. Recent events include meetings with the Intercollege Relations Commission, the Advising and Counseling Council (ACC) of the CTCs, the Annual Statewide Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Conference at Central Washington University, and the Dual Credit Workshop at Big Bend Community College.

Washington State GEAR UP partnered with directors and staff of eight western state GEAR UP programs to convene the 9th annual GEAR UP West regional conference in Boise, Idaho in late October.

Policy and Research staff have worked on the 2015 Roadmap Update which will assess the state's progress towards meeting the educational attainment goals, and explore potential policies and programs of impact. The Affordability Symposium will engage stakeholders in the development of a Washington Affordability Framework. Degree Authorization and financial aid staff have continued their commitment to education consumer protection, working closely to support students earning their degree at a college that is closing (Interface College - Spokane). Additionally, data from all campuses on the number of students receiving Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) credit and the number of credits awarded for PLA is currently being collected for use in the annual PLA Report to the Legislature.

The GET Committee will meet on December 3 to continue to explore the implications of adopting a state 529 savings plan. On November 19, Committee members will provide a presentation to the GET Legislative Advisory Committee and the Senate Higher Education Committee.

The 12th Year Campaign includes the American College Application Campaign and College Goal Washington. As of November 1, we have a 17 percent growth in 12th Year Campaign sites. Also, 77 percent of the districts in the state have returned an agreement to gain access to the FAFSA portal to monitor aid applications from seniors.

WSAC College Bound Scholarship staff worked with the office of Governor Inslee to honor the 110 top CBS sign-up districts.

Maddy Thompson, Director of Policy and Government Relations, reminded the Council of the 2015 process to determine Council positions in legislature. Decisions to support an initiative was based on whether it supported the Roadmap and Strategic Action Plan. When unsure, staff would bring it before the executive committee for review. Sector members were communicated with regularly throughout the session. Maddy and staff plan to do the same again for the 2016 session.

Aaron Wyatt, Communications Director, provided the Council with a high-level view of communication plan for the Roadmap Update. The goal of the Council is to insure that both the Strategic Action Plan and Roadmap report align with the agency's mission:

"We advance educational opportunities and attainment in Washington. In pursuit of our mission, the Washington Student Achievement Council:

- *Leads statewide strategic planning to improve educational coordination and transitions.*
- *Supports Washingtonians through the administration of financial aid, a college savings plan, and support services.*
- *Advocates for the economic, social, and civic benefits of postsecondary education."*

Aaron discussed the channels by which the agency employs to maintain and foster collaboration with key publics. Agency partners also provide opportunities for engagement.

DRAFT Roadmap Report: Measuring Our Progress

Maddy Thompson, Director of Policy & Government Relations
Alan Hardcastle, Director of Research

Maddy Thompson initiated the Roadmap Report by walking members through the draft 2015 Roadmap Update and Alan Hardcastle, Director of Research, provided a summary of the findings and conclusions of the report. Council members also provided input and guidance on the content of the transmittal letter to the Governor and Legislature.

The Technical Workgroup and other partners involved with the Roadmap Update were thanked for their detailed participation in the process. A conference call is set up for December 10 for Council members to give final approval on the Roadmap Update.

Maddy explained the report focuses on data. Implications in the report don't go as far as recommending strategies, at this point. Strategy recommendations are the charge for next year's Strategic Action Plan.

The state has grown from 50 to 51 percent toward its postsecondary goals. In order to meet 70 percent by 2023, we'll need nearly 500,000 more people to obtain a

postsecondary credentials. In order to close the gap, it would require over 400,000 to obtain additional credentials to keep up with the current population trend.

High school graduation rates grew one percent from 89 to 90 percent. An additional 200,000 people are needed to get a high school diploma or equivalent to close the gap.

Council member Jeff Charbonneau noted a fundamental concern over the slow uptick of the graph and increases, with a final huge push to meet the goal. He questions whether the huge push in the last three years is possible. Jeff believes it will require an “S” shaped curve, with the big push happening now. He stressed the action needs to be sooner rather than later.

Alan provided a summary of the leading indicators, core measures, and progress. Not all, but three specific measures were disaggregated and brought before the Council for discussion. A deeper level of information is available in a workbook available in the very near future for those who are interested.

High School Enrollment:

The Council was reminded that high school graduation rates have increased 10 percentage points over the last decade. Washington is a little lower than the national average for high school graduation rates, but for all students of color and other underrepresented students the state rates are a bit higher than last year. This population remains lower than the average of all students in Washington State. GED completions are dropping as well. Interesting to note is, of all ninth graders, 26 percent failed one or more academic courses, which effects GPA.

