



## ICW response to HECB request for input to 2008 Master Plan for Higher Education

Independent Colleges of Washington urges special attention to four key areas to establish the network of robust, diverse, high-quality higher education opportunities Washington needs.

**Equity** – Promote higher education opportunities for all students, regardless of their family resources. Much of the projected growth in the college-age population in Washington will come from groups that are underrepresented in higher education. To get them into and through college will require a bold student-centered response that both encourages people to consider college and breaks down the barriers they face. It's the ethical response that will give students the tools they need to improve their lives and contribute to a stronger economy in Washington.

- Emphasize outreach to underrepresented populations.
- Increase funding for strong student-centered financial aid programs.
- Adopt a "shared responsibility" model based on need.
- Include independent colleges in the plan for growth.

**Student Focus** – We must overcome our tendency to focus on institutions, and develop student-centered policies to provide the support, information, and resources they need to be successful.

- Use all the state's higher education resources. The diversity of educational opportunity in Washington is one of our great strengths. Students' ability to choose the college that best fits their needs and desires enhances their likelihood of success. With strong outreach programs and robust financial aid, thousands more students will be able to make the dream of college a reality, and every educational sector will thrive.
- Include independent colleges in all transfer information systems.
- Create aid or loan forgiveness for graduates employed in high demand areas.

**Value Education** – An educated citizenry fuels economic growth and enhances the quality of life for everyone in our society. We must do more than train people to do jobs; we must also educate people who will create jobs, and nurture those who will become tomorrow's leaders. The diversity of opportunities is vital to our state's success.

- Support broad-based, rigorous liberal arts education that sharpens each student's ability to think critically, solve problems, communicate effectively, and imagine the jobs none of us have yet dreamed of.
- Meet the economic needs of the state by supporting diverse opportunities, from job-training programs that help people fill the jobs of today, to advanced degrees that will help people create the careers of tomorrow.

**Quality** – More enrollment slots alone do not mean a better educational system. Quality is critical.

- Endorse the rich diversity of our higher education system, built on private accreditation.
- Allow higher education to do what it does best: create opportunities for students to learn.
- Implement regulatory relief for state colleges.
- Adopt policies that promote healthy competition between colleges, public and private, that will lead to greater effectiveness and attention to the needs of the students.
- Focus the state higher education subsidy on quality improvement.
- Address state college salary issues to recruit and retain top-quality faculty.
- Allow full tuition-setting authority at state colleges that desire it.
- Provide incentives for colleges to collaborate across sectors.

*Invest in Washington... One student at a time.*