WASHINGTON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT COUNCIL
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Council Meeting Minutes
May 12, 2026
Centralia College

Members Attending (alphabetical by last name):
Jeff Charbonneau, Ruben Flores, Miles Parker, Terri Standish-Kuon, Jeff Vincent, and Monica "Monyu" Yu

Staff Attending (alphabetical by last name): Natalie Alvarado, Joel Anderson, Abby Chien, Crystal Hall, Amy Keltner, Isaac Kwakye, Hannah Lodwick, Ami Magisos, Michael Meotti, Lucas Minor, Grace Xu Nelson, Daniel Oliver, Armen Papyan, Abbey Roth, Rathi Sudhakara

Staff Attending Virtually (alphabetical by last name): Joel Bentley, Perla Bolanos, Rita Chang, Carlie Curlee, KC Deane, Kimberly Hetrick, Jill Huynh, Lyle Irimata, Sam Loftin, Ellen Matheny, Homar Maurás-Rodríguez, Inez Olive, Shannon Peterson, Amy Roach, Isaac Rodriguez, Katie Tallman, Amy Tan, Shannon Venezia

Meeting called to order at 9:00 a.m.

Consent of the Agenda
Motion made to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.
Motion seconded.
Motion carried.

Approval of the Minutes
Motion made to approve the August Council Meeting Minutes.
Motion seconded.
Motion carried.

Welcome
Presenters: President Mohrbacher, Rick Gable, and J Vander Stoep:

- President Mohrbacher shared that Centralia College is celebrating its centennial[1] and thinking about what students will need in the next century of the college. He went on to share demographics about the college and its student population, campus updates, and community partnerships.
- Rick, Superintendent of the Chehalis school district, highlighted the district's recent achievements, including graduation rates and college eligibility. He mentioned a focus on helping students succeed beyond high school and the work the school district is

[1]Centennial celebration. (n.d.). https://www.centralia.edu/about/centennial.aspx

doing to achieve that. He also talked about the Cornerstone Partnership, which was supported by the Regional Challenge Grant.

- J Wander Stoep gave an overview of student achievement within the Chehalis school district. This included highlighting the STEM program and a history of how the program developed. They hope that what is happening here can be replicated elsewhere.

Questions and Comments:

- Does college preparation at Cornerstone also include non-traditional post-secondary options? It does: community partnerships create experiential opportunities for students, including simulation labs.

Executive Director Update

Presenter: Michael Meotti

- Held the first meeting of the College Enrollment and Readiness Work Group. This is an opportunity to start a conversation across different sectors of education in the state on increasing college enrollment and readiness.
- Michael Meotti will be retiring at the end of August or early September. He reflected on his time at the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC).
- Jeff Vincent then went on to describe the recruitment process for the next Executive Director.

Questions and Comments:

- Will this be a national search? Yes.
- What will diversity representation look like in the process? A discussion will take place with the Governor's Office on those considerations.
- Will the same characteristics also be considered for interim coverage? That will also be discussed with the Governor's Office.
- Having been in previous searches, a reminder to conduct due diligence in the search firm selection.

Chair Report

Presenter: Jeff Vincent

- Citizen Members' seats for the Council should be filled by the August meeting. One new member, who was unable to attend today, has been confirmed: Heather Tow-Yick.
- Question on how citizen members are chosen. The way potential members are identified is described, as well as the process from candidate to member. There is also an open application process with the state.

Legislative Update

Presenters: Joel Anderson

Materials: 2026 Legislative Session Summary

Reviewed requests WSAC submitted to the Governor's Office with three bills approved by the Office, one of which was enacted by the Legislature.

- Summarized 2026 legislation enacted in the higher education sphere, the 2026 Supplemental Operating Budget cuts and new appropriations, and new provisions that do not include new appropriations.
- Discussed the development of the Higher Education Legislative Caucus.

