

Washington's 4-Year Public College & Universities: Leading the Nation in Degree Production

*Clearly defined higher education roles and differentiated missions serve Washington well and provide citizens with broad choices in educational offerings. Because of this effective educational array, **Washington's public baccalaureate sector is the most productive in the nation, and among the most cost effective and efficient.***

—Council of Presidents

Washington's Success Story

Through the guidance of the legislature and the determined efforts of our higher education institutions over the last two decades, our public baccalaureate sector has demonstrated continual improvements in degree completion and productivity, making Washington one of the best performing states in the country in producing degrees relative to state investments. *(Kelly, 2009)*

- Washington's comprehensive institutions, and Evergreen, were rated number one in the nation in completion and degree productivity relative to funding per FTE. *(Kelly and Jones, 2005)*
- Our public research institutions award more bachelor's degrees per FTE student than research institutions in any other state.
- Washington is 2nd in the nation in degree productivity at the graduate level. *(IPEDS)*
- Our freshmen retention rate is among the highest in the nation. *(IPEDS)*
- Our six-year graduation rate for first-time freshmen ranks 3rd in the nation and has improved by 9% in the last decade. This means 1,350 more of the freshmen class entering our campuses today will earn bachelor's degrees than they would have 10 years ago. *(IPEDS)*

KEYS TO SUCCESS

LEADERSHIP by the Governor, Legislature and our 4-Year Higher Education Institutions

RESPONSIBLE STEWARDSHIP of the State's Baccalaureate assets and resources

FOCUSED ENGAGEMENT to address Washington's goals, challenges, and economic vitality

PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS among sectors, institutions, agencies, businesses, and communities

CUTTING EDGE INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY in the classroom, in the community, and around the world

Washington's baccalaureate sector is highly productive but significantly lags the nation in baccalaureate participation.

Washington's Challenge: To enroll more Washington citizens in baccalaureate institutions to earn degrees that will sustain our economy.

COP's Response to the Challenge

Washington's 4-year college and universities will:

- **Achieve the long term bachelor and graduate degree goals of the Strategic Master Plan.** Our baccalaureate institutions will respond quickly, economically, and with academic excellence.
- **Re-double our efforts to attract and retain students who are racially, ethnically, and economically diverse.** Washington must provide more of its citizens, especially the rapidly growing population of under represented academically prepared high school students, with more opportunities for direct entry to 4-year institutions.
- **Continue to lead in developing online and distance education courses, programs, and degrees.** Washington's public baccalaureate institutions will continue their leadership in advancing technologies and innovations that respond to global, social, and economic needs.
- **Pursue efficiencies, reallocate existing resources, and seek new sources of funding.** Washington's public 4-year institutions will require a sustainable funding model and adequate state support. Flexibility to manage our resources is essential if we are to respond to student demand, meet state goals, and maximize capacity.

Strategies

- ◆ **Take advantage of Washington's public baccalaureate success in productivity by using institutions' existing physical capacity and funding under utilized instructional capacity.**
 - Fully develop existing branch campuses
 - Expand the array of degree programs offered through university centers and partnerships
 - Expand upside down degrees
 - Increase Running Start and fast-track programs
- ◆ **Increase online learning opportunities for all students, including those in remote locations.**
- ◆ **Provide more opportunities for academically prepared high school students to directly enter 4-year institutions.**
 - Fund additional outreach efforts to K-12 students
 - Increase campus based outreach programs, such as Gear-Up, Trio, MESA, Camp, etc.
 - Expand mentoring programs