



**Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board**  
***2009-11 Internal Agency Strategic Plan***

W A S H I N G T O N  
H I G H E R  
E D U C A T I O N  
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## Overview – Key responsibilities

The Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) is a state agency governed by a 10-member citizen advisory board appointed by the Governor to provide vision and leadership for public higher education in Washington.

The HECB is an advocate for students and the overall system of higher education to the Governor, the Legislature, and the public.

The HECB collaborates with the two- and four-year institutions, other state governing boards, and the Superintendent of Public Instruction to create a seamless system of public education geared toward student success.

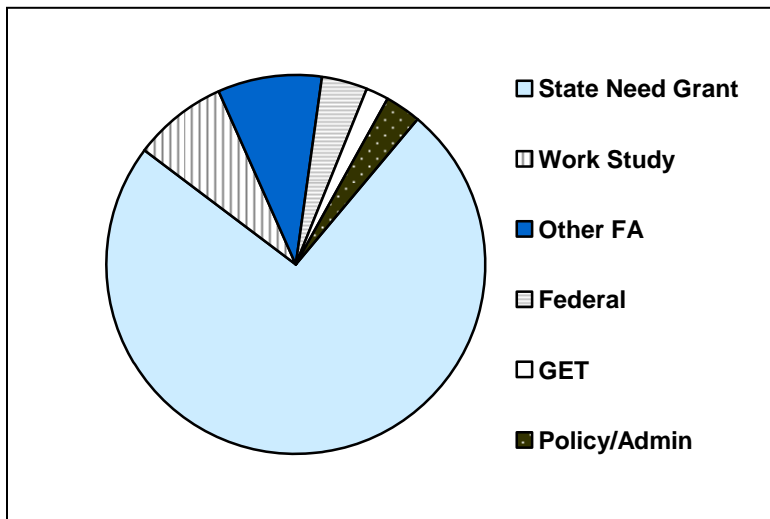
### Key Responsibilities

- Develops a statewide strategic master plan for higher education.
- Administers state and federal financial aid and other education services programs.
- Reviews, evaluates, prioritizes, and makes recommendations on the operating and capital budget requests of the two- and four-year public institutions.
- Establishes an accountability monitoring and reporting system to achieve long-term performance goals in higher education.
- Administers the Guaranteed Education Tuition (GET) college savings program.
- Develops policies that ensure efficient transfer of credits and courses throughout public higher education.
- Approves all new four-year academic degree programs offered by the public institutions.
- Establishes minimum admissions standards for the state's four-year colleges and universities.
- Conducts statewide needs assessment of student, employer, and community needs for higher education.
- Reviews and approves new off-campus centers and locations, and consolidation or elimination of programs.
- Authorizes out-of-state colleges and universities and some in-state private colleges and universities to offer degree programs in Washington.
- Approves educational and training programs for veterans' educational benefits.

The HECB also collects and maintains a wealth of data about educational processes and outcomes, and works with a significant network of measurement organizations.

## Overview – Agency budget

Agency Budget: \$243 million



The 2007 HECB budget was \$243 million. Nearly all of these funds pass through the agency and go directly to support students' financial needs.

## Overview – Agency responsibilities

### **Financial assistance**

The HECB distributed financial aid for about 76,000 students at Washington public and private colleges and universities in 2006-07.

Federal programs like GEAR UP and Title II provide direct services to students and account for most of the federal funding in the HECB budget. About \$1.7 million in federal funds is distributed as financial aid.

State financial assistance programs administered by the HECB include:

- State Need Grant
- State Work Study
- Health Professionals Loan Repayment and Scholarship
- Educational Opportunity Grant
- Washington Scholars Award
- Washington Award for Vocational Excellence
- Future Teachers Conditional Scholarship and Loan Repayment
- Alternative Routes to Teacher Certification Conditional Scholarship
- American Indian Endowed Scholarship
- College Bound Scholarship
- Foster Care Endowed Scholarship
- GET Ready for Math and Science Conditional Scholarship
- Passport to College Promise Scholarship (for foster youth)
- WICHE Student Exchange Programs

### ***Recommends budgets, policies***

The HECB reviews the operating and capital budget requests of the state's public colleges and universities and recommends priorities to the Legislature and Governor. Higher education budgets make up about 11 percent of all state appropriations. The agency also conducts studies and makes recommendations on state higher education policy. For example, every year the HECB conducts a national survey to compare tuition and fee rates.

### ***Sets college admission standards***

State law directs the HECB to establish minimum admission standards for students seeking to enroll as freshmen at the state's public four-year colleges and universities. New minimum admission standards approved recently will affect students who enter high school in 2008.

