

Southeast King County Higher Education Needs Assessment Advisory Committee Meeting

9:00 AM – 12:00 PM | August 31, 2016 | Covington, Washington

Welcome & Introductions (9:00-9:05 AM)

Randy Spaulding of the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) welcomed participants and Demi Michelau of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) led a round of introductions for all present Advisory Committee members. Michelau also introduced Dennis Jones, President Emeritus of the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), and Jones explained his role as a subcontractor for the project focused primarily on data collection and analysis.

Meeting Goals (9:05-9:10 AM)

Michelau then updated the group on the goals for the day's session: providing a project status update, conducting a focus group with the Advisory Committee, and confirming upcoming Advisory Committee meeting dates and locations.

Project Status Update (9:10-9:30 AM)

She went on to share an update on the project timeline (pictured below) – noting that the general timeline was on track, although data collection and stakeholder interviews have been extended from August through September due to delays in receiving necessary data.

	August	September	October	November	December
Stakeholder Interviews	Active	Active			
Data Collection	Active	Active			
Summarize & Interpret Findings		Active			
Draft Preliminary Report		Active			
Incorporate Feedback into Preliminary Report			Active		
Create Final Report				Active	
Incorporate Feedback into Final Report					Active

She noted that data on community college students



had been received from the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges, data on job openings had been received from Burning Glass, and data on high school and postsecondary students are anticipated from the Education Research and Data Center by mid-September. Michelau also mentioned that American Community Survey data had already been collected and analyzed and that data from the state's Employment Security Department and Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board was publically available in the form of their published reports.

Christina Sedney then described the geographic area for which data is being collected – explaining that due to the Advisory Committee's feedback at the previous meeting data are being collected from outside the boundaries of the southeast King County Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA). She explained that data from school districts both within and surrounding southeast King County would be collected. The included school districts are: Auburn, Dieringer, Enumclaw, Federal Way, Highline, Kent, Renton, Tahoma, and White River. The postsecondary institutions will include those which serve eighty percent of undergraduate students from these school districts as well as Green River Community College, Highline College, Pierce College, and Renton Technical College.

Lastly, Sedney noted that the team is still seeking contacts in transportation planning to identify additional data on commuting patterns that might exist and encouraged the Advisory Committee to share any ideas they might have. She added that the team is also working to request data from private institutions that serve the area – in particular Western Governors University Washington.

Sedney went on to provide an update on the team's regional stakeholder interviews. She explained that the table in the slides laid out all those suggested by the Committee at the last meeting as potential interview subjects. She explained that because the team was still working on analyzing the local jobs data from Burning Glass they had prioritized non-business community interviews on this trip since they would like to have the jobs data in hand before speaking with employers. Consequently this trip's

interviews focused primarily on government and education stakeholders.

Sedney shared that the team had interviewed Representative Pat Sullivan, Senator Joe Fain, Moriah Martin of the Kent School District, and Jenée Myers Twitchell, gaining valuable insights from each. She added that the team had also done site visits to Renton Technical College with Angel Reyna, Green River Community College with Deb Casey Powell and Green River's Kent Campus with their Dean of Branch Campuses Leslie Moore and the location's Director for Instructional Support and Operations Byron Ford – gaining a better understanding of the opportunities and challenges faced by existing providers in the area.

Focus Group Discussion – Part I (9:30 – 10:45 AM)

Postsecondary Supply

Michelau launched the discussion by asking participants to reflect on what educational needs they felt were not currently being met in the community – were there unmet needs in the provision of adult basic education/English as a second language programs, vocational education/applied associates degrees, transfer degrees, baccalaureate degrees, or graduate degrees?

Joe Potts replied that graduate degrees are not readily available nor are opportunities to transfer to baccalaureate programs to complete four year degrees. Mark Lanza added that baccalaureate opportunities do exist—for example at UW Tacoma, Bellevue, and most recently Green River—but that these are increasingly difficult to access due to traffic.

Josh Lyons noted that as an employer in the medical field (he runs a medical wellness center) that he does encounter those who have either some college but no degree but also those with degrees without industry value – highlighting the exercise physiology degree as an example of this. He added that many employees need or would benefit from additional professional certification (for example in medical billing) and continuing education opportunities but that these are difficult to find locally. While there are online versions, these don't help with acquisition of soft skills. He explained that some needs

could be met though in-house training combined with online support, but that there is no clear pathway and that practicum/certification type programs would be helpful. He also mentioned that Eastern Washington produced graduates with exercise degrees that do not have the level of real world skills needed and need to be “trained upwards” to be able to apply their knowledge appropriately. He noted that he almost exclusively hires employees from in state, and that his workforce needs are not at the physical therapist level, rather he is looking to fill roles that require either some college or a four-year degree. However, he reiterated that often those coming in with a four-year degree don't have the practical skills he would like to see. Angel Reyna responded that Renton Technical College does offer customized training for incumbent workers and job skills training for corporate partners.

