

Washington Community and Technical College Students
2012 LEGISLATIVE WHITE PAPER
Developed at the 2011 Legislative Voice Academy

The five critical issues outlined in the white paper represent the priorities of students in the Washington State community and technical colleges during the upcoming legislative session and biennium budget process. The issues are listed in no particular order.

TEXTBOOK ALTERNATIVES

On average, students spend up to one-third of higher education costs on textbooks. Alternative format options would significantly impact textbook affordability. Such options will positively impact environmental sustainability, student access, and student learning outcomes. Students request legislation that will enable greater student access to affordable alternative textbook formats.

DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENT SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES FEES

Under Washington State law, Boards of Trustees have the discretion to keep services and activities fees collected through excess enrollment and contracted services in the college operating budget or give them back to students. Services and activities fees are not intended to supplement the college operating budget. Services and activities fees are intended to give students the opportunity to invest their dollars in ways that best suit the needs of their campuses per RCW 28B.15.045. Students request the creation of statewide legislation that compels Boards of Trustees and college administrations to give all services and activities fees collected, including excess enrollment and contracted services, to the student governing bodies.

CONGRUENCY OF DIRECT TRANSFER DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Community and technical college students are experiencing difficulties accurately completing their specified direct transfer degrees. In order to ensure proper academic advising and efficient use of time for degree completion, students request legislation which requires a mandatory annual assessment of congruency among the Intercollege Relations Commissions, State Board of Community and Technical Colleges, and individual institutional guidelines for the direct transfer degree requirements.

LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER DEMOGRAPHIC CATEGORIES ON COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE UNIFORM APPLICATION

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students are a vulnerable population on college campuses, but lack of data makes their needs nearly invisible to many college administrations. Students request legislation requiring the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges modify the Uniform Application for Admission to Washington Community and Technical Colleges to include demographic categories for sexual orientation and gender identity; to use this demographic information to research the enrollment, retention, and degree completion rates of LGBT cohorts; and to address inequities of educational outcomes if they are identified within this population.

PROTECTED AND DEDICATED FUNDING FOR THE COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM

Community and technical colleges have become as essential to the production of the Washington State workforce as the K-12 institutions of years past, but are not recognized in this respect, and thus funding for these institutions is discretionary and not protected. In order to maintain and increase access to higher education, students request that legislation be enacted to protect student financial assistance programs such as work study and financial aid, as well as to create protected and dedicated funding for the Washington State Community and Technical College system, establishing a K-AA educational system.