### ***Assesses higher education needs***

The agency's statute requires it to "develop a comprehensive and ongoing process to analyze the need for additional degrees and programs, additional off-campus centers and locations for degree programs, and consolidation or elimination of programs by the public, four-year institutions." The HECB published the *State and Regional Needs Assessment* in 2005. It is being updated.

### ***Helps families save for college***

The Guaranteed Education Tuition (GET) program is the state's pre-paid college tuition program. GET offers Washington families a simple, safe, and affordable way to save for future college expenses. Since GET began in 1998, families have opened more than 90,000 accounts, valued at over \$1.1 billion. More than 10,000 Washington students are currently using their GET benefits to attend over 200 colleges and universities nationwide.

### ***Examines emerging issues***

The HECB serves as a resource to the Legislature and governor by responding to requests for research and recommendations on important issues as they arise. Recent examples include development of "college readiness" standards in English and science, interest in expanded baccalaureate programs in Snohomish and Kitsap counties, and regional health sciences needs.

### ***Motivates young people to go to college***

#### **GEAR UP**

GEAR UP stands for Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs. This state- and federally-funded program serves more than 4,200 low-income students in 37 school districts throughout Washington. The programs prepare students for college success by providing intensive tutoring, mentoring, and college/career planning. Services are provided through the federally-funded Scholars Project (2005-11) and the state-funded GEAR UP for Student Success program (2007-09).

### **College Bound Scholarship**

Low-income seventh and eighth graders can receive College Bound Scholarships by pledging to graduate from high school, stay out of trouble, and earn admission to a college or university. If they fulfill their pledge, the state will pay for their college or career school tuition and books.

## History and organization

Created by the Legislature in 1985, the HECB was established formally in January 1986 as the successor to the Council for Postsecondary Education. Appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Senate, board members serve four-year terms. The members annually elect a board chair, vice-chair, and treasurer. The student member is appointed to a one-year term.

## Key statutory responsibilities under RCW 28B.76

<b>Policy Analysis and Reporting</b>	<b>Fiscal Policy</b>	<b>Data and Research</b>	<b>GET</b>	<b>Program, Institution Approval</b>	<b>Student Financial Assistance</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Strategic planning</li> <li>•Data analysis</li> <li>•Policy leadership</li> <li>•Accountability</li> <li>•Transfer and articulation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Budget review</li> <li>•Data analysis</li> <li>•Capacity studies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•IPEDS data</li> <li>•State, federal financial aid data</li> <li>•State higher education facts</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•State, regional needs assessment</li> <li>•Program review and approval</li> <li>•Degree authorization</li> <li>•VA approving agency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•State Need Grant</li> <li>•State Work Study</li> <li>•Educational Opportunity Grant</li> <li>•GEAR UP</li> <li>•Other financial scholarship and loan programs</li> </ul>

## Priorities of Government

The agency strategic plan supports the following Priorities of Government.

- Improve student achievement in elementary, middle and high schools
- Improve the value of postsecondary learning
- Improve the economic vitality of businesses and individuals
- Strengthen the ability of state government to achieve results efficiently and effectively

## GMAP

Due to the activities of other statewide education assessment bodies, such as the Washington Learns initiative and the P-20 Council, the HECB has not yet been asked to report directly to the Governor in a GMAP forum on its activities.

As part of the 2009-11 agency strategic planning process, the HECB has developed internal performance measures around which to begin developing an internal GMAP process. Leadership is committed to an engaged, ongoing strategic planning and performance management system that will: clarify the connections between staff work and agency mission; identify meaningful measures of efficiency and effectiveness; and, over time, identify performance gaps and recognize successes.

## Citizen Engagement

The HECB seeks citizen engagement at regularly scheduled board meetings held at geographically diverse locations that are open to the public. A wide range of higher education stakeholders are invited to make presentations at these meetings.

In developing this agency strategic plan, the HECB surveyed higher education faculty and staff, legislators and legislative staff, and other stakeholders regarding their view of the agency's strengths and possible areas of improvement. Staff members also regularly consult with experts in other state agencies engaged in forecasting, education policy, economic development issues, and other related areas.

In 2007, during development of the Strategic Master Plan, feedback was solicited at six public forums throughout the state and five small group meetings with targeted business and education leaders. Periodic public forums and focus groups are also held on other topics, such as those recently conducted under a grant from the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education regarding the needs of employers in Washington and the relationship between the baccalaureate sector and the state's workforce development goals.

