

Subject: Update—Strategic Planning and Achieving System Integration

Colleagues,

I want to offer my appreciation for your hard work and dedication the past several months. The executive leadership team asked and received your participation on several important initiatives. For this, we are extremely grateful.

Although our efforts are not complete, we are gaining a clearer picture of the actions needed to overcome our challenges now and in the future. We are making substantial progress, but we still need your involvement to press ahead. To help, I've briefly summarized our three major initiatives (Budget Planning, Strategic Planning, and Achieving System Integration), their relationship to each other, and ways you can become involved in each process.

Budget Planning

Since the enrollment high point of the 2010–2011 academic year, we have seen a continuous decline in our local and international student population. We are also experiencing accelerated changes in technology, intense regional competition, a shift in local demographics, shrinking state funding, and changes in the state funding model. Taken together, this has resulted in a \$9 million reduction in our budget and a projected deficit ranging from \$8 million to \$10 million in the upcoming years.

Budget cuts are certain. In anticipation, college presidents and vice chancellors have taken earnest measures to reduce operational and personnel costs. Even with this, a reduction in force is likely.

I encourage you to attend the budget forums at your college to learn more about the process and offer feedback.

Strategic Planning

Seattle Colleges initiated its current strategic planning process in the summer of 2016. (The current plan sunsets in 2017.) The strategic planning began with the board of trustees, chancellor, and presidents identifying overall goals and phases for the process. In January 2017, the board determined that Seattle Colleges needs one vision, one mission, one set of values, and one set of goals for entire district. It also endorsed our "Guiding Principles for Decision Making."

Over the past seven months, we have surveyed employees; met with external advisors; conducted interviews with government, business, and community partners; and arranged meetings with key stakeholder groups to identify themes to include in a refreshed mission, vision, and set goals. We are still seeking input and invite you to participate by:

1. Taking the online survey.
2. Attending a town hall meeting at your college in April or May.
3. Contacting your college's strategic planning or institutional research lead.

After gathering input, we plan to draft a preliminary strategic plan for review by the board of trustees and community in July.

Achieving System Integration (ASI)

Organizational Excellence and Balancing Integration and Differentiation are two of the guiding principles adopted by the board of trustees and executive leadership team. It's also been a recurring theme in our strategic planning discussions. Considering this and our urgent need to increase enrollment, become more competitive, and improve our financial stability, it became imperative to lay the foundation for a more efficient and integrated structure that improves our service to students and the community.

Last fall, the Executive Cabinet identified some immediate areas for integration and assembled teams to identify operational improvements and efficiencies. These are:

- Website integration
- Enrollment
- E-learning

We then *formally* launched the Achieving System Integration effort with the distribution of a concept paper. The paper outlines the challenges, urgency, and potential areas to study. With this framework in place, we began the first phase of this process. It calls for research and data gathering on noninstructional operations and recommendations for consolidation or integration.

A Seattle Colleges steering committee, led by Mary Ellen O'Keefe, is working with Jean Floten of Floten Consultancy to manage this effort. The committee is currently reviewing our organizational structure, staffing patterns, and business operations. Their recommendations will be made available to employees late in the spring quarter. I will also ask for feedback from an external panel of key stakeholders. The Chancellor's Executive Cabinet and the board of trustees will make the final decisions.

I encourage all employees to become informed and engaged. We have posted the ASI concept paper and associated video on the chancellor's webpage.

Employees are also invited to:

- Review a recently published Q&A on ASI
- Respond to an ASI survey with questions or concerns you would like addressed at the upcoming listening sessions.
- Attend listening sessions scheduled at:
 - SVI: April 17, noon to 1:30 p.m.
 - North: April 19, 12:30 to 2 p.m.
 - Central: April 19, 3 to 4:30 p.m.
 - South: April 26, 1:30 to 3 p.m.

Employee engagement will help ensure that we have received the best ideas and strategies for strengthening Seattle Colleges now and for the future.

Position for a Better Future

For sure, these are stressful times. We undertake this work to position us for a better future: a high-impact and high-performing institution that is celebrated by students, employers, and educational partners. You can contribute to that vision. We ask you to stay engaged while continuing to serve students under our care.