



Washington's Community and Technical Colleges 2012 Legislative Agenda

Don't Starve the Solution: Preserve Higher Education Funding

Since 2009, the state has dramatically decreased funding for higher education. Courses and programs have been eliminated; resulting in a significant drop in enrollment, due to lack of capacity, not decreased student demand. We project 10,000 fewer students will be served this year. That number will grow to 20,000 next year and could be as high as 40,000 by 2013 if additional cuts are made and not restored with new revenue.

Maintain State Need Grant and Work Study

For over 40 years, the State Need Grant has assisted students from our state's lowest-income families pursue certificates and degrees, or retrain for new careers. Research shows that low-income students are less likely to enroll and are at greater risk for not completing degree or certificate programs if they do not receive an appropriate mix of grants, student loans, and part-time work. State Work Study funding is already down 66% from three years ago. Suspending the program would eliminate Work Study opportunities for the remaining 1,200 CTC students.

Authorize Financing for *ctcLink*

ctcLink is our new technology foundation to provide better service to students, faculty, and staff. Washington CTCs' current computer software and associated business processes are over 30 years old, limiting our ability to implement further system-wide efficiencies. All 34 colleges will use the same system to access information and resources with system-wide data stored in one central location. Last year, the Legislature recognized the value of investing in this new technology by establishing the Innovation Account, using up to 3% of tuition revenue. This year, we need legislative authority to sell bonds (COPs) backed by revenue in the Innovation Account.

Support Capital Request

Investments in modern training facilities benefit students and create job opportunities in local communities. The community and technical college system's capital list includes locally funded projects, a long-term lease for the Spokane Aerospace Training Center, and major projects in prioritized order.

Higher Education Representation on Select Committee for Pension Policy

The Select Committee for Pension Policy (SCPP) makes policy and funding recommendations affecting public employee pensions. Members include legislators and governor-appointedees representing employers, employees, and retirees. Legislation in 2011 gave the SCPP greater oversight of plans sponsored by higher education institutions. Higher education retirement plans are unlike plans overseen by the SCPP, operating under different laws. Adding a committee member experienced in higher education retirement plans will add unique and necessary expertise to the SCPP.

Provide Regulatory Relief in Construction, Purchasing and Reporting

Construction. Provide ongoing authority to finance capital projects when debt service is paid from local funds. Eliminate the floor of \$25,000 for minor capital funded projects. Increase bid limits for public works contracts to a single limit of \$100,000 irrespective of multiple or single trade or craft.

Purchasing. Authorize colleges and universities to purchase equipment maintenance agreements for periods longer than one year, and to purchase air and car rental off-state contract with personal or state credit cards.

Reporting. Eliminate state campus safety reporting requirements which duplicate federal reporting requirements. This will reduce administrative redundancy without lessening our commitment to meet safety reporting requirements.

Budget Impacts & Efficiencies

400 student support and administrative positions were eliminated from June 2009 through May 2011, reducing administrative costs by over \$30 million.

State funding for the CTC system was cut from \$750 million in 2009 to \$585 million next year, a 22% reduction. Meanwhile, enrollments grew. As a result, per-student state funding will be down by more than \$1,200.

Colleges regularly update their job training program offerings to keep pace with employer demand. In the last two years, 560 professional-technical certificate, degree, and short-term training programs were eliminated, with resources redirected to 213 new programs in high demand areas such as energy, sustainability, health care, and aerospace.