HECB staff engage in various outreach activities, including workshops and trainings in support of our financial aid and college savings programs, financial aid information sessions, and promotion of college access programs—such as GEAR UP, the Foster Care Endowed Scholarship, and the College Bound Scholarship—that provide college planning guidance and financial assistance to low-income, minority, and other under-served youth.

## HECB Vision and Mission

The agency strategic plan has been developed to inform agency budget decisions for the 2009-11 biennium, and to guide the agency's work between July 2008 and July 2011. The agency vision and mission provide over-arching direction for the goals, strategies, and objectives identified in the agency strategic plan.

### **Vision**

*Driven by the belief that our citizens and our society benefit from higher levels of education, the Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board will help our state thrive and prosper by serving as an effective communicator, collaborator, and coordinator for programs and services that develop the full potential of our higher education institutions and the students they serve.*

### **Mission**

The Higher Education Coordinating Board provides vision and leadership for public higher education in Washington; serves as a principal advocate for students and institutions with the Legislature and Governor; and works to ensure a seamless system of public education geared toward student success.

To fulfill this mission the HECB:

- Provides research, analysis, and recommendations to help policy makers and postsecondary institutions develop informed, thoughtful higher education policy recommendations.
- Develops the Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education to guide progress, funding, and accountability.
- Collaborates with postsecondary institutions to efficiently deliver financial assistance and services to students.
- Helps families save for college through GET, the state's prepaid tuition program.
- Protects consumers through regulatory functions such as degree authorization and approval of veterans' programs.
- Conducts an open and ongoing discussion with stakeholders and the public to achieve the educational goals of the State of Washington.

## **Agency Goals for 2008-2011**

### **Goal 1**

*Align agency activities, across division lines, with the goals and priorities of the Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education.*

### **Goal 2**

*Continuously improve the effectiveness, responsiveness, and quality of agency interactions with clients, customers, partners, and stakeholders.*

### **Goal 3**

*Increase agency efficiency and effectiveness by continuously improving systems, processes, resource alignment, and performance-based culture to achieve organizational excellence.*

## **2008 Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education Summary**

In December 2007, the HECB approved an updated Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education covering a 10-year period (2008-18).

In January 2008, the agency submitted the plan to the Governor and Legislature for review. The Legislature approved the plan by concurrent resolution during the 2008 session. The principal goals of the plan are listed below.

### ***I. Raise the level of educational attainment to create prosperity, opportunity***

- Meet Global Challenge State benchmarks in degree attainment
- Expand and renew facilities, technology, programs, and services
- Focus on diversity
- Create higher expectations for K-12 students
- Create a system of support for lifelong learning
- Make college affordable and easy to access



## ***II. Promote economic growth and innovation***

- Fill unmet needs in high-demand fields
- Promote student enrollment in STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) fields
- Expand research capacity
- Contribute to the innovation economy
- Stimulate capital formation and create an entrepreneurial environment
- Build a coherent approach to workforce development
- Find new ways to finance work-related education and training

## ***III. Monitor and fund higher education for results***

- Provide funding tied to Global Challenge State benchmarks
- Focus accountability on master plan goals
- Explore financial incentives for educational attainment

## **Legislative Directives**

In addition to passing the concurrent resolution approving the Strategic Master Plan, the Legislature also directed the HECB to complete the following assignments by December 2008:

- Develop new proposed goals for bachelor's and advanced degree production based on the needs of Washington's economy.
- Complete a study of the operating, capital, and technology capacity needs associated with achieving increased degree and enrollment goals.
- Help interested parties reach agreement on one preferred site for the University of Washington North Campus.
- Develop program and operating plans for a higher education center in the Kitsap County area.
- Staff a performance agreement committee to develop and implement six-year performance agreements between the state and the four-year institutions.

## **Goal 1 - Align agency activities with the goals of the Strategic Master Plan.**

Since much of the agency's assigned work supports the Strategic Master Plan, careful alignment of existing work and new objectives will be necessary to ensure progress.

### **Objective A**

Raise the level of educational attainment to create prosperity, opportunity.

#### ***Strategy 1***

Continually analyze and recommend enrollment growth needed to meet increased demand and reach degree benchmarks based on state workforce needs.

#### **Performance Measures**

- Number of associate degrees awarded.
- Number of bachelor's degrees awarded.
- Number of advanced degrees awarded.

#### **Targets**

- 24,200 associate degrees awarded in 2010-11.
- 23,390 bachelor's degrees awarded at public institutions in 2010-11.\*
- 6,437 advanced degrees awarded in 2010-11.\*

\*Note: 2008 Strategic Master Plan sets higher targets for 2018 in light of Washington's changing economic needs.

#### ***Strategy 2***

Continually analyze and recommend the operating, capital, and technology capacity and needs associated with achieving degree and enrollment goals.