As outlined in the implications section, the data reveals opportunity gaps in the K-12 system. The state is at risk of seeing the overall rates decline if there is no concerted effort to improve completion. Schools may rise to the challenge during this critical juncture in progress toward graduation as policies are tailored to help eliminate barriers.

Postsecondary Enrollment:

Enrollment has declined among students, especially among students over 25, suggesting students are returning to the workforce, which could be due to the rising of the economy after the great recession. Apprenticeships, while still small in numbers, are also related to economic recovery. Requests for financial assistance remain high.

As outlined in the Implications section: The slight overall decline in enrollment obscures the striking drop in enrollment of students aged 25 and older. Enrollment patterns are sensitive to our state's shifting economic cycles. The challenge is to make it easier for adults to accumulate credits while they are employed. Enrollments from traditional-aged students is a positive sign given that recent graduates were increasingly from groups underrepresented in postsecondary education. There is growth in Hispanic/Latino enrollment which is an encouraging sign.

Postsecondary Completion:

Postsecondary awards have increased slightly, especially among students ages 18-24 and with some underrepresented groups.

Per the Implications section in the report, the data suggest that the gradual increase in awards is a good sign, particularly given the lack of growth in high school graduates. These gains have extended to traditionally underrepresented groups, indicating the attainment gap is not widening. As with enrollments, awards to older students dropped off as the economy improved. The state's attainment goals cannot be met passively through demographic changes, or by increased high school graduation and postsecondary enrollments of ages 18-24 alone. To meet the state's educational attainment goals, we must attract, engage, and graduate more adults.

The overall participation and attainment progress is too low to reach the 2023 goals. High school completion, postsecondary access and completion for historically underserved and underrepresented populations, and postsecondary recruitment, retention, and completion for working-age adults are the two areas which need particular attention. However, further action is needed across the spectrum.

Council Member Input:

Council member Gil Mendoza reminded the Council that this year's ninth grade students are the first class to have the 24-credit high school graduation requirement. Core Requirements make up 17 of those credits. There is some flexibility within those course requirements and we could be doing a disservice to students for allowing flexibility within those courses.

Council member Marty Brown wants to emphasize in the letter to the Governor and legislators the needs that remain. Just in community and technical colleges alone the funding level is still not up to state funding received in 2007-09. There are still many areas that are far behind. The only increase in community and technical colleges is in apprenticeships.

Mr. Mendoza said when the economy is up, people are not going to school as much. He wonders how we communicate to employers to actively engage them in the business community. How do we help them understand they are actually helping themselves in the long run? We need to address this issue to meet our goals.

Council Chair Maud Daudon said the attainment goals were set to improve our economy. The goal is to get people on track to be successful, to support their families, and have opportunity.

Ms. Daudon also reminded the Council that the business community is keenly interested and connected to engaging with education through lifelong learning and addressing pipeline issues. There needs to be more connected relationships with

employers and the educational system. We might consider next year assembling an advisory board of employers to help guide this effort. We have a great cross section of employers of different industry sectors, globally and regionally.

Mr. Mendoza stated the Business Roundtable historically has been focused on higher education, but this year its focus is changing to K-12 with emphasis in early learning. They want to engage students early in education so they land a higher-level job in the industry.

Understanding the economy is stronger in the Puget Sound and not so much in the rest of the state, there is an interest in spreading the word of the job opportunities across the state, especially for those who are willing to relocate. We need to bring employers into the equation.

Council member Paul Francis believes a two-way partnership needs to happen. He reminded us that often large segments of the business community were not there when we were advocating for education when funding had historic reductions. He would like the business partners for a two-way relationship.

Council member Jeff Charbonneau said business partners need to be given an identifiable role to play. They often don't know how to help. Educators need to be asked what the business community could do for them. Mr. Charbonneau reiterated the need for the state and the business partners to rise to the challenge, not just the schools. He would like this to be the message in the report to help "break down the silos."

Mr. Francis stated that demographics play a key role in terms of targeting a population to serve and the state serves a wide range of groups, i.e. veterans, foster youth, homeless youth. Many of these populations could be summarized and shown to make a difference in numbers from the efforts. These groups could be combined to serve a broader number of people.