Questions and Comments:

- What do the agency and higher education cuts entail? These are across-the-board cuts that leave it up to the agency and higher education institutions to implement.
- Any sense of what might be coming in the upcoming session? Money is limited. Watch for more shifting of funds between accounts.
- More details on the student financial aid cuts? There was a push to restore funding from cuts made in the last budget, but this did not pass. In the next academic year, the cuts to programs will go into effect.
- Concern about budget cuts in loan programs that impact high-demand fields. Explanation of how the Washington Student Loan program was initially funded and where it is today.
- A comment about the Reimagining and Improving Student Education (RISE) Committee and how it pertains to high-demand fields and federally protected loans.
- Any plan to recruit student legislators to the Higher Education Legislative Caucus? Strictly limited to legislators at this time. Typically, recruitment has focused on members of the higher education committees.
- What is WSAC exploring for request legislation or the process the agency is undertaking? Currently formulating the process for next year's decision package and agency request legislation development. This involves soliciting ideas from WSAC staff and close stakeholders.

FAFSA Campaign Update [1:32:00]

Presenters: Isaac Kwakye

- Described the background technological, environmental, and socioeconomic shifts in the 21st century and their impact on individuals, families, and governments.
- Explanation of how the 2026 Washington Competes FAFSA Campaign came to be established.
- Taking a business-like approach to the campaign, seeking to modernize the outreach strategy.
- Review of the campaign goals shared in the January Council Meeting and reflecting on where the goals stand as of May 11.

- Highlighting the regional partnership work being undertaken and how the campaign has affected completion rates.
- Shared about what has been contributing to progress, the learning opportunities, and a look at what comes next. This included spotlighting Your Future, Funded,[2] new tools for schools to utilize, examples of innovative practices, and partnerships.
- Reviewed the lessons learned in the campaign, looked forward to what comes next, and asked to help share the work.
- A short video was played featuring Cierra DW, one of the WA Grant campaign videos.

Questions and Comments:

- In reference to Free and Reduced-Price Lunch students, is there an impact in messaging around students eligible for Washington Connect and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)? Still learning about the impact because this is an effort that has just started. What has been learned is the way WSAC is talking to students is different than many other places and how different barriers impact the messaging.
- While this work is happening, is there a look beyond the application? This is part of the overall work WSAC does, looking not just at the application but also enrollment and beyond.
- With all the different initiatives around the state revolving around FAFSA, has there been any talk about a FAFSA mandate for high school completion? While that is not part of this work, whether there is a mandate or not the work is to also help student understand the various pathways beyond high school and about the aid the state can provide.
- Has there been outreach to employers and business associations so adults can also see this messaging about continuing education and FAFSA? This is being done through both the OtterBot messaging system with dual generation messaging, as well as through regional partnerships.
- Continued conversation on a FAFSA mandate and its possible impact on the messaging.

2027 Strategic Action Plan

Presenters: Abby Chien, Armen Papyan, Ami Magisos, Rathi Sudhakara, Hannah Lodwick, Jeff Vincent

Materials: 2027 Strategic Action Plan

- Overview of the Strategic Action Plan, including the intended purpose, attainment strategies, how it was used in the past, and the updates that have been made.
- Cluster updates, equity, affordability, enrollment, basic needs, completion, and regional partnerships were shared. The focus for each of these clusters was to share the landscape surrounding the cluster as well as priorities for the upcoming year.

[2] *Your future, funded | WSAC*. Your Future, Funded. (n.d.). https://wsac.wa.gov/your-future-funded

- Reviewed the areas of focus the Council will support over the next year, including supporting the FAFSA campaign, increasing college readiness and enrollment, exploring the 70% attainment goal, and more.

