

## **WEIAOB Meeting Minutes**

September 27, 2023

2:00 p.m.

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

### **Members Attending (alphabetical by last name):**

Steven Ashby, Jane Broom, Ruben Flores, Charles Knutson, William Lyne, Michael Meotti, Eleni Papadakis, Sen. Emily Randall, Mark Riker, and Dr. Terri Standish-Kuon.

### **Staff attending (alphabetical by last name):**

Joel Anderson, Heather Hudson, Terri McReynolds, and Michael Meotti.

### **Meeting called to order at 2:05 p.m.**

### **Consent Agenda**

Motion made to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Motion seconded.

Motion carried.

### **Approval of the Minutes**

Motion made to approve the January WEIAOB Meeting Minutes.

Motion seconded.

Motion carried.

### **Explanation of New WEIAOB Staffing Plan**

**Presenter:** Michael Meotti, Heather Hudson

- WSAC intends to support WEIAOB members and their intention to issue recommendations on how funds from WEIA should be spent to support higher education in Washington state.
- Joel Anderson recently joined WSAC and will be the Board's main point of contact moving forward.

### **WEIA Fund and 2023–25 Operating Budget Presentation**

**Presenter:** Michael Meotti

- WEIA is currently in a strong position and WSAC is working on translating account statements into summary materials that are easier to understand.
- In the prior biennium (2021–23) WEIA brought in approximately \$750 million. Projected revenues for the 2023–25 biennium are currently over \$800 million and may reach \$840 million. By the end of Fiscal Year (FY) 2024, WEIA will have an ending balance of over \$200 million. This balance is growing each year at a rate that is slightly faster than anticipated.
- WSAC is developing templates that can be updated each year for the WEIAOB to better understand the current financial position of WEIA.

**Comments & Questions:**

- **Does WEIA have an existing balance of \$200 million right now or would this be true by the end of FY2024?**
    - WEIA has an existing balance of roughly \$200 million right now and this number is expected to stay the same throughout the 2023–25 biennium. However, this projection could change based on future decisions made by the legislature in the 2024 supplemental budget.
  - **Is the calculation of WEIA’s \$200 million existing balance inclusive of new information from the Economic and Revenue Forecast Council (ERFC)’s September 2023 revenue forecast?**
    - Yes, the numbers discussed during today’s meeting are inclusive of the most recent ERFC forecast.
  - **Is WEIA’s \$200 million existing balance accounted for by an increase in revenue, decreases in enrollment and Washington College Grant utilization, or other factors?**
    - The answer to this question is not clear because projected revenues and expenditures change periodically. There have been some upticks in rates of FAFSA completion and utilization, but the financial implications of these shifts are modest in comparison to the total WEIA balance.
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**Discussion: Budget/Policy Proposals and Recommendations to Governor**

**Presenter:** Heather Hudson, Ruben Flores, Paul Francis, Dr. Terri Standish-Kuon, Joel Anderson

**Material:** [2024 Budget/Policy Proposals Submitted to WEIAOB](#)

**Introduction:** Presentation of 2024 budget and policy proposals from the Council of Presidents, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, Independent Colleges of Washington, and Washington Student Achievement Council to the WEIAOB for consideration.

**Discussion:** Board members have expressed continued interest in issuing recommendations to the Governor’s office and state legislature for how WEIA funds should be spent. This meeting is the first opportunity to discuss 2024 budget and policy proposals with the Board and the discussion will continue during the next meeting in January 2024.

**Presentation #1: Ruben Flores, Executive Director, Council of Presidents (COP)**

- COP compiled materials from their member institutions, which all submit individual budget requests. The requests were put into three categories: “advance access to college and support student success to completion” (\$9.04 million), “high demand degrees and enrollments to meet workforce job needs” (\$12.51 million), and “foundational strategic investments” (\$17.1 million).
- Central Washington University is requesting funding to help address student basic needs insecurity and expand access to College in the High School programs.
- Most of the member institutions’ requests are meant to combat declines in enrollment and better meet Washington state’s workforce needs.
- Eastern Washington University is requesting funding to support a dental hygiene program. Member institutions are continuously talking to industry leaders about existing workforce needs.