#### **Performance Measure**

- Percentage of system enrollments offered via alternative delivery methods such as distance or online learning, and night and weekend courses.

#### **Target**

- Increase by five percent annually.

#### ***Strategy 3***

Conduct policy and demographic analysis to increase participation, progress and success in postsecondary education.

#### **Performance Measures**

- Percentage of students who graduate within six years of enrolling as first-time, full-time freshmen.
- Percentage of students intending to transfer from 2- to 4-year institution who do so within three years (includes those who have earned at least 15 credits).
- Percentage of students of color.
- Percentage of faculty of color.

### **Targets**

- Increase percentage of students who graduate within six years of enrolling as first-time, full-time freshmen by two percentage points annually.
- Increase percentage of students intending to transfer from 2- to 4-year institution who do so within three years by five percentage points by 2010-11.
- Increase percentage of students of color by three percent annually.
- Increase percentage of faculty of color by one percent annually.

### **Objective B**

Make college affordable and easy to access.

#### ***Strategy 1***

Increase the State Need Grant income threshold and close the gap between the State Need Grant award amounts and the full cost of public sector tuition.

#### **Performance Measures**

- Average percent of public sector tuition covered by SNG.
- Percentage of Median Family Income (MFI) required for SNG eligibility.
- Number of students served by SNG.

#### **Targets**

- Increase value of SNG award to 100 percent of public sector tuition and fees.
- Increase SNG income eligibility threshold to 85 percent of state MFI.
- Increase number of students served by SNG by three percent annually.

#### ***Strategy 2***

Develop a coordinated statewide financial aid and higher education aspiration campaign.

#### **Performance Measures**

- Number of applications for college.
- Number of Washington filers of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

#### **Targets**

- Increase the number of applications for college by 5 percent annually.
- Increase the number of FAFSA applicants by 5 percent annually.

### **Objective C**

Promote economic growth and innovation.

#### ***Strategy 1***

Promote student interest in, and preparation for, STEM fields and high-demand degrees.

#### **Performance Measures**

- Number of declared majors in STEM and health care degree programs.
- Number of degrees awarded in STEM and health care degree programs.

**Targets**

- Increase declared majors in STEM and health care degree programs by five percent annually.
- Increase degrees awarded in STEM and health care degree programs by five percent annually.

**Strategy 2**

Expand university- and college-based research.

**Performance Measure**

- Number of technology transfer licenses or options executed by public research universities.

**Target**

- Maintain baseline from 2008.

**Objective D**

Monitor and fund higher education for results

**Strategy 1**

Implement six-year performance agreements with public, four-year institutions.

**Performance Measures**

- Average dollar amount of per-student funding.
- Additional measures to be determined by Performance Agreement Committee and institutions, such as degrees per FTE enrollment levels.

**Targets**

- Increase system-wide per-student funding to reach 60<sup>th</sup> percentile in Global Challenge States.
- Targets for additional measures to be determined by Performance Agreement Committee and institutions.

**Goal 2 – Improve interaction with clients, customers, stakeholders and partners****Objective A**

Maintain and enhance quality outreach, education, and training that are relevant, timely, and coordinated.

**Strategy 1**

Conduct an inventory of outreach, education, and training activities.

**Performance Measures**

- The number of individuals served through outreach, education, and training.
- The number of staff directly involved in outreach, education, and training.
- The cost of outreach, education, and training activities by program.

**Target**

Establish baseline cost/benefit ratio for program evaluation by June 30, 2010.

## **Objective B**

Strategically market the agency's programs to reinforce key messages and expand public and stakeholder awareness.

### ***Strategy 1***

Develop a consistent design format and consistent messages about the agency for use in all published materials (print and electronic).

### ***Strategy 2***

Redesign agency and program Web sites to increase usability, reinforce agency identity, and strengthen the delivery of key messages.

### **Performance Measures**

- Number of agency publications (print and electronic) redesigned.
- Number of agency Web sites and pages redesigned.
- Number of visits to agency Web sites.

### **Targets**

- 100 percent of publications and Web pages redesigned and branded by July 2011.
- Number of visits to agency Web sites increased by 10 percent by July 2011.

## **Objective C**

Provide meaningful data collection and analysis that are relevant and timely.

### ***Strategy 1***

Continue the development of the agency research group to improve cross-division collaboration.

### ***Strategy 2***

Evaluate relevance of non-statutorily required information and data to determine need.

### **Performance Measure**

- Will be tracked internally.

## **Objective D**

Maintain, enhance, and develop IT systems that streamline essential processes.

