

February 7, 2008

TO: Admissions and Registration Council

FROM: Ronelle Funk, Policy Associate – Student Services
Washington State Board for Community & Technical Colleges

RE: Winter 2008 State Board Report

Happy New Year! I hope that 2008 will be a great year for you and your programs. The legislative session began on January 14th and the amount of activity for a short session has been tremendous. Higher education issues this session include: capital funding, technology, Worker Retraining and Running Start deficits, emergency preparedness, and campus child care.

Each week during session the State Board is tracking approximately 100 bills in both the House and Senate. To see a complete summary of bill status reports, Legislative News, or one-page issue summaries visit the SBCTC legislative information Web site at:

http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/l_index.aspx

SBCTC Supplemental Budget Request

Reauthorize 2003 “Building Washington’s Future Act” aka the Gardner-Evans-Locke Higher Education Bonds (\$1.0 billion)

The \$740 million in bond authority authorized in 2003 for capital funding projects has been fully committed. Statutory reauthorization is necessary now to ensure continues adequate capital funding for higher education – two-year and four-year institutions. An increase of \$1.0 billion over the next three biennia (three, two year increments), recognizes the increased cost of construction inflation in order to maintain the purchasing power of the initial allocation. An increased capacity will address new opportunities in high demand fields to respond to the needs of the state’s employers, and it will also allow our public higher education institutions to remain competitive in the global economy.

New Equipment and Online Library Resources (\$7.5 million)

Colleges often receive state funds to equip new buildings but there is no source of money to replace outdated equipment on a routine cycle. Funding for the replacement of equipment would allow students in high demand workforce programs to learn essential skills on current equipment, allowing employers to hire workers who are prepared to add immediate value to our state’s businesses.

Students also need online resources to be prepared for future jobs and to compete in the global economy. Two-year college students deserve to have modern online library references and research

materials to prepare for their careers, or transfer to four-year colleges and universities. \$1.5 million would allow the two year colleges to access the same electronic journals as the four-year colleges and universities.

Encourage Student Success with Better Support for Running Start Students (\$7 million)

As the Running Start program has grown, the funding gap between what the colleges receive from school districts, and the cost of providing instruction and student services has tripled from \$900 to \$3,000 per FTE. Statewide, the gap in funding has created an annual deficit of nearly \$35 million. Colleges would have a clearer representation of their state enrollment targets if they counted the .4 FTES portion not covered by the K-12 reimbursement.

Support a Strong Economy by Bolstering the Worker Retraining Program (\$5.7 million)

Since 1997, the funding for 6,200 Worker Retraining FTES has stayed stagnant, without an adjustment for inflation. In that time, tuition has increased 84 percent, inflation was 20 percent, and legislative support for other college programs has increased 42 percent. While an undisputed success, the program needs more support for student financial aid and college instruction to make it whole.

Keep Students Safer with Equipment and Planning for Campus Safety (\$8.5 million, House Bill 2507, House Bill 2648/Senate Bill 6328)

The 34 community and technical colleges across the state are vulnerable to exposure to hazardous materials, natural disasters and campus violence. Colleges need to know where they are most at risk. Funding would help conduct thorough assessments of campus facilities and surrounding areas to determine potential threats and campus vulnerabilities.

Colleges need to work with local first responders to create new response plans and then train employees to respond in a crisis. Colleges will conduct crisis training exercises, lockdown and evacuation drills. The colleges need to upgrade and extend their ability to warn students and employees on and off campus. Resources are needed for all colleges to deploy a variety of communications tools in an emergency.

Update on Higher Education Issues of Interest this Session

2007-08 Opportunity Grant Program

In 2006, the Washington State Legislature appropriated \$4 million to the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges to create the Opportunity Grant pilot program. The 10 pilot programs showed excellent results with 73 percent retention and approximately 843 low-income students participating in training for high-wage, high-demand career pathways.

In 2007, the Legislature expanded the Opportunity Grant program by \$7.5 million for a total of \$11.5 million per year for all 34 community and technical colleges. In 2007-08 the Opportunity Grant program expects to serve 2,000 full-time equivalent students (FTES) or approximately 4,000 full-time and part-time students.

Eligible students may receive funds to cover tuition/mandatory fees for 45 credits and up to \$1,000 for books and supplies for per year. Support services such as tutoring, career advising, college success classes, emergency child care, and emergency transportation are also part of the Opportunity Grant program. The program also includes the Opportunity Grant Partnership Program administered by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTECB). The partnership program connects

Opportunity Grant students with industry mentors, internships, and relevant job experience. The goals are enhancing student retention, completion, and transition to work.