Questions and Comments:

- Interested in seeing how $80 million in reduction cuts to financial aid is broken down by median income. Also interested in the number of students by median family income (MFI) who are affected by the cuts.
- Is there a role for WSAC to advocate for the sustainable funding of education? One way to invest in this is to show and promote that there is something of value for Washingtonians' futures. As a follow-up, how do we identify the key issues to focus on and grow interest? Highlight to legislators that WSAC can serve as a bridge to help them better understand how the higher education system works, is funded, etc.
- Comment about the clarity of the call to action in the SAP.
- We have made progress toward our attainment goal, which can be shown to be something to invest in. It would also be prudent to look at our peers and see what is working for them.
- Clarity on the roles of how the Council can advocate and how the agency can advocate.

Motion made to adopt the 2027 Strategic Action Plan
Motion seconded.
Motion carried.

Regional Challenge Grant - Reapplication
Presenters: Hannah Lodwick, Abbey Roth
Materials: Investment Update, Reapplication Recommendations

- Update on how WSAC can continue to invest this year despite budget constraints, including an implementation timeline. Without new funding, partnership awards will conclude in either June 2027 or June 2028.
- Showcased how regional partnerships have impacted local communities' graduation rates, FAFSA filing, and college retention rates.
- Reviewed the reapplication process, including evaluation criteria and forms of evidence, a timeline of the work, and a framework for growth used as part of the evaluation.
- Individual recommendations were shared: ELEVATE, Kitsap Strong, Olympic Peninsula Resource CO-OP, and Washington State Native American Health Sciences Partnership.

Questions and Comments:

- Were there areas where funding was not provided (through the lens of trust building)? The original letters of interest included over 80 applicants.[3] While only eight partnerships were funded, there is great area coverage in the work being done. Also, in subsequent years, the number of applications declined as understanding of the program increased.
- Is there any indication from any of the partnerships in cohort one that they will be able to continue the work without new funding from this program? Many partnerships are securing funding through a variety of diversified means. They are also working towards sustainability planning.
- What are the biggest surprises and disappointments? The program is creating an impact on a college-going culture in communities that would not otherwise have it. There is also a monthly Regional Partnership Learning Community where partners can share the work they are doing and bring in outside expertise to increase learning on strategies.
- The power of regional partnerships is something that has proven to be valuable and will be a part of WSAC's work going forward.
- Thinking of the college-going culture as community-based work rather than siloed in the education system.

Motion made to support the recommendations.
Motion seconded.
Motion carried.

Cluster Focus: Completion
Presenters: Abby Chien
Materials: Credit Mobility Brief, CCA: Accelerator Institute Update

- Grounded the discussion in where completion comes from and what students might need to be able to complete, including topics such as basic needs and all other supports that go into it.
- Started by defining what credit mobility is and the approach being taken. Shared examples of where academic learning can be found, including college courses, training programs, and life experiences. Reviewed the challenges in validating learning and transfer credits.
- Discussion to focus on credit mobility and how to create a unified vision to guide the development of systems beyond "traditional transfer."

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[3] Washington Student Achievement Council. (2023). (rep.). *Establishing the Regional Challenge Grant*. Retrieved July 2026, from https://wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/rcg_legreport2023_FORPUBLICATION_20231019.pdf.

Comments and Questions:

- Timely discussion as the US Department of Education has been discussing a closely related topic that touches on credit transfer.
- This should also be thought of as an option to allow for individual experience.
- Consider that some students might take AP classes or community college courses to save money due to affordability.
- Highlighting Washington 45[4] which helps students understand transferability. Thinking about ways to make credit transfer easier to understand for students.
- Credits that transfer or do not transfer does not always make sense and possibly hinders moving forward in completion.
- Also recognizing that the student's voice is an important part of this discussion. The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) is working on reciprocity agreements, making students transfer-ready, and looking at the direct transfer agreement.
- The Complete College America (CCA) Accelerator Project includes five institutions in eastern Washington working to close equity gaps for low-income students and students of color by providing targeted technical assistance.
- Reviewed the areas of focus the institutions prioritized and the themes that emerged.