Postsecondary Demand

Michelau then asked the group to think about the postsecondary demand in the area, is this generated by current high school students, recent high school graduates, adults with no college, adults with some college and no degree, or degree holders seeking retraining or graduate degrees?

Mark Lanza responded that adults face serious barriers to completing degrees which translate to higher costs for the community down the road. Briahna Murray updated the group on the findings from the research for the initial lobbying effort, that anecdotally those in the Covington, Maple Valley, and Black Diamond area felt there were solid two- year options for those coming out of high school, but there were not any feasible four-year options for those looking to remain in the area and attend a brick and mortar institution. Mark Lanza added that transit is a significant barrier to potential students.

Murray further noted that Covington is in a unique stage of growth and that now is the time to think about how people in the region are going to get bachelor's and graduate degrees given that Covington is not within the Sound Transit corridor and that commuting barriers to locations outside the community will likely not be mitigated in the future. Joe Potts added that MultiCare is building a hospital in Covington and that this will likely change the area's workforce and influence demand for higher education.

Moreover, he noted that among teachers there is a significant need for continuing education – particularly at the master's degree level.

In terms of recruiting teachers to the area, Potts indicated that he often has to go out of state for teachers in high need areas such as special education, math, and science. Since most teachers enter their roles with a bachelor's degree, they ultimately need a master's degree to advance in terms of salary. At present their options for this are largely online. Josh Lyons added that Lesley University at one time offered a program that was predominately online with some weekend in-person coursework. Potts added that there is also an administrative program out of Puyallup.

Cathy Calvert responded that she has looked at programs to offer at the Muckleshoot Tribal College and has found a serious shortage of vocational programs that operate in the plateau area of Enumclaw and Auburn. There is demand for a variety of vocational programs such as carpentry or construction pre-apprenticeship style programs as well as programs in medical billing and for lab technicians. She noted the area used to have partnerships with Bates and Renton, where they bused students to Renton or brought in programs from Bates, but that these have not continued. She also mentioned that baccalaureate degrees are also an issue, as the tribal college at one time had a partnership with Antioch University for teacher certification and with Green River for early childhood education, but that these were no longer operating.

Calvert provided some background on the Muckleshoot Tribal College for the group, explaining that it was established in 1995 through a Tribal Resolution. The college worked towards accreditation for several years, but then the Muckleshoot Tribe decided to focus more on their K-12 pipeline and building infrastructure to support that. Now that work is largely completed and they are once again focused on pursuing accreditation for the college. Currently the college partners with Green River to offer IT programs, Northwest Indian College to offers associate's and bachelor's degrees, and Evergreen to offer a program in tribal governance. However, given the relatively small pool of students from the Tribe, there is a need to expand the college's reach to the

broader local community – though they do have some restrictions based on serving only the direct needs of Tribe.

Regan Bolli shared that Covington is about to begin work on a 250 acre development of commercial retail space and residential units. They have submitted a proposal to Sound Transit to include this development through an express bus and a parking garage. The project is on a ten-year timeline and could launch as early as next year.

Mark Lanza noted a lot of barriers to postsecondary education center around cost and that living at home would make college attainable for local students who can't afford a residential option. Arlen Harris responded that place-bound students are an issue state wide; there are often not options beyond associate's degrees for these students. Murray mentioned that their research for the needs assessment suggested that a model similar to that used for the Peninsula project would be a feasible option, with Harris adding that Washington State University has a center at Everett to address this need. Antonio Sanchez also mentioned that Central Washington operated six centers.

Darby Kaikkonen explained that those who earn Associate of Arts degrees and do not transfer tend to be older, female, and parents. Meanwhile, those who earn Associates of Science degrees have a high likelihood of transfer and are typically male, white, and higher income. Regan Bolli added that the lack of options after a two-year degree is an issue for both high school students and adults.

Earl Gibbons shared that in Bremerton, Western Washington has a partnership with Olympic College as a result of being approached by Olympic – who led a series of focus groups with local employers including those in the natural resource industry and defense contractors – to determine need. Western's typical pattern is to work with a local community college and co-locate – for example something they often do with teacher preparation programs.

