



Washington State Community & Technical College Student Association

2021 Legislative Session Agenda

The following issues were developed by CTC students. This agenda represents the issues Washington State Community & Technical College students have identified as their highest priorities for advocacy during the upcoming year.

Increase College Affordability and Financial Assistance For CTC Students

College affordability means more than paying for tuition. Additional factors such as textbook costs, housing, food, and utility bills impacts students' ability to attend college. While grateful for this resource, the Workforce Education Investment Act is estimated to help 110,000 students, this legislation was passed prior to the COVID-19 outbreak. The new economic phenomenon brought on by the pandemic, jeopardizes resources available to students. A high school diploma is no longer enough to give a person equal access to quality employment without a post-secondary education. To meet this demand, every resident of Washington State should have an equitable opportunity to pursue higher education. This makes our workforce more competitive and strengthens our State's economy. The legislature should expand access to in-state tuition programs and adopt an innovative model that supports academic completion for CTC students, specifically, the Workforce Education Investment Act.

Increase Resources for Mental Health Counseling

Anxiety, depression, or mental health other conditions complicates a student's college experience. At some CTC colleges, over 50% of the cases served by the Disability Support Services office relate to mental health. Given the number of students with mental health issues, mental health counseling available at CTC's is inadequate. CTC students need access to increased mental health services while enrolled. We ask for funding for mental health treatment so colleges can do more to serve students with mental health needs. We propose that the Legislature increase the spending for community and technical colleges to a rate of \$6 million, allowing each college to have a counselor to student ratio of at least 1,250:1.

Expanding the Working Connections Child Care Program

Lack of access to childcare is a problem in our state and may contribute to inequity among students with children. COVID-19 has exacerbated this problem. Many students struggle to find affordable childcare options, creating a barrier to beginning or finishing their education. The Working Connections Child Care Program helps low-income families pay for childcare. We ask for an expansion of the Working Child Connection Care Program, to give more families access to affordable childcare, allowing students to further their education and careers.

Issue Exploration

In addition to the legislative issues noted above, CTC students identified the following seven (7) issues, in no particular order, that association members could explore at the local level. (1) supporting part- and full-time faculty: increasing funding to hire full-time faculty, (2) funding Strengthening CTC training: saving the grant, (3) Homelessness in higher education: Support 22SB 5800 for colleges to support homeless students, (4) Increase the WASFA assistance for students, (5) Washington College Grant: Increasing funding or keeping the same funding level, (6) developing tech equity for CTC students: increase funding to all CTC's and (7) textbook affordability: Pass HB 1470.