

SUMMARY OF BOARD PANEL DISCUSSIONS February 23, 2007

Following is a summary of the key points raised in the panel discussions at the February Board meeting.

Bill Grinstein – HECB Chair

Board Chair Bill Grinstein said the master planning process would be based on four underlying principles: transparency, engagement, participation and a strong sense of outcomes and goals.

With 15 public institutions now authorized to grant bachelor's degrees, it is expected the state's higher education institutions will continue to focus on the important issues of access, affordability and excellence identified in past master plans.

The new plan also must address how to better prepare students for participation in post-secondary education. The full engagement of the legislative and executive branches will be sought as the plan's major strategies are developed.

LEGISLATORS

Rep. Deb Wallace

- This is precisely the right time to be addressing these issues.
- World trade plays a large role in our state's economy. We are a global economy state. We must plan to participate in the emerging global economy or we will be left behind.
- If the goal is to educate more students to higher levels, technology (distance education) must play an increasingly important part in the delivery of post-secondary education.

- 20-year planning parameters have been proposed for higher education to encourage the legislature to stay focused on the important priorities.
- Increased state support, financial aid and tuition policy are the fundamental components of increasing access. Future policy must address these issues strategically.
- Accountability for meeting long-range goals is an essential component of a strategic planning process.
- Workforce issues must be addressed through more comprehensive and strategic planning.
- The actual cost of education needs to be accurately measured so we can make decisions about how to invest in the future.
- Accurate capacity studies are needed that incorporate distance learning technology as a solution to future demand for post-secondary education.

Sen. Paull Shin

- Higher education is about preparing students for their future...for our future.
- Any person is 'teachable' if you make the investment. Students should not be barred from participating in post-secondary education because they cannot afford it.
- Affordability, access and accountability are essential.
- A stable source of funding is critical in meeting education needs.

- Political stability comes from economic stability.
- In the 21st century we are facing great challenges. Increased global competition offers us the opportunity to learn from other countries...as they learn from us.
- Substantial investment is needed across all education sectors – early learning to higher education.
- Student success has to become a top priority.
- The time has come to end the notion of right and wrong. We need to work together.

EDUCATION LEADERS

Terry Bergeson – Superintendent of Public Instruction

- K-12 has undergone a substantial change in the last 12 years beginning with the education reform act passed in 1993.
- Washington Learns is *education reform stage two*.
- It takes a huge investment to bring kids (from widely divergent backgrounds) up to a level playing field in kindergarten.
- Whatever detail of Washington Learns we are talking about, a different paradigm is needed to take us to the next level.
- We all have to work together on these issues. We need a more powerful dialogue.
- We need to look at learning from the viewpoint of the learner.

- The goal line needs to be shifted from simply passing the 10th grade WASL to the use of the test as a building block for further education and work.

Deb Merle – Governor’s Higher Education Policy Adviser

- Many of the 2004 master plan recommendations found their way into legislation.
- Both the HECB and Washington Learns have emphasized we need to educate more students at higher levels.
- CEOs tell us their number one need is qualified workers.
- Our *number one need* is an ongoing funding policy that is predictable and that links state support to the Global Challenge State benchmarks.
- Budget provisos need to be made on the basis of expected results in degree attainment, especially in the area of high-demand skill sets.
- More attention to alternate course delivery systems is needed; addressing the needs of place-bound students.
- A new focus is needed to help us determine how today’s students learn.
- Greater K-12 alignment with post-secondary education is needed - the P20 Council will improve this.
- Simplifying financial aid programs.
- Greater transparency and improved public/private partnerships.

Denny Heck – Washington Learns Higher Ed

- Business cycles come and go. Money here today will almost certainly not be available in the future.
- The Governor's Rainy Day fund is a start toward providing a more stable funding base for education. But more focus will be needed.
- Unprecedented funding for higher education this session, particularly for high-demand program development.
- Master plan can help knit together more closely. Past dialogue has centered too much on funding the priorities of separate systems.
- We need to do a better job of serving the under-served. If we don't do it we will suffer dire economic consequences. It is wrong to leave people behind. It is stupid to do it when the state is growing.

Jone Bosworth – Department of Early Learning

- We need to encourage and support lifelong learning by forging better partnerships among ourselves and the communities we serve.
- We have to understand that the commitment we must make is from birth onward...all the way through post-secondary education and into the work environment as well.
- Early learning studies show that you must reach kids with high-quality programs before they are five or they will not be prepared to succeed in the education system.
- We need a high-quality rating system to establish benchmarks for early learning.

- We need financial incentives to increase quality.
- We need to encourage a constant dialogue with kindergarten teachers.
- We need to focus on regions of the state with the greatest need.
- Education is a four-letter word: HOPE

Roberta Greene – HECB Board Member

The state has caused the problem of fighting over resources that has had us sneaking around corners to find funding. I applaud the effort to make a difference and change higher education by focusing more on the key transition points. We need to do a better job and we have the right people in the room to move ahead. We need predictability, not vagueness.

The GET program is a good investment for many...but there are far too many who cannot afford to purchase GET units. A lot of folks simply can't do it. We don't need a tuition policy; we need a funding policy. And we need greater focus on parental help and guidance.

Andy Bodman – Western Washington Provost

The state should look to Gov. Locke's "Priorities of Government" initiative regarding its commitment to education: "Education is the best possible investment the state can make."

- We need to "be direct" about state goals for education:
 - Access to high-quality education
 - Efficiency throughout K-12, community colleges, four-year institutions

- Affordability – state policy should be linked together with institutions
- We need to target state resources – who gets how much?
- We need accountability
- **Three challenges:**
 - The “attainment gap” – number of degrees
 - The achievement gap – consider the entire pipeline; higher ed comes at the end (20% of 12th grade class are students of color – 33.3% of 1st grade class are students of color – which will cause the participation rate to decline even more)
 - The funding gap
- Master Plan must respond to public pressure for every student to succeed.
- We need a GET program for lower-income students; the state should purchase units now.
- The 2004 master plan emphasized the private benefits of public education – we need to highlight the public benefits. The higher education system is for the students.

Charlie Earl – SBCTC Executive Director

- Demand is for global & local knowledge, skills and understanding.
- The system must be centered on educational need.
- Demand is for global & local knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Demographic changes affect system, knowledge and skills are declining.

- We need to increase participation rates across all sectors – colleges and universities need to be perceived as relevant.
- Need to focus on student success (affordability), student attainment (helping each student go further), access (we need to do more outreach to attract students).

Don Bennett – WTECB Acting Director

- We need to have an inclusive discussion about “what do we mean by ‘higher education’” – create a more inclusive definition.
- Adults in the workforce also need to be connected to the pipeline.
- We need to “think vertically.”
- There are many entry points for education; all are critical to the state’s economy.
- Referred to WTECB’s 2006 High Skills, High Wages report.

Vi Boyer – Independent Colleges of Washington

- Need clear message.
- Need for opportunity and equity: The underserved population is not just going to show up; we need a strong outreach plan and strong financial assistance.
- We need a strong student focus – getting out of silos.
- Diversity of opportunity will help students succeed – current and future job training important.
- Quality important – resources needed to expand enrollment.
- Focus on outcomes over 4-10 years.