Gibbons said that Western is about to launch a multi-disciplinary degree completion option with the City of Poulsbo. However, a critical element of this was that the city provided a building for the endeavor - in fact deeding the building to Western. This building space expanded classroom capacity and their ability to serve students after

hours and this is the reason Western has such a strong presence in the community. Another key to the partnership was that employers in the area had needs that Western was well-equipped to meet. While the population base in Poulsbo is about 250,000—a critical mass—it can still be a challenge to meet scale in these types of programs, many can only support one player.

As an example, WSU has an engineering program that is designed specifically to support the shipyard, and Western offers cyber security programs targeted to support the needs of the area's defense contractors. However, oftentimes an area's potential adult student population is not prepared to enter a specialized program, as they lack the required math and science courses. For example, there is a huge list of unqualified prospects for current programs that need access to a prerequisite process. Western does work with Olympic and Peninsula to provide the appropriate prerequisites, partnering with their faculty to create coursework that can feed into Western's four-year degrees. However this process is time consuming – it took over a year to implement and programs don't always perfectly articulate with the pipeline. Now Western has taken a further step and is going into local high schools to make sure their upper division math articulates to these programs. Western actually has tenured and tenure-track faculty located in Bremerton, although they also bring some in. Ultimately students can enter Olympic and finish a four-year degree at Western without leaving the Bremerton area – they have an accessible four-year plan. However, those factors that make people place bound also serve to make it hard for universities to come in.

For example, in Everett there has been a university center for 20 years, Western is only now building a building there because the state legislature has been putting money behind this. The legislature also mandated that WSU offer engineering degrees there and six other universities operate there as well.

Antonio Sanchez followed with a description of Central Washington's off-campus programs, explaining that they operate six centers. He cautioned that there are many constraints to wade through in creating and operating these entities - mostly centered around the fiscal need to ensure that these operations can be self-supporting. Even when all the pieces are in place to create a center, long-term fiscal sustainability is still a

consideration. He noted that Central's Highline center offers an amazing opportunity for students to complete a four-year degree directly after their associate's. Further examples of off-site programs Central offers include supply management through their School of Business, security at Pierce College, offerings at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, teacher education programs, and degree completion programs. He added that while universities are flexible in theory, they face real constraints in terms of legal and fiscal issues. Also, demographic shifts are very important and will need to be considered in addressing coming need.

Earl Gibbons added that education programs often need to relocate periodically because they typically meet all the need in a geographic area in a relatively short amount of time - especially in administrative programs.

Workforce Needs - Current

Michelau then asked the group to consider in what sectors the area is currently experiencing workforce shortages. Antonio Sanchez replied that there is a marked transition towards the requirement of a Bachelors Degree in Nursing (BSN), as opposed to an LPN or RN which will spike demand for BSNs and that many fields within allied healthcare will also likely experience growth. He also mentioned that Central is seeing a growing demand for carbon fiber specialists based on a shift by Boeing towards using more carbon fiber in their work.

Josh Lyons noted that he sees a surfeit of four-year degrees in the area and that as a small-business owner he can't afford to hire someone with a four-year marketing degree expecting a 60 to 70 thousand dollar annual salary. What he really needs are people with specific skills in things like social media or administrative work that don't necessarily have a four-year degree and are willing to work for an hourly rate.

Cathy Calvert shared findings from her own research into trades in the area, which predicts a shortage in certain fields due to baby boomer retirements. However, she is starting to observe a shift back towards skilled trades if they lead to a high paying job – and that this is particularly true for students of color. These students can go into union

apprenticeships or specific programs offered by Renton.

Angel Reyna added that Renton is the second largest apprenticeship provider in the state. The pathway is to complete a pre-apprenticeship program or apply to an apprenticeship program directly. He noted that these programs typically expand as the economy expands. Some of these programs are located on campuses and they are part of a pathway to an applied degree. Renton currently offers a "multi-occupational degree" through apprenticeships from a variety of fields, though some are interested in more specificity (such as an associate's degree in carpentry). Renton works with employers or unions to create these apprenticeship options. Areas of growth include aerospace and there is also need in advanced manufacturing, IT, and health sciences.

Mark Lanza asked what community and technical colleges are doing in terms of creating business partnerships? Arlen Harris responded that Everett and Kirkland do this all the time and Green River is working at this, but that this work is driven by leadership at individual campuses. Angel Reyna added that at Renton they have advisory boards of local companies for all professional tech programs.

Joe Potts noted that he has heard from Sea-Tac Electric that they struggle to find electricians. And Regan Bolli replied that Valley and MultiCare have been in discussions with Green River about nursing programs.

Demi Michelau recapped that the industries most prominent in the group's discussion seemed to be IT, Nursing, Teaching, Advanced Manufacturing, Trades, and Carbon Fiber and asked what other workforce needs might be an issue.