- Member institutions have made foundational requests for funding to address other needs like campus security and maintenance costs.

#### Comments & Questions:

- **Which foundational investments should come from WEIA as opposed to the General Fund? How do we differentiate between these?**
  - WEIA funds are explicitly for higher education use and should not be expected to supplement unrelated operating budget needs.
  - WEIA has expanded in recent years. COP is letting legislators make decisions about what costs can and should be covered by WEIA.
  - Some Board members expressed a desire to see WEIA funds used only for costs that are explicitly related to higher education.
- **Are the budget requests being presented only for funds from WEIA or all potential accounts?**
  - All potential accounts. Colleges and universities are unable to specifically request that investments come out of WEIA. This decision is up to the state legislature.
- **There is a significant need for more STEM and computer science degrees in Washington state.**

Transition to presentation #2.

#### **Presentation #2: Paul Francis, Executive Director, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC)**

- SBCTC is requesting \$9 million to create new BS in Computer Science degree programs and help address shortages in the computer science workforce. This proposal is closely aligned with SBCTC's goal to improve educational equity in Washington state.
- SBCTC's second request is for \$600,000 to expand access to open educational resources. Textbook costs are currently a large burden for community and technical college (CTC) students. This proposal would help alleviate these costs for many CTC students.

#### Comments & Questions:

- **Investing in BS in Computer Science degree programs is important to improving equity gaps in STEM and computer science fields. One Board member expressed interest in having the Board formally recommend this proposal to the Governor's office and state legislature.**
- **When may the Board make official recommendations about how WEIA funds should be spent?**
  - The Board can make recommendations now as well as during its next meeting in January 2024. At that time, members will have new economic projections and a better understanding of the Governor's proposed 2024 supplemental budget.

Transition to presentation #3.

#### **Presentation #3: Dr. Terri Standish-Kuon, President and CEO, Independent Colleges of Washington (ICW)**

- Private colleges and universities in Washington award roughly 20% of all baccalaureate degrees across the state.

- When WEIA was created, private college and university students started receiving a lower amount as their maximum possible Washington College Grant (WA Grant) award. However, the state legislature provided flexibility for an inflationary adjustment to be made to the award amounts. ICW wants students at private colleges and universities to be eligible for the maximum WA Grant award (costing roughly \$8.5 million per biennium) and to have the inflationary adjustment for WA Grant awards fully funded (costing slightly less than \$2 million per biennium).
- Computer science degrees are popular at private colleges and universities.

**Comments & Questions:** None.

Transition to presentation #4.

#### **Presentation #4: Joel Anderson, Assistant Director of Policy and Planning, Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC)**

- WSAC wants to expand the State Work Study (SWS) program and has seen evidence to suggest that near-peer mentorship programs provide effective support to high school students who are navigating postsecondary pathways. This expansion would waive the salary match requirement for public and nonprofit employers that are facilitating both near-peer mentorship programs and other forms of college access and readiness work.
- WSAC is requesting \$1.5 million for this proposal and hopes to add up to 300 students to the SWS program.
- WSAC's second request is for \$1.25 million to expand the use of Otterbot, an artificial intelligence-based texting tool, to walk College Bound students through postsecondary pathway application processes. Otterbot is currently used with these students starting in 11th grade. This proposal would enable WSAC to use the tool with College Bound students starting in late middle school.