Questions and Comments:

- What are the near-term priorities in this area of work? Holistic advising work and credit mobility related to transfer and credit for prior learning.
- An ask for more information on the Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs). All institutions in this work are emerging or current HSIs. Collected information to understand the areas of work they are doing, look at the commonalities, and start to fill in some of the gaps from a policy perspective.
- How did the cohort come together? CCA put out a call several years ago for institutions to join this project. One of the conversations that emerged from the application process was about serving Latino and Hispanic students in Washington. WSAC joined the project in part to help facilitate and guide the work.

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[4] Washington 45. (n.d.). https://www.sbctc.edu/colleges-staff/programs-services/transfer/washington-45.aspx

Public Comment:

- Steve DuPont, Central Washington University. Started by thanking Michael Meotti for his years of service, and the discussion on credit mobility. Suggested edits to the SAP, commented on tuition policy and state subsidies, how state subsidies affect the level of tuition and fees, and the fund split.

Motion Made to Adjourn Meeting.
Motion Seconded.
Motion Carried.

Meeting Adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Appendix A

May 12, 2026 TVW Meeting Recording

Appendix B

Meeting chat record from Zoom

01:36:23 Terri Standish-Kuon, Ph.D.: Hello! I am Terri Standish-Kuon representing not-for-profit, independent colleges and universities. Good to be here.

01:46:23 Joel Bentley: Hello everyone, the agenda and supporting materials for today's meeting can be found here: https://wsac.wa.gov/council-meetings

01:48:43 Shari McMahan: Are you able to share slides of current presentation?

01:49:17 Terri Standish-Kuon, Ph.D.: Replying to "Are you able to shar..."

+1 President McMahan

01:49:54 Grace Nelson: Hello Shari, there are no slides for this portion of the meeting. Thank you.

01:50:11 Shari McMahan: thank you.

02:31:40 Terri Standish-Kuon, Ph.D.: Could comments be made closer to the microphones? Thanks!

02:50:21 Terri Standish-Kuon, Ph.D.: The Legislature did not restore student financial aid funding for ~7K Washingtonians attending independent, not-for-profit colleges and universities, cutting by 1/3 (~$3,200/year) for students in the middle of their academic programs. SB 5828/HB 2567 would have restored those Washington College Grant funds.

02:54:38 Terri Standish-Kuon, Ph.D.: Replying to "The Legislature did ..."

Two-thirds (67%) are students of color, 65% are female, and 62% will be the first in their families to earn a degree, from all corners of the state (rural, urban; Eastern, Western Washington). One in 3 are students who transferred to an ICW campus.

02:54:53 Miles Parker: Reacted to "Two-thirds (67%) a..." with 💔

02:58:35 Terri Standish-Kuon, Ph.D.: Replying to "The Legislature did ..."

Grateful for the leadership of Senators Nobles/Warnick and Reps. Street/Ybarra in leading these discussions!

02:59:31 Miles Parker: Reacted to "Grateful for the l..." with 💔

03:10:34 Miles Parker: is this equity score considered to be high, low, or middle?

03:14:15 KC Deane: Great question, Miles. As Isaac just noted, equal filing across groups would result in an equity gap score of 1.0. As the chart on the last slide showed, we've made good progress, but we would still like to improve.

03:14:35 Miles Parker: Reacted to "Great question, Mi..." with 👍

03:14:40 Miles Parker: thank you

03:31:09 Terri Standish-Kuon, Ph.D.: Could the WSAC team please share a copy of the Governor's letter?

03:32:16 Terri Standish-Kuon, Ph.D.: Also, what part of the outreach effort has been through employers/business associations so adults see the messaging?

03:37:54 Monica "Monyu" Yu: Is there any targeted support for middle income students and families who don't make enough to cover out of pocket, but also not qualifying for substaintial financial aid?

03:50:10 KC Deane: Thank you for the question, Monyu! In this SAP discussion we will share more about an affordability effort to develop a clearer picture of how Washington households pay for postsecondary education by income level, and understand how affordability is changing for WA families and students amid ongoing economic change. This will include exploration of the support needs for middle income students and families.