This year, several legislators requested support documentation for the expansion of the Opportunity Grant program and there is a discussion about changing the budget proviso to increase the program between \$5 and \$10 million. This could potentially double the current capacity to approximately 4,000 FTE or 8,000 headcount.

For more information, visit the web page: http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/s_opportunitygrants.aspx or contact, Ronelle Funk, Policy Associate – Student Services, rfunk@sbctc.edu, or 360.704.4397.

Student Achievement Initiative

The Student Achievement Initiative is a statewide initiative within the community and technical college system to develop an incentive system that rewards colleges for improving student achievement. It came about in response to one of the three goals of the State Board's 10-year system direction, "Achieve increased educational attainment for all residents across the state." This is the system's response to addressing that goal. Colleges are primarily to be measured on improving preparation for college level courses, building to a year of college credit, completing college level math, completing certificates, degrees, and apprenticeship training. See this link for more information: http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/e_studentachievement.aspx.

Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST)

Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) pairs English as a second language (ESL) / adult basic education (ABE) instructors with professional-technical instructors in the classroom to provide students with literacy education and workforce skills at the same time. I-BEST challenges the traditional notion that students must first complete all levels of basic education before they can begin workforce training. See this link for more information: http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/e_studentsuccess.aspx.

Campus Child Care (House Bill 2582/Senate Bill 6730)

In 1999, the Legislature established two accounts for student child care matching grants for institutions of higher education. The Higher Education Coordinating Board manages the account for four-year colleges and universities and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges manages the account for the two-year college system.

Since then, the Legislature has appropriated \$50,000 each year of the biennium to the State Board to award competitive grants for child care. These grants must be matched by the college and student body and be used to expand programs that address the need for high quality, accessible and affordable child care for students.

For the 2007-09 biennium, Green River Community College, South Seattle Community College, Skagit Valley College, Bellevue Community College and Edmonds Community College received Child Care Matching Grant awards to increase access.

House Bill 2582, sponsored by Rep. Mary Helen Roberts, D-Edmonds, and Senate Bill 6730, sponsored by Sen. Derek Kilmer, D-Gig Harbor, provide additional flexibility in how to administer the matching grant

program to meet local needs, and clear legislative intent and program goals to help shape how the funds will be spent – aligned with the state goals for increasing access to affordable, quality child care.

Life Transitions Program (House Bill 3065)

In 2009, the Displaced Homemaker Program will be celebrating 30 years of successfully helping transitioning homemakers get a job or enter higher education. This short-term navigation program has two primary goals – to help transitioning homemakers enter the workforce or enter higher education to get the education and training they need to be self-sufficient.

While in the program, participants identify their transferable skills, skills gaps, career goals, as well as develop strategies to deal with barriers to their success (such as financial management, health problems, child care issues, etc.). The program is the perfect complement to job skills training (such as the Worker Retraining Program or Opportunity Grant program) because participants are developing the soft skills necessary to not only enter the job market successfully, but continue to be successful once they have a job. The changes to the RCW focus on expanding eligibility and access to the program, and will provide additional flexibility in administering the program.

Passport to College – Foster Care Initiatives

The new Passport to College Promise program, administered by the Higher Education Coordinating Board, serves current and former foster youth. It creates a significant student scholarship, as much as \$6,900 per year. It also offers colleges an incentive grant tied to Passport student performance, in exchange for agreeing to provide a certain level of support to these youth. Next year, the grant is budgeted to be about \$500 per student per quarter. If your institution needs more information, or if you have any questions, please contact Dawn McAferty, Passport Program Manager at the HECB, at 360-753-7846 or e-mail dawnc@hecb.wa.gov. For a great website featuring access and success for foster youth go to: www.independence.wa.gov.

DVR/DSB/PIHE Collaborative Agreement

Last October, a new Interagency Agreement (IA) was signed by the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), the Department of Service for the Blind (DSB), and public institutions of higher education (PIHE) regarding the division of responsibilities for serving clients who are also higher education students. In a previous agreement from 2000, the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) found compliance issues regarding financial responsibility, dispute resolution, reimbursement, and coordination of services. The new agreement addresses these issues and states that DVR and DSB will share extraordinary accommodations cost. The agreement also calls for the creation of a worksheet that will provide guidance on the reimbursement threshold per student.