**Comments & Questions:**

- **Multiple Board members expressed support for the Otterbot proposal.**
  - WSAC received a grant from the Capital One Foundation to fund the use of Otterbot with College Bound students and has seen positive outcomes from its use.
- **The presentations during the meeting have shown that many pilots and testing phases have been implemented to demonstrate the effectiveness of strategies to improve students' success in postsecondary pathways.**
- **How can the Board make effective recommendations and embrace successful strategies to improve students' success in postsecondary pathways?**
  - WEIA funds don't have to be defended like money in other state accounts since they are protected for covering higher education costs.
  - It is important to advocate for more higher education spending in the future to expand postsecondary pathways and other career-based supports for students. The last supplemental budget (2022) grew by over 8% while higher education spending only grew by roughly 3.1%.

- It feels counterintuitive for Washington state to have one of the most robust and equitable state financial aid networks but spend less on higher education than many other states across the country.
- Advocates in the environmental community often coalesce around 3–4 core goals to ensure that key priorities are achieved. The Board should consider taking a similar approach to refine its goals and recommendations to the Governor’s office and state legislature.
- **A co-chair suggested that the Board was not ready to vote on recommendations at this time. The Board engaged in a brief discussion and agreed that recommendations should be made at the next meeting in January 2024. Multiple Board members noted that this would allow them to discuss the presentations heard today with their respective stakeholder groups.**
- **Board members discussed the submission of their annual report, which has not yet been submitted for 2023. An annual deadline in December was mentioned, but a co-chair clarified that the report is statutorily due by August 1 of each year.**
  - The Board discussed whether the annual report should be submitted in December instead to better suit the timeline by which state agencies submit budget and policy requests to the Governor’s office for review. Multiple Board members noted that submitting the annual report in December would not provide state legislators with enough time to read it and act on its contents during the following legislative session.
  - Both COP and SBCTC produce annual reports on how WEIA funds are used by their member institutions. WSAC wants to help facilitate simultaneous conversations about the effectiveness of past WEIA investments and future recommendations for how WEIA funds should be spent.
  - A co-chair suggested that the Board form a small working group to determine the best path toward changing the due date for the annual report. The Board engaged in a brief discussion, agreed with this idea, and expressed interest in requesting an extension to submit the 2023 annual report by December 31, 2023.

### **Extending the Submission Deadline for the 2023 WEIAOB Report**

Motion made to request a deadline extension until December 31, 2023, from Sen. Randall and Rep. Slatter for submitting the 2023 WEIAOB report.

Motion seconded.

Motion carried.

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### **Review and Adoption of 2024 Meeting Timeline**

**Presenter:** Joel Anderson

**Material:** [WEIAOB 2023–24 Meeting Timeline](#)

**Introduction:** Presentation of a tentative 2024 WEIAOB meeting timeline.

- The next WEIAOB meeting will be hosted on Thursday, January 4, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., on Zoom.
- Moving forward, WSAC intends to maintain a quarterly meeting schedule for the Board with meetings in January, April, June, and September of each year.

- The January 2024 meeting will include more time to consider budget and policy proposals from stakeholders as a Board and issue recommendations to the state legislature on how to spend WEIA funds.
  - A Board member expressed interest in adding a discussion of WSAC's data dashboards to the agenda for this meeting.
- The April 2024 meeting will include a discussion of results from the 2024 legislative session and a review of new reports on past WEIA investments.
- The June 2024 meeting will include a review of WEIA revenues and expenditures as well as a discussion of the Board's general strategy for FY2025.
- The September 2024 meeting will include a discussion of budget and policy proposals from stakeholders for the 2025 legislative session, an opportunity to approve recommendations for the Governor's office, the approval of the Board's annual report, and the adoption of a 2025 Board meeting timeline.
- This meeting schedule aligns with state budget drafting timelines throughout the year.
- The Board currently has four total vacancies: two for business representatives and two for students (one from a four-year institution of higher education and one from a community or technical college). Both WSAC and the Governor's office are aware of these vacancies.

See Appendix

**Meeting Adjourned:** 3:59 p.m.

## Appendix A

### TVW meeting recording 9-27-2023

## Appendix B

14:08:35 From Karen Strickland To Everyone:

Karen Strickland, AFT Washington President. Good afternoon.