Vice Chair, Karen Lee, suggests that during times of prosperity, the Council should be advocating more for the over 24 year-old population who are in the workforce but do not necessarily have a diploma or certificate. They are often the ones to attend the community and technical colleges. When the economy is tight, employers still have the same technically certified positions and often hire employees who are under skilled and these often have a high turn-over rate. Ms. Lee would like to see us advocating more and differently to access this population for the technical and certification programs and 4-year programs.

Mr. Charbonneau would like to acknowledge early childhood education as part of the overall education system. Maddy agreed that this information will be included in the Opportunities section of the report.

Chair Maud Daudon would like the report to suggest a sense of urgency, needing these investments to be addressed immediately. Ms. Daudon would like to accelerate the strategy finding aspect of this work. It is important to get this message across but not necessarily in the transmittal letter.

Gene Sharratt recapped the input from Members, explaining staff will include the following when finalizing the report and preparing the transmittal letter:

- They will work on putting together an advisory board to seek to close gaps between educators and employers with a state-wide effort and clear expectations on both sides.
- The staff will take a strong look at continued learning for those who are employed and those who are not employed.
- The under-skilled and under-employed population will be considered in determining strategies for returning adults.
- Early childhood education will be included in the Opportunities section of the report.
- Ramp up the language around the sense of urgency.
- Include some language about the reduction of enrollments including data about the number of people actually getting employment and reference to how education is a pathway to employment and opportunity.

Public Comment

Nova Gattman, Legislative Director of the Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board (WTECB) informed the Council that the WTECB is working on efforts to increase the business engagement which one of the four key strategies that will be included in the WTECB's four-year plan. The WTECB would enjoy partnering with WSAC in this effort.

Larry Seaquist, citizen of Gig Harbor. He stated that the purpose of the Roadmap is to provide to policy makers a set of benchmarks of the minimum levels of high school and postsecondary attainment the state needs in order to function. The idea is that every two years the state will refresh those goals. He asks, should the numbers be adjusted?

It would be useful for the entire education system to know which populations in the state are undereducated. That would help the system know what they need to do to target them. He believes the state legislature must be informed that we are sliding backwards.

Brian Taubeneck, Vice President of External Affairs, University of Washington, noted the report states there are decreases in certificates at mostly for-profit colleges. Certificate programs are mostly fee-based programs and can be costly for some students. Some of the drop offs could be because of costs. This is a great opportunity for the business community to get involved.

Council member Jeff Charbonneau wants to be sure we recognize where the problem is and not point fingers where it is not. It is not a broken K-12 system it is a lack of investment. The reality of the teacher shortage, it is a lack of investment. If this mindset is changed it will help to involve the business world. They will not back something that is broken. They want to invest in success.

Paul Francis reminded the Council that they have to be thoughtful about the political light in which they operate and consider the tough challenges. There are many important needs.

Chair Maud Daudon wanted to reiterate that legislative work done to date has largely been driven by business. Business is hugely invested in and concerned with the educational system and have been a great partner in the effort.

Vice Chair Karen Lee believes there is language throughout the study about the commitment to serve the adult student. There are more people in the 24 and over than there are in the entire K-12 system. There tends to be much less focus on this demographic. Our education system is not meeting the needs of the over-24 population.

Council member Gil Mendoza reminds the Council that the underserved is our growing demography. There are outside pressures that cannot be controlled, such as “no child left behind” that create barriers for the system to improve. Business, labor, higher education, K-12 must come together to rewrite the educational plan that is fair and works for Washington. We need to prepare for that now. The superintendent, Randy Dorn has gone on record saying, “Do not decimate the rest of the system when funding K-12.”

Washington Student Perspectives: Affordability issues for students related to access, completion, and employment

David Ruiz, Washington Community & Technical College Student Association

Elissa Goss, Washington Student Association

Brian Taubeneck, Graduate and Professional Student Senate

David Ruiz, President of the Washington Community & Technical College Student Association (WACTCSA). This organization represents 34 colleges and 380,000 students with a diverse population. It includes mothers, fathers, high school students, returning students, many first generation college students, and international students. These students have a critical window that involves an obstacle that challenges them and often don't continue their education due to that obstacle.

WACTCSA is working on four agenda items with the legislature.

1. Free community and technical college education.
2. Textbook affordability and open educational resources.
3. Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) for food costs on campus.
4. Post-secondary education for inmates.

Elissa Goss, Executive Director of the Washington Student Association (WSA). The WSA has been in existence for 30 years. It is student created, funded, and run by 13 member board of directors representing 11 campuses, as well as a seven member executive board. It is the only United States student association with a full-time student lobbyist. The organizations represent 150,000 students across the state.

