Bellevue College-Washington State University

Memorandum of Understanding

Statement of Intended Purpose

Washington State University (WSU) and Bellevue College (BC) agree to explore a formal partnership between the two institutions in order to increase higher education opportunities for Washingtonians in the communities where they live; specifically in the greater Seattle metropolitan area. The focus of this partnership is to:

- Create a truly unique educational institution that addresses unmet educational needs by expanding collaborative learning environments and diversifying academic-career pathways that lead to continued higher education or directly to a career.
- Leverage the innovations and efficiencies of both parties to create an extraordinary union of open enrollment, affordability, accountability, quality, and excellence.
- Increase access to and support for success in full array of degrees and certificates (credit & noncredit) that offers a continuous seamless educational experience leading to successful careers for global citizens.

This partnership will provide high-quality and high-access educational opportunities and develop a nimble approach to meet work force needs. In so doing, it will strive to become a center for curricular/pedagogical innovation and excellence.

WSU-Bellevue College will continue to offer its broad array of two-year degrees but will augment four-year degree offerings over time based upon regional need. Students will be able to complete selected four-year degrees at WSU-Bellevue College, as well as transfer in a seamless manner to other WSU campuses for programs not available at WSU-Bellevue College.
Preliminary Guidelines

Governance

Bellevue College will become “Washington State University-Bellevue College” (WSU-Bellevue College). WSU-Bellevue College will remain a public higher education institution administered under the General Statutes of the State of Washington and the Washington State Legislature. WSU-Bellevue College will continue to be governed by a local Board of Trustees regarding issues specific to WSU-Bellevue College and its regional community and by the WSU Board of Regents regarding issues involving the WSU system.

The title of the Chief Executive of WSU-Bellevue College shall be defined as Chancellor with a direct reporting relationship to the President of Washington State University. The senior administrative team comprising the Chancellor’s cabinet will be referred to as Vice Chancellors.

Faculty

The faculty of WSU-Bellevue College will remain a separate faculty; the hiring and supervision of WSU-Bellevue College faculty and staff will remain under the authority of the Chancellor and follow WSU-Bellevue College policies and procedures. Current Bellevue College faculty and staff will remain; retaining their current statuses to the extent allowed by Washington state statutes and any final agreements between WSU and Bellevue College. Current collective bargaining structures and agreements will remain in place for WSU-Bellevue College for their specified durations.

Existing Bellevue College faculty and newly-hired Bellevue College faculty qualifying for and assuming responsibilities commensurate with tenure-track or tenured faculty appointments within the WSU system could be employed as such within WSU’s statewide academic units. These appointments would be governed by the terms specified in the WSU Faculty Manual.

Tuition and Fees

Tuition and fee rates will be established by the local Board of Trustees, with final approval by the WSU Board of Regents. WSU-Bellevue College will implement a minimum feasible tuition model designed to facilitate student access to the two-year and four-year degree programs offered at WSU-Bellevue College. Tuition rates will not exceed that of the highest tuition rate at the state’s bachelor’s, master’s, or Ph.D. granting institutions, except when the academic program does not exist at one of those institutions. In those instances, benchmarking will be with universities with similar degree programs to determine recommended tuition rates.
Curriculum

Two-year degrees require input from the appropriate WSU-Bellevue College faculty governance body and approval from the Chancellor and Board of Trustees. Four-year degrees and graduate degrees offered at WSU-Bellevue College normally require input and approval of the WSU Faculty Senate, WSU-Bellevue College Board of Trustees and WSU Board of Regents.

Offering of four-year degrees and graduate degrees will be determined through needs assessment of the community and students. WSU-Bellevue College will have the ability to pilot new program ideas in order to establish regional specific or innovative programs. Priority will be given to degrees having measureable demand that will generate sufficient revenue to cover full cost of delivery. Initially four-year course and degree offerings could take appropriate advantage of courses already being offered through the WSU Global Campus.

Degrees and Certificates

Academic degrees, diplomas, certificates, and specialized certifications shall be awarded by WSU-Bellevue College and authorized by the Board of Regents except for 2 year degrees or pilot programs at the two-year level. These credentials will carry the following signatures: Chair, Board of Regents; Chair, Board of Trustees; President of WSU and Chancellor of WSU-Bellevue College.

Admissions and Enrollment

WSU-Bellevue College will be an open access institution. Students may apply for admission to two-year degree programs, four-year degree programs, or specialized training and certificate programs. The primary degree paths will be for the two-year and four-year degrees.

In order to continue the open access mission of Bellevue College services that facilitate readiness will need to be strengthened. These service include but are not limited to, English as a second language, adult basic education, pre-college course work and the support services to successfully make the transition to and through college courses for all underserved students. Evaluation of entry requirements will be explored and designed to provide the best possible opportunity of success.

Students will be admitted to a four year program based upon the requirements of each program. Students not meeting those criteria will be admitted into a two-year program. WSU-Bellevue College will explore various modes of program entry not necessarily tied to a calendar.
Administrative Processes and Procedures

A thorough examination involving local input will be conducted of all administrative processes and procedures such as human resource services, business and finance, payroll, student services, information technology and any and all similar functions. Functions will be divided between local delivery and centralized processes to achieve maximum service and efficiency.

Funding

It is agreed that both parties will pursue legislation that provides resources to transform Bellevue College. WSU-Bellevue College will become an institution of innovation in the area of teaching and learning. The current method of funding is not sufficient to accomplish the innovation needed. Legislation will be required to avoid increasing costs to students.

Examples of support required:
- Innovative, high-impact student support services that increase success of all students
- Development and incorporation of innovative high impact teaching and learning practices

Academic Calendar

WSU-Bellevue College will be run on a semester basis.

Supplemental Document

A companion document to this memorandum has been provided as a guide for further conversations to work out the details of subsequent conversations.

Daniel J. Bernardo, Provost and Executive Vice President acting on Behalf of Elson S. Floyd, President, Washington State University

Dave Rule, President Bellevue College