14:08:41 From Jolenta Coleman-Bush To Everyone:

Good afternoon, Jolenta Coleman-Bush, Microsoft

14:08:56 From Mike Burgess To Everyone:

Mike Burgess - Lobbyist ICW

14:09:35 From Alicia Kinne-Clawson To Everyone:

Alicia Kinne-Clawson, nonpartisan staff to Senate Higher Ed and Workforce Development committee

14:09:39 From Stephanie Winner To Everyone:

Stephanie Winner, Operating Budget - SBCTC

14:09:40 From Joel Anderson (he/him) | WSAC To Everyone:

Meeting agenda: <https://wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/9-27-2023%20WEIAOB%20Meeting%20Agenda.pdf>

14:09:53 From Carolina Landa To Everyone:

Hello all, Carolina Landa- Policy Analyst at HDC assigned to the PEW committee

14:10:02 From Joel Anderson (he/him) | WSAC To Everyone:

January 2023 meeting minutes (from WTB): <https://wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/1-23-2023%20WEIAOB%20Meeting%20Minutes%20%28from%20WTB%29.pdf>

14:10:28 From Kate Henry To Everyone:

Kate Henry, nonpartisan staff from OPR for the House Appropriations higher education portfolio

14:11:57 From Michele Alishahi To Everyone:

Michele Alishahi, nonpartisan staff for Senate Ways and Means, higher education portfolio

14:12:01 From Eleni Papadakis To Everyone:

Thank you for the kind words, Jane. It was quite a start-up adventure. I've appreciated your gracious leadership, and am appreciative for the warm hand-off of this Board to our WSAC friends,

14:13:44 From Ramona Nabors To Everyone:

Ramona Nabors, Budget Advisor to the Governor-Higher Education for OFM.

14:25:40 From Jane Broom To Everyone:

As a reminder, our principles for this fund are:

14:30:36 From Joel Anderson (he/him) | WSAC To Everyone:

Summary of proposals: <https://wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/9-27-2023%20WEIAOB%202024%20Budget%20%26%20Policy%20Proposals%20Summary.pdf>

14:30:53 From Joel Anderson (he/him) | WSAC To Everyone:

Full packet of proposals: <https://wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/9-27-2023%20WEIAOB%20All%202024%20Budget%20%26%20Policy%20Proposals.pdf>

14:37:24 From Jane Broom To Everyone:

WEIA Investment Principles

1. Help achieve the goal that 70% of students in each cohort of Washington high school graduates complete a postsecondary credential by age 26.

2. Provide support for equitable educational access and economic outcomes for systemically underserved students.

3. Help Washington businesses fill the jobs of the future with qualified, Washington student's including current workforce.

4. Improve statewide systems and/or test innovative approaches that can be replicated across institutions.

14:52:55 From Paul Francis To Everyone:

<https://www.sbctc.edu/resources/documents/colleges-staff/programs-services/legislative-outreach/2024/2024-operating-request.pdf>

15:00:24 From Paul Francis To Everyone:

Washington community, technical college system wins international open education award -

<https://www.sbctc.edu/blogs/news-releases/2023/oer-excellence-award>

15:33:13 From Paul Francis To Everyone:

FYI - To Eleni's point, the SBCTC issues a report every year on our funded WEIA investments. Here's our 2022 report. Our 2023 report will be available later this fall.

<https://www.sbctc.edu/resources/documents/colleges-staff/programs-services/legislative-outreach/weia-report.pdf>

15:37:54 From Heather Hudson To Everyone:

I'm stealing that Jane!

15:41:33 From Paul Francis To Everyone:

Here's the relevant RCW: <https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=28B.77.310>

15:43:02 From Ruben Flores To Everyone:

Yes, and DP's are not due until mid September.

15:53:42 From Michael Meotti To Everyone:

we'll change the heading to WEIA Board Rhythm of Business 😊