03:50:44 Monica "Monyu" Yu: Reacted to "Thank you for the ..." with 💔

03:55:38 Terri Standish-Kuon, Ph.D.: With respect to the $80M in student financial aid cuts, could staff please provide Council members with a table breaking down that total by median family income (MFI) level and sector and number of students affected? Information provided at earlier Council meetings suggested that growing median income in the state may mitigate the number of students affected by changes in award level by MFI. Thank you.

03:56:05 Miles Parker: i second what teri said, this would be so helpful in solidifying understanding

03:56:28 Miles Parker: terri*

04:00:38 Terri Standish-Kuon, Ph.D.: Could staff please share with Council members which work stream items in pages 33-38 are related to specific grantor (outside funding) objectives?

04:02:55 Terri Standish-Kuon, Ph.D.: Replying to "Could staff please s..."

It would be helpful to understand which priorities in each cluster are being supported by external funding, e.g., as Rathi just reported for Lumina and Gates foundations.

04:03:36 Ruben Flores: Reacted to "It would be helpfu..." with 👍

04:04:01 Miles Parker: what is the percentage of adult learners with no credit who have successfully completed their programs with their coaches? also, what is the age range of these adult learners?

04:05:52 Rathi Sudhakara: Reacted to "It would be helpful to understand which priorities in each cluster are being supported by external funding, e.g., as Rathi just reported for Lumina and Gates foundations." with 👍🏽

04:06:16 Miles Parker: Reacted to "It would be helpfu..." with 👍

04:06:35 Terri Standish-Kuon, Ph.D.: Replying to "Could staff please s..."

Thank you, Rathi; this is of interest across all clusters.

04:09:33 Rathi Sudhakara: Replying to "what is the percentage of adult learners with no credit who have successfully completed their programs with their coaches? also, what is the age range of these adult learners?"

This is a new pilot, Miles. We are in the process of identifying potential people in the community around Clover Park and CWU who are interested in pursuing post sec education. We will then connect them to coaches.

Adult age range is 25-44, but I will confirm who we are targeting through this pilot. Happy to meet to share more if you are interested.

04:10:34 Rathi Sudhakara: Reacted to "Thank you, Rathi; this is of interest across all clusters." with ❤️

04:17:09 Ami Magisos: Replying to "Could staff please share with Council members which work stream items in pages 33-38 are related to specific grantor (outside funding) objectives?"

@Terri Standish-Kuon, Ph.D. For the Basic Needs Strategy Cluster, the majority of our priorities this year will be advanced without additional external funding. One exception is our Basic Needs Navigation cohort, where we are seeking some national and regional funding supports.

04:17:26 Miles Parker: Reacted to "This is a new pilo..." with 👍

04:17:52 Miles Parker: Replying to "what is the percen..."

that would be great. would love to learn more.

04:19:48 Terri Standish-Kuon, Ph.D.: Replying to "Could staff please s..."

Appreciate this, @Ami. If the policy team could annotate the SAP for an overall look, that would be helpful.

04:20:36 Abby Chien she/her | WSAC: Replying to "Could staff please share with Council members which work stream items in pages 33-38 are related to specific grantor (outside funding) objectives?"

Hi @Terri Standish-Kuon, Ph.D., for completion: the Complete College America cohort is supported by funding from Gates, and the Holistic Advising work is supported by SHEEO with outside funding from MDRC. Universal Transfer Explorer is supported by ITHAKA S+R (with a variety of funders across the board), and the ACPL cohort "constellation" is supported by Student Ready Strategies. The other initiatives, for the most part, do not have outside funding

04:21:32 Abby Chien she/her | WSAC: Reacted to "Appreciate this, @Ami. If the policy team could annotate the SAP for an overall look, that would be helpful." with 👍🏽

04:23:12 Terri Standish-Kuon, Ph.D.: Replying to "Could staff please s..."

