

## **Background**

At the 2011 Washington Community and Technical Colleges (CTC) Legislative Voice Academy, the CTC students developed a white paper outlining five critical priorities; one of which was to provide the ability for students to optionally indicate Sexual Orientation and Gender Expression as part of the registration process. In response to this student led initiative, WSSSC established the LGBTQ Student Success Task Force (spring 2012). To date the task force has determined the following:

- 1) campus climate directly impacts student success and achievement; and
- 2) information gathered on sexual orientation and gender expression will prepare colleges to develop appropriate academic and student support services; and
- 3) the steps that are needed to immediately implement the process, including IT support and cost (minimal); and
- 4) a communications strategy must be developed to publicize the reasons why this is an important, timely and beneficial initiative for Washington State community and technical college students.

## **Why Are We Doing This?**

The primary motivation for implementing this initiative is to promote a safe and inclusive learning environment (campus climate) for LGBTQ students enrolled in the Washington State CTC system. Collecting and tracking data will allow the colleges to know more about their students and thus, be better prepared to design and develop curricular and co-curricular offerings that reflect the diverse perspectives and experiences of all students.

The task force has determined through research, practitioner knowledge and student testimonies that implementing this initiative would serve as a visible testament to the CTC's commitment to diversity, inclusion, academic achievement and student success.

## **How Will the Data be Collected and Secured?**

Data will be collected on registration forms used by colleges. These data elements will be included as part of the student's biographical record, available for college institutional research, and reported to the SBCTC as part of the state reporting MIS process. This will provide the capacity to extract data from a system-wide perspective. The SBCTC does not share sensitive data unless the Presidents have approved the use of the data.

The OFM Education Research and Data Center (ERDC) has developed detailed guidelines indicating who would have the ability to gain access to this data. They have also adopted a set of redaction policies to ensure that aggregated data is also not identifiable.

## **What are the Technology Needs and Cost of this Initiative?**

If we wait for CTCLink – this project could take 18 months to 5 years. Therefore, the task force has explored other options so project implementation is not delayed. Information Technology (IT) agreed that an acceptable approach for adding additional data elements to the legacy applications would be to contract with a 3<sup>rd</sup> party vendor (Fresche Legacy) to perform the analysis and coding effort. IT has also agreed to work with the CTCLink team to ensure that this information is captured and available in the new ERP solution.

Based on the complexity of the project, the estimated cost is approximately \$50,000 to \$70,000 (one time cost) to complete. The task force determined that the project could move forward if each of the 34 CTC's contributed approximately \$1500 to \$2000 to fund the project.

Task Force Members: Toni Castro (WSSSC/HCC), Rhonda Coats (WSSSC/SPSCC), Ray Gartner (IT), Michelle Andreas (SBCTC), Tonya Benton (IR/HCC), Kate Bligh (ARC/HCC), Monica Lundberg (CUSP/SSCC), Dante Obcena (Student/SSCC), Mathew Shrader (Student/SPSCC), Ali Collucci (BCC).