

Board members focus on improving access, success at August planning retreat

Members of the Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board held a retreat Aug. 14-15 in Seattle to discuss the development of the new Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education.

Facilitated by David Longanecker, executive director of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE), the retreat was designed to help Board members focus on key challenges and issues related to the plan.

During the discussion, two broad challenges emerged: 1) the need to ensure greater access/success, not just in higher education but throughout P20; and, 2) the need to support statewide economic development more strategically.

Board members have met with higher education policy experts, legislators, demographers, students, school administrators, technologists, diversity advocates, the business community and other stakeholders during the last six months to gain information and perspective about the plan.

What higher education *must* do

Longanecker said higher education nationwide is moving away from a conversation of what is *right* to do, to a discussion about what it *must* do, to secure a stable and progressive society in the 21st century.

"There are economic and social imperatives that require us to move from process to outcomes," he said. We need more focus on accountability.

Ann Daley, HECB executive director, said higher education and the state must find ways to ensure growing numbers of students from under-represented groups complete high school and continue successfully to higher education.

Teacher education target

Daley has suggested that higher education and the state should set a target of becoming the nation's top state for teacher education in the next decade, as a way of improving K-12 student performance.

"Such an initiative would make full use of higher education's expertise and leadership while advancing the goal of student success throughout P20," she said.

Postsecondary institutions also need to be held increasingly responsible for achieving greater rates of student success as measured by retention rates, transfer rates, progress to degree rates, and numbers of degrees and certificates produced, she said.

Focus on students

Many participants agreed that what is missing in Washington is a sense of urgency about higher education.

Board members listed a set of challenges and opportunities for the

state's higher education institutions including:

- Greater emphasis on educating children to beyond the level of their parents – especially first-generation college students and those from under-represented groups.
- The need to prepare K-12 students to do college work without the need for remediation.
- Balancing public and institutional interests and using data to measure success.
- Strengthening public perceptions about the quality of the regional and branch institutions.
- Developing a P20 approach through clear standards/expectations; feedback loops; greater emphasis on early learning; improved communication with parents; and teacher/leadership training.
- Providing financial incentives for specific goals... increased success among under-represented students... degree production... parent 'awareness' programs completed.
- Providing incentives for families to save, students to take college prep courses, and expansion of programs such as GEAR UP.

The HECB will hold a meeting with its Advisory Council on September 27, at WSU Tri-Cities. A working outline for the strategic plan will be submitted for review at that time.

The plan must be completed by the Board in December 2007, so it can be submitted to the 2008 Legislature for review and approval. To read a copy of the notes from the August retreat go to: [Board Update - August 2007](#).

HECB seeking Deputy Director for Policy, Planning, Research

The Higher Education Coordinating Board is accepting applications for the position of Deputy Director for Policy, Planning and Research.

The new deputy will work with the agency director, the Legislature, and college and university professionals to develop state higher education policy and lead research and analysis activities aimed at ensuring that higher education in Washington is accessible, affordable and accountable.

Resumes should be submitted to the HECB by September 17. Read more at: [Deputy Director for Policy, Planning, Research](#)

Public meetings being scheduled to discuss master plan with key stakeholders, community groups

Ann Daley and Board members will visit Washington cities in October and November to hold discussions with stakeholders and the public about the proposed content of the strategic master plan, prior to preparing a final draft in November.

Public forums will be held in several cities during the month. A schedule is being developed.

Additional meetings with state education organizations, editorial boards, post-secondary institutions, and civic and business groups also are being scheduled.

The Board also will hold meetings: **Sept. 27** in Tri-Cities; **Oct. 25** in Vancouver; **Nov. 15** in Des Moines; and Dec. 13 in Olympia. For a complete schedule see: [HECB meeting calendar](#)