

► Legislative Visits

As we prepare for the Legislative short session, I've been meeting with our local and state representatives to gain visibility and share with them some of our college's collective interests and needs, including tuition backfills, salary increases, bachelor degrees, and partnerships. As a leader in the conversation on what higher education will look like in Washington in the coming years, our legislative representation needs to know who we are and know they can call when they want their local higher education perspective. To date, I have met with eight legislators and local officials and am continuing to schedule additional meetings.



A brief rundown of some of the priorities I am addressing during these visits includes:

Addressing 2015-17 funding shortfalls:

- **Critical compensation adjustment:** The 2015-17 operating budget provided compensation increases for college staff, but the budget funded only 83 percent of the impact to college budgets. Full compensation funding would protect funds already budgeted for student programs and services.
- **Adjust for tuition reduction in applied baccalaureate programs:** The 2015-17 operating budget accounts for lost tuition revenue for lower-division coursework, but the offset does not fully cover lost revenue in applied bachelor's degree programs. An adequate backfill would support these successful, in-demand workforce degrees.

Fill skill gaps in the workforce:

- **Basic Education for Adults:** About 650,000 to 700,000 Washington adults need basic skills to pursue college for living-wage jobs and meet employers' needs. This population needs to be added to the caseload forecast to develop stable funding for adult basic education in the future.
- **STEM degrees:** The MESA Community College Program helps under-represented students pursue STEM degrees. This additional investment would expand the program from six colleges to all 34 colleges in the CTC system.
- **Opportunity Grants:** we are working to expand the Opportunity Grant Program. The program provides student support services and financial help for low-income student to pursue education in high-wage, high-demand careers.

Promote student success:

- **Faculty increments:** Students and employers alike rely on faculty to bring knowledge and innovation into the classroom. Funding faculty increments would help colleges retain and attract the talent needed to maintain excellent instruction.
- **Advising, career planning and development:** Academic advising, career planning and other support services keep students on-track to graduate on time. New investments would support these vital services, which were cut deeply during the Recession-era budget reductions.
- **Public safety through corrections education and training:** National research shows that prison education reduces recidivism rates and frees public funds for other important priorities. A statutory change is needed to allow the use of existing state funds for academic degree programs within corrections institutions.
- **College affordability:** BC supports the Washington Student Achievement Council in seeking additional funding for the State Need Grant and College Bound Scholarship program.