Angel Reyna responded that Mechatronics was a growing area for Renton, and that they are working with a consortium through a U.S. Department of Labor grant to create programming related to repairing robotic components as this is emerging as a need for area employers.

Projected Workforce Needs – 10 Years in the Future

Michelau then asked the group to envision what the area's key industry needs may be in the future, looking ahead about ten years. Antonio Sanchez replied that Energy Management will be an important area as the country increasingly shifts towards alternative energy sources. He noted that there will be a huge need—in the range of 60,000 jobs. Central Washington has an energy management program that currently serves about 25 students a year. They are asking the legislature for more funding, but so far have not been successful. They have a consortium of advisors from major power companies for the program. In addition, a lot of this work can be done remotely and is not tied to the production location so it is an important field for those across the state.

Randy Spaulding added that nursing and teachers will both continue to be in high demand over time – particularly given Washington's class-size reduction legislation. Dennis Jones added that his impression is that in southeast King County healthcare will take the largest share of the skilled workforce. He then asked if there was any other industry in the area that might also require a skilled workforce.

Regan Bolli responded that this was correct, but that education would also be a key area of workforce need. Furthermore, since the area is both a medical and a retail hub – the retail sector will need manager-level employees. He noted that there is a trend of chain stores bringing in managers from outside the community who don't stay for long. Lyons added that this impacts the general sense of community when the business community is not connected to the area in a long-term way. This is particularly an issue in Covington as Maple Valley businesses tend to be more local in staff and ownership.

Michelau then asked if anyone could be more specific about the potential IT needs – were there job opportunities within the community in this field or is this more to be able to access high paying jobs in adjacent areas? Antonio Sanchez responded that traffic is a huge variable and that the cost of housing in Seattle will push residents here and may change local dynamics over time. He noted that a growing number of veteran

students are looking for options that map to their experience in the military – as these are tracked, there will be increasing demand for certain degrees like security and technical degrees, and some in health.

Randy Spaulding asked if southeast King County residents worked in the nearby warehouse district in Auburn and Kent. Some Advisory Committee members didn't think so; however, Josh Lyons said that he believes that many do particularly towards the west side of Covington. Deb Casey Powell added that there is growing demand for commercial pilots, which is why Green River is expanding its Aviation program to the new Auburn center.

Break (10:45 - 11:00 AM)

Focus Group Discussion – Part II (11:00 - 11:50 AM)

Vision for the Future

Michelau asked the group to reflect on what the future would be like for their area in an ideal world. Mark Lanza replied that he would want a full blown four-year campus which operated in concert with community colleges and technical schools. This campus would deliver baccalaureate and graduate degrees and could either be a new campus or a branch campus. He would also like to see close collaboration with the K-12 system - creating a more integrated education process overall.

Briahna Murray added that they really liked the Peninsula model and that there didn't need to be a “brand name” single provider, but that she envisioned a model where multiple universities could collaborate with community and technical colleges – in a center connected to the downtown development efforts. Bolli added that Covington's vision is of a town center that provides both a civic and educational hub for the community with higher education as a focal point.

Michelau asked if people envisioned the center as more full service – providing things like student services (registration, financial aid, etc.) or more of a delivery space for online education, noting the Green River's Kent Campus offers a nearly full array of

student services. Bolli replied that he would see it as less of a location for providing student services and more as a location where locals could come to receive the education they need to secure high -wage employment. Lanza added that he'd like to see a very visible higher education presence that was inclusive of everyone. Lyons added that his vision is a "Pike Place Market" for higher education where a group of institutions offer various programs and avoid a single institution facing too much in infrastructure costs.

Randy Spaulding noted that single provider entities can provide more robust student services, while multi-institutional set-ups offer a greater diversity of programs. Dennis Jones replied that the project will require creatively thinking about managing the realities of scale and place.

Jim Schmidt asked the group what role dual enrollment programs like Running Start and College in the High School might play in all of this. Potts replied that Kent has robust programs in both areas, including some certificate programs. Arlen Harris added that Green River enrolls 5,600 Running Start students. Cathy Calvert noted that these programs are harder to offer in Enumclaw which doesn't have the geographic opportunities school districts like Kent do in terms of proximity to higher education institutions.

Deb Casey Powell responded that Green River is now offering a Bachelors of Applied Science in IT, so a complete pathway from high school through to a bachelor's degree does exist in Covington.