WSA's legislative priorities are in summed up in three areas:

1. **Affordability:** Tuition level hold, State Need Grant, graduate student expenses, debt, child care, housing, textbooks, food, transportation, paid internships.
2. **Access:** Voter registration, students with disabilities.
3. **Quality:** Advising support funding, affirmative consent, student activity fees.
 - Student support: academic advising, career services, tutoring.
 - Academic: faculty of color, TAs, Class/field availability.
 - Student safety: sexual assault, discrimination (institutional /personal).
 - Applied Learning: RSO funding, learning research Centers.

Brian Taubeneck, Vice President of External Affairs, Graduate and Professional Student Senate (GPSS) at the University of Washington. GPSS represents all of the 15,000 graduate students of the University of Washington.

Mr. Taubeneck discussed some of the priorities of graduate and professional students.

1. State-loan program to be offered at a lower interest rate.
 - The American Foundation, found that graduate students make up 14 percent of the student population but 40 percent of the one trillion dollar student debt.
 - Graduate students make up 77 percent of the federal student loan profits.
2. Fee-based programs have no direct state support.
 - In some cases because it is a fee per credit, some in-state residents often pay as much as out-of-state residents.
 - Fee-based program students often don't give on-campus employment because employers get credit waivers but not fee waivers. The hiring organization then has to cover the costs.
3. Partnering with undergraduate lobby.
 - Campus climate, mental health resources, child care.
 - GPSS would like to have student representation.

Support and Outreach Communications Campaign Motion (Action Item)

Marty Brown, Executive Director for the State Board for Community & Technical Colleges

Motion was made by Marty Brown on behalf of Ray Lawton, Citizen Member, who was unable to attend the meeting.

Council member Ray Lawton wrote a paper which was shared with the Council and attendees. It included the background for the proposal and possible solutions. He wrote:

“The purpose of the following proposal is to create a sustainable program to reach all who are in or could be in the educational system.”

“The sectors, through this proposal, will have the opportunity to reach out to all those in the educational system, in a creative approach. This approach would leverage the use of methods from other states and programs in Washington. It will rely on the sectors to tailor the approach to the needs, making use of technology, to reach students who might be identified.”

“Improving retention, working the pipeline, and providing opportunity for all will always be a work in process. Through this proposal, there will be continual learning and understanding best practices from communities within our state and from other states.”

The proposal was stated by Marty Brown as written below:

“The Washington Student Achievement Council endorses the K-12, SCCTC, ICW and COP sectors Support and Outreach Communications Campaign.”

Motion seconded by Karen Lee.

Discussion included praises for Ray Lawton and his passionate work on this issue.

Public Comment

Nova Gattman, Legislative Director of the Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board (WTECB) said they are still reviewing the Roadmap but offered some initial thoughts.

The WTECB is happy to see a focus on high school completion and postsecondary access for historically underserved populations. The report did a particularly good job of highlighting how ninth grade is a tipping point for so many students, a year that determines whether they will go on in high school and reach the finish line.

At the Workforce Board we've focused a lot on young people and the importance of career-connected learning early in their middle/high school years, they see a direct connection between what they're learning in school and the work world and tend to be more likely to complete their education or training.

The WTECB just published their most recent edition of the *Where Are You Going?* career guide, which is a complement to our Career Bridge website. This year's edition focuses on in-demand occupations, so students can connect with jobs that are projected to grow.

The Workforce Board has been updating their state strategic plan for workforce development and will be bringing this before our board tomorrow for initial approval. They appreciate WSAC support on this plan. It will be sent to Members as soon as it's finalized. They appreciate aligning efforts for improving outcomes wherever the two plans allow, as has been done over the last few years on various initiatives.

The WTECB has re-branded their *High Skills High Wages* plan to *Talent and Prosperity for All*. The plan has a strong focus on reaching populations with barriers, including many of the people the Roadmap Plan intends to reach—those without sufficient education who need to advance their education levels to reach living-wage careers. The Strategic Plan dovetails with the implementation of the new Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which was presented at a WSAC meeting earlier this year. WIOA fully addresses the employment, education, and training needs of our increasingly diverse workforce.

Many of the stakeholders in this work includes participation of members of this Council, SBCTC and OSPI. The work has united the workforce system like never before, and we are very excited about the opportunities to harness these partnerships to improve the workforce system.

Formal Meeting Adjourned at 12:05

The **Symposium on Higher Education Affordability** commenced following the Council meeting.