

WEIAOB 2025 Legislative Priorities Workgroup: Meeting Minutes

August 29, 2024

2:00 p.m.

Virtual Meeting via Teams

Members Attending (alphabetical by last name):

Steven Ashby, Jane Broom, Terri Standish-Kuon, and Jeff Vincent.

Others attending (alphabetical by last name):

Joel Anderson (WSAC), Jolenta Coleman-Bush (Microsoft), Heather Hudson (WSAC), Michael Meotti (WSAC), and Katie Rose (SBCTC).

Meeting called to order at 2:02 p.m.

Introductory Comments

Presenter: Joel Anderson

- At the June 20 Board meeting, Board members agreed to form a workgroup for the purpose of establishing a process to adopt 2025 legislative priorities.
- During the August 22 workgroup meeting:
 - The workgroup agreed that developing a rubric based on the Board's guiding principles and performance accountability metrics would help members evaluate proposals.
 - The workgroup felt that it was important to issue recommendations that include measurable goals.
 - The workgroup did not agree on a set number of recommendations to make each year.

Key Takeaways

- The Board should be updated on WEIA's existing balance and the amount of funding that may be available for discretionary spending.
- The draft rubric should be made more specific to identify specific degree, credential, and/or career fields of focus. It should also align more explicitly with the Board's guiding principles and performance accountability metrics.
- Board members may be able to solicit and assess proposals in Fall 2024 using a finalized rubric, allowing them to approve legislative priorities during the Board's January 2025 meeting.
- The Board will need to consider how to engage with the Governor's office given the transition in administrations before the 2025 legislative session.

Discussion: Key Topics and Questions

Presenter: Jane Broom and Joel Anderson

Material: 2025 Legislative Priorities Workgroup Draft Rubric

- It would be helpful for Board members to know how much money is in WEIA and what amount may be considered available for discretionary spending.
 - Numbers that are publicly available include WEIA revenue forecasts and historical, maintenance level spending for programs like the Washington College Grant.
 - It may be helpful to look at maintenance level expenditures from WEIA and apply an inflation factor to estimate what must be spent in the 2025–27 biennium.
 - During the 2023–25 biennium, approximately \$260 million from WEIA went toward the Washington College Grant. More than \$91 million of this amount was appropriated in the 2024 supplemental operating budget.
- The workgroup would like to recommend key questions or indicators that can be used to evaluate proposals to the full Board. As an example, the first draft of this concept included the following statements—a proposal:
 - Must demonstrate that funding from WEIA will help Washington residents do one or more of the following:
 - Afford and enroll in a postsecondary program
 - Persist and complete a postsecondary degree or credential that aligns with industry and employer job needs
 - Obtain a good-paying job and/or access a high-quality career connected pathway or credential that will lead toward a good-paying job
 - Should consider demographic and regional context while prioritizing historically underserved communities
 - Should be measurable over a certain time frame
 - Should reach across all higher education sectors, including two- and four-year public institutions; four-year independent, not-for-profit institutions; other institutions approved by Washington state; and registered apprenticeships
 - Should spur innovation and change beyond a single entity (i.e., the proposal should be more comprehensive than providing additional funding from WEIA for an existing system to function in the same way)
- Workgroup members provided feedback on the draft rubric.
 - The initial statements are a good start, but it is too easy for proposals to meet all the criteria. There should be more specificity in the types of postsecondary programs, degrees, and credentials that are being named. These should align with the Board’s theory of change.
 - When the Board first tried evaluating legislative proposals, its vetting process was too specific.
 - The Board should further clarify its areas of focus.
 - The draft rubric includes statements, not questions. These criteria may be more impactful when reframed as questions. Connections to the Board’s guiding principles and performance accountability metrics should be made more explicit.
 - The Board should weed out proposals that merely “do more of the same.” WEIA expenditures should go beyond making incremental additions to existing programs.
 - Necessary and valuable job skills can come through all degree and credential programs. However, there is a need to specifically focus on high-demand fields where Washington is not producing enough relevant degrees and credentials.
 - For example, occupations like nursing or being an electrician require specific training.

- It is important to ask whether proposals would expand high-demand, over-enrolled degree or credential programs. Conversations with the Washington Roundtable have demonstrated that all public institutions of higher education outside of the University of Washington have unrealized capacity to produce additional degrees and credentials in high-demand fields.
 - Some students are currently turned away from these fields due to capacity constraints.
- The statements about prioritizing historically underserved communities and measuring outcomes should be made more specific.
- Proposals should explain how their intended impacts would benefit the state. Categorizing investments as short- or long-term may be helpful.
- In 2023, the Board solicited proposals from the public four-year institutions (COP), SBCTC, ICW, and WSAC. They were sent out with other meeting materials, but Board members needed more time to consider them before issuing formal recommendations.
 - The current timeline presents the Board with an opportunity to submit its annual report by October 31 with broad statements, then issue more specific recommendations during its January 2025 meeting.
 - All agency decision packages (DPs—i.e., budget requests) are due to the Office of Financial Management (OFM) by September 10, 2024. Draft agency request legislation is due to OFM by September 13, 2024.
 - External organizations like the Washington Student Association have different processes for establishing legislative priorities.
- A tentative timeline for the Board to approve 2025 legislative priorities could occur as follows:
 - September 18, 2024—Board members discuss and approve workgroup recommendations
 - October 31, 2024—deadline to receive proposals from state agencies (DPs) and external organizations (alternative process)
 - Early January 2025—Board members discuss and approve 2025 legislative priorities based on assessments of submitted proposals
- This timeline also enables the Board to acknowledge and potentially recommend investments that are included in Gov. Inslee’s proposed 2025–27 operating budget.
 - One of the specific proposals that must be considered in January is funding for Career Connect Washington (WA), per Gov. Inslee’s [directive](#) from January 31, 2024.
 - There will be a brief presentation of the annual CCW report at the September 18 Board meeting.
- For the next workgroup meeting on September 4, Heather and Joel will prepare:
 - Minutes from the August 29 workgroup meeting
 - An updated draft of the proposal evaluation rubric
 - A draft timeline for the Board to solicit and assess proposals

Closing

Presenter: Joel Anderson

- The next workgroup meeting will be Wednesday, September 4, at 2:00 p.m. via Teams.

Meeting Adjourned: 3:05 p.m.