Barriers to Achieving this Vision

As a final item of discussion, Michelau noted that any solution for the area would clearly involve significant collaboration among regional higher education providers and asked the group to consider what challenges might arise to make such collaboration difficult. Angel Reyna responded that changes in leadership make collaboration challenging at times and Arlen Harris agreed that leadership is a key factor. He shared the example of

Olympic, where their president actively pursues partnerships but noted that collaboration often depends on individual leaders taking the initiative to do so.

Dennis Jones posited that nothing in Washington's current policy environment encourages collaboration through funding mechanisms. This then creates an environment of competition. Potts agreed that policy often creates obstacles to collaboration and suggested a "cage-busting" mentality is needed. Lanza responded that locally – thinking of the tri-city area of Covington, Maple Valley, and Black Diamond – there is a great deal of collaboration.

Michelau asked the group to think about what policies could support increased collaboration and Jones responded that policies that incentivize collaboration would have to be built around money flowing only when two and four years collaborate in certain areas and where resources are available to both provider and receiver institutions. For example, two-years might provide students services throughout a collaborative program with four-years providing only upper division content.

Cody Eccles asked what Jones felt was missing from the Washington atmosphere given that they have an effective two plus two system and that institutions are actively trying to meet local needs through efforts like branch campuses and centers. He added that fiscal realities are what prohibit economies of scale and that the real issue is constrained resources.

Jones responded that two plus two programs serve recent high school graduates and drive students to four-year campuses. Gibbons added that relationships between two and four years in Washington are generally good, but that how these relationships work is driven by leadership. The incentive structure leads Western to co-locate with two years and use memoranda to govern agreements (for example with student services provided by two years). Yet, there is a lack of support from the state to enact these partnerships, there is no built-in incentive from the state to create these partnerships if there's not special legislative support. Consequently, for four years to go in to a new

location it has to be entirely self-financed. This generally leads to students at remote location having to pay a *higher price*, even those these are the students with more financial constraints. Funding support wouldn't necessarily need to come from the state, for example employers and institutions have an incentive to produce more BSNs. Gibbons went on to note that if hospitals would scholarship nurses you could easily fund a program.

Eccles added that part of the problem is that there is a disconnect between enrollment and funding levels and that different enrollments cost a different amount and there is particular demand for high-cost fields.

Antonio Sanchez cautioned that projecting workforce need can be dangerous as needs change and programs are expensive to put into place. A smarter way to think about it might be to use a "clustering" approach – building programs that can serve a sector (healthcare, IT, cyber security) rather than a very specialized area. For example, you could create healthcare programs next to hospitals which could employ graduates, thereby creating a healthcare cluster.

Gibbons added that employers have to participate in bringing higher education to a new area beyond their desire to hire graduates. He highlighted Everett as a great example, where Boeing and their supplier base as well as the Navy employ graduates. Employers must supply internships and job opportunities. It is not fair to ask institutions to absorb all the risks of building a new program; employers and the local government must share that risk. Institutions need local governments and employers to help ensure there is a market of individuals that are eligible and able to take advantage of newly implemented programs.

Spaulding added that the Everett project received legislative funding which helped to subsidize the students' cost. Eccles warned that these are multi-year considerations and that you can't move too quickly – thinking about an institution is more on a 10-year timeline rather than a one to two year timeline. Spaulding replied that the Kitsap

project rather than Everett was more analogous to this work. Murray added that changes in leadership affected the southeast King County project. That they had been working with Eastern but then a change in leadership at Eastern derailed that effort. The big question really is are the students there? And if they are, what programs do they need? She is intrigued by the idea of creative hybrid solutions.

Gibbons noted that Lyons' point suggests that the need is for certificate programs, and perhaps what would make sense is a center which aggregates micro-credentials from lots of providers using technology, which would also be more attractive to adult students. Spaulding agreed that this approach would allow for a broader range of providers and Cathy Calvert added that the Muckleshoot Tribal College in fact already operates in this way – essentially as a learning center – given their accreditation status.

Next Steps (11:50 AM – 12:00 PM)

Michelau noted that team was planning for a busy September which would include further stakeholder interviews, ongoing data collection and analysis, and the drafting of a preliminary report. Ellen Matheny of WSAC noted that she had created a website for the project: <http://www.wsac.wa.gov/higher-education-needs-assessment>. The website houses information on the project's authorizing legislation, timeline, meeting notes and materials, and upcoming dates and deadlines. It will also feature the report itself when available and will be updated throughout the course of the needs assessment.

Michelau then asked the group to settle on upcoming meeting dates and it was decided that the final three meeting dates would be: October 6 (location TBD), October 26 (location TBD), and November 18 (City of Covington) all from 9 AM – 12 PM.

Adjournment (12:00 PM)

As there was no other business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 12:00 PM.