### ***Strategy***

Move toward more accessible web-based applications to automate manual processes.

### **Performance Measures**

- Percentage of student financial aid applications available via the Web.
- Percentage of student financial aid programs administered via the HECB's web-based financial aid portal.
- Percentage of GET enrollments submitted via the Web.

### **Targets**

- 100 percent of financial aid applications available via web by July 2011.
- 100 percent of student financial aid programs administered via portal by July 2011.
- 95 percent of GET enrollments submitted via Web by July 2011.

## **Objective E**

Maintain and enhance integral stakeholder relationships

### ***Strategy***

Continue to cultivate new and existing relationships to ensure appropriate stakeholders are involved in activities.

### **Performance Measure**

- Will be tracked internally.

## **Goal 3 – Increase agency efficiency, effectiveness**

### **Objective A**

Increase opportunities for employee motivation and retention.

#### ***Strategy***

Achieve performance management confirmation by June 30, 2011.

#### **Performance Measure**

- Percentage of Performance Development Plans, evaluations completed on time.

#### **Target**

- 100% reached and maintained by December 31, 2009.

### **Objective B**

Reduce agency liability from physical, fiscal, and legal risks.

#### ***Strategy***

Conduct comprehensive enterprise risk management assessment by June 30, 2010.

#### **Performance Measures**

- Number of findings by State Auditor's Office audits of HECB activities.
- Amount (\$) paid for accident claims

#### **Targets**

- Maintain 0% audit finding rate.
- Reduce amount paid for accident claims by 20% annually.

### **Objective C**

Increase number of internal processes that are automated.

#### ***Strategy***

Develop management information system by June 30, 2011 to improve resource allocation and automate internal processes.

#### **Performance Measure**

- Will be tracked internally.

### **Objective D**

Increase agency-wide collaboration and cross-divisional communication.

#### ***Strategy***

Improve internal agency communications, to include launch of a modified agency intranet, dashboard, or other internal communication system by June 30, 2010.

### **Performance Measure**

- Will be tracked internally.

### **Objective E**

Increase productivity and administrative efficiency.

#### **Strategy**

Institute regular internal performance reviews to identify process improvements and level resources, beginning July 1, 2009.

### **Performance Measure**

Will be tracked internally.

## **Assessment of external challenges and opportunities**

### **Economy**

- Need for higher overall levels of education to remain economically competitive.
- Increased need for degrees in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, medical fields, teaching and other high-demand areas.
- Need for expanded research and innovation to fuel future growth, opportunity.
- Cyclical funding of education.

### **Client populations and demographics**

- Increasing numbers of under-represented students in K-12 system.
- Lack of resources and family history to support postsecondary participation.

### **Client expectations**

- Increased demand for higher education among all groups.
- Concern about rising cost of higher education.
- Improved student services and support.
- Higher levels of diversity throughout postsecondary education.
- Increased access, especially to four-year degree programs.

### **Related industries**

- More graduates needed to fill specific workforce needs
- Increased research and technical assistance needed to spur innovation and economic development.

### **Natural environment**

- Limited access in remote areas.

## **Assessment of internal capacity and financial health**

### **Finance**

- Policies and procedures provide strong internal controls in most areas.
- Managers throughout the organization are directly involved in program financial review and management.
- Need for greater emphasis on financial and risk management in position descriptions and hiring processes.
- Greater consistency is needed across programs in revenue collection practices.

- Fund balance monitoring is complicated by 19 separate accounts; monthly Financial Management Review (FMR) has improved tracking.

### **Workforce**

- In anticipation of challenging fiscal environment, FTE levels have been held steady below budgeted amounts.
- Ongoing vacancies increase workload and stress for current employees.
- Current 56% completion rate of performance development plans (PDPs) well below goal for regular and meaningful performance planning and feedback.

### **Facilities**

- Facilities are adequate for current staffing levels.
- Need for contingency planning during impending lease negotiations in order to accommodate possible future growth.

### **Technology Investments**

- Hardware and infrastructure replacement cycles maintained to support staff and systems functionality.
- Robust in-house application development to increase automation of financial aid transactions and improve tracking and management.
- Challenges presented by new program responsibilities without sufficient resources for IT development.
- Need to devote programming resources to write applications for routine administrative tasks and improve overall agency financial management.

### **Other Internal Challenges and Opportunities**

- Need for further review of record-keeping practices in light of rapidly changing public records laws, particularly in regard to electronic records.
- Continue focus on staff morale and productivity via active employee wellness program.
- Continue and expand efforts to collect employee input on cost saving measures; eliminate redundancies, identify efficiencies, and expand cross-divisional and cross-programmatic collaboration.