Thanks, @Abby. Amy Keltner, could the whole policy team please aggregate and share this information with the Council? Thanks!

04:29:54 Rathi Sudhakara: Reacted to "Appreciate this, @Ami. If the policy team could annotate the SAP for an overall look, that would be helpful." with 👍🏽

04:32:07 Amy Keltner: @Terri Standish-Kuon, Ph.D. We will provide a picture of where grantors are supporting SAP priorities.

04:33:01 Terri Standish-Kuon, Ph.D.: Is there an opportunity via the SAP to better center/make/raise awareness of the case for the value of higher education to set the stage for possible future opportunities? How can we champion what works (e.g., financial aid)?

04:52:25 Terri Standish-Kuon, Ph.D.: Here are stories from students like the Washington College Grant recipients who will see their aid cut: https://vimeo.com/1182058689

05:37:10 Grace Nelson: Welcome back everyone, please introduce yourself when you get a chance. Thank you!

05:37:54 Kimberly Hetrick: Good afternoon! Kimberly Hetrick, WSAC, Career Connect WA and WA Jobs Initiative

05:38:28 Terri Standish-Kuon, Ph.D.: Hello! I am Council member Terri Standish-Kuon, and I serve on behalf of students and the Independent Colleges of Washington for not-for-profit, independent colleges and universities.

05:38:50 Rosalind Sylvester: Hello! Rosalind Sylvester- Olympic Peninsula YMCA- CBO part of Olympic Peninsula Resource Co-Ops (RCG recipient)

05:38:52 Shannon Peterson: Hello, Shannon Peterson, WSAC, Washington Jobs Initiative Grant Manager

05:38:58 Krista Francis, Peninsula College: Hello everyone, Krista Francis, Peninsula College and Olympic Peninsula Resource CO-OP.

05:39:04 Katie Tallman (she, her) | WSAC: Good afternoon! Katie Tallman, WSAC Communications

05:40:57 Caitlin Sackett: Hello Everyone - Cat North, Caitlin Sackett & Anna Forrestal, Peninsula College - East Jefferson County and Olympic Peninsula Resource CO-OP

05:45:17 Terri Standish-Kuon, Ph.D.: Abby and Hannah, how many applications (and which regions) were never funded? I am trying to get a sense of where we encouraged effort but where partners did not receive support?

06:45:08 Terri Standish-Kuon, Ph.D.: For resources and connections to counselors at Independent Colleges of Washington campuses: Supporting Students in Transfer.

06:50:22 Terri Standish-Kuon, Ph.D.: For students considering transferring, here are curated links to resources at each campus, including equivalencies: Campus Visits, e.g.: Transfer Students | Gonzaga University, Transfer Students | Heritage University, Transfer | PLU, Transfer Students (Undergrad) | Saint Martin's University, Transfer Students (SPU), ...

06:50:39 Terri Standish-Kuon, Ph.D.: Replying to "For students conside..."

Transfer Admissions | Seattle University, Transfer | University of Puget Sound, Transfer Students | Whitman College, and Transfer Students | Whitworth University

06:50:48 Monica "Monyu" Yu: Reacted to "For students consi..." with 👍

06:55:58 Terri Standish-Kuon, Ph.D.: @Abby Chien she/her ...

[Full message cannot be displayed on this version]

07:06:45 Cassie Walizer | CCA: WSAC, and in particular Abby, have been phenomenal partners in this CCA Accelerator work.

07:08:00 Abby Chien she/her | WSAC: Reacted to "WSAC, and in particular Abby, have been phenomenal partners in this CCA Accelerator work." with 💖

07:08:15 Abby Chien she/her | WSAC: Reacted to "@Abby Chien she/her ..." with 👍🏽

07:12:24 Ami Magisos: Reacted to "WSAC, and in particular Abby, have been phenomenal partners in this CCA Accelerator work." with 💖