



ICRC Winter Meeting

Update from Independent Colleges of Washington

February, 2026

Sheila@icwashington.org

Gonzaga University ▪ Heritage University ▪ Pacific Lutheran University ▪ Saint Martin's University ▪ Seattle Pacific University
Seattle University ▪ University of Puget Sound ▪ Whitman College ▪ Whitworth University



INDEPENDENT
COLLEGES OF
WASHINGTON



**ICW campuses
are close
to students
across the
state**



ICW Students

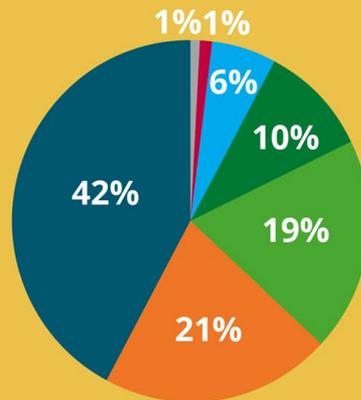
Most are from Washington

2 in 5 are from families living on low incomes

1 in 3 are first generation

58% ARE STUDENTS OF COLOR (and 60% of first-year students)

(and 60% of first-year students)



UNDERGRADUATE ENROLLMENT BY RACE/ETHNICITY

- Native American/Alaska Native: 1%
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander: 1%
- Black/African American: 6%
- Two or More Races/Ethnicities: 10%
- Asian: 19%
- Latinx/Hispanic: 21%
- White: 42%



Participation in Statewide Agreements

Member Campus	AA/AS DTA	AS-T Track 1	AS-T Track 2	Biology	Busi- ness	Comp. Science	Engineer- ing	LPN-BSN	RN-BSN	Pre- Nursing	Reverse Transfer
Gonzaga University	Y		Y		Y	Y	Y				
Heritage University	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y			
Pacific Lutheran University	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y				Y	Y
Saint Martin's University	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Seattle Pacific University	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	Y
Seattle University	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	Y
University of Puget Sound	Y										
Whitman College	Y										
Whitworth University	Y	Y		Y	Y						



Transfer Pathways Scholarships

Criteria:

- Demonstrated financial need (Pell or Washington College Grant-eligible)
- Students who transfer from any of the 34 CTCs
- Enrolled part-time or full-time

Institutional matching funds encouraged (from any source)

Renewable, subject to availability, for up to three years



Transfer Pathways & Partnerships

Pathways

Uniform Pathway to
Psychology – all ICW
campuses

Partnerships

TCC to PLU Automatic Admissions
Seattle U's Redhawk Transfer
Admission Guarantee
Whitworth GAP+ for Spokane CC,
Spokane Falls CC



Advocacy

HB 2567, SB 5828: Seeking full, indexed restorations for Washington College Grant and College Bound Scholarship programs – for students attending private, not-for-profit campuses





Inequitable State Student Aid Cuts

- **Washington College Grant Cuts (Starting AY 2026–27)**
 - For eligible students attending a not-for-profit university, grants **drop by more than \$3,200 per year**—from \$9,739 to ~\$6,437.
 - That’s a **loss of more than \$13,000** over four years.
- **College Bound Scholarship Cuts (Starting AY 2027-28)**
 - College Bound students see their scholarships **cut in half**—from ~\$13,796 to ~\$6,898 per year.
 - That’s a total **loss of >\$27,500** during their college journeys.

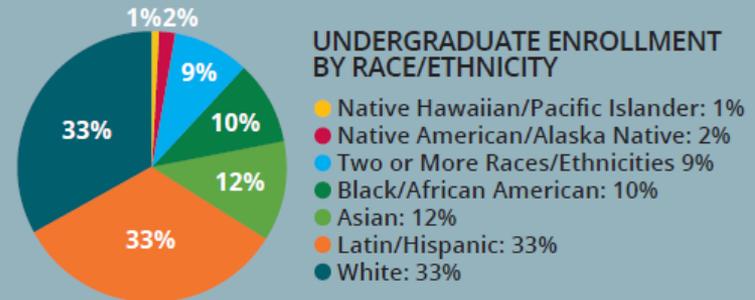
Who's Most Affected by State Cuts?

At private, not-for-profit colleges in Washington

- 67% of Washington College Grant recipients are students of color
- 65% are women
- 62% are first-generation college students

These ~**6,200** students may stop or drop out, borrow more, or forgo enrolling altogether.

Two thirds of ICW's WA Grant recipients are students of color





Washington's Workforce Will Suffer

Washington College Grant recipients attending ICW member campuses are pursuing degrees in much-needed fields

- **21%** in STEM
- **14%** in business, management, and related fields
- **13%** in health professions

Two thirds of ICW's WA Grant recipients are majoring in a high-demand field





ICW Annual Report



Questions?

If you have any questions, please contact:

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Washington Student Achievement Council Updates

Winter 2026





Transfer Updates

- Actively recruiting for up to 8 more institutions to participate in the Transfer Explorer Project
 - Current participating institutions: WSU-Everett, Central Washington University, Shoreline College, Columbia Basin College, Yakima Valley College & Clark College
 - Project update and information for the next cohort: [2026 Transfer Explorer Update](#)
- Early-stage scoping for a qualitative transfer study focused on the experiences of transfer students



Advancing Parenting Student Success Webinar February 6 at 12:30 PM, registration via zoom

- Approximately 1 in 5 Washington students on campuses are caring for a dependent, and they are disproportionately female and low-income.
- Parenting students are disproportionately impacted by basic needs insecurity: 68% of Washington parenting students report food and/or housing insecurity, compared to 52% of all students statewide.
- 75% of parenting students who need childcare report not being able to access affordable care.

ATC Winter
2026
Meeting
Summary

Working Meeting
Updates –
Conversations and
Report Outs

January 29, 2026
(Virtual)

Professional Development

Winter PD: facilitation &
communication skills

Spring PD:
career/professional materials

Survey coming for 2026–27
topics

PD archives migrating to
Canvas

Transfers & Transitions

AP crosswalks: no immediate changes

State transfer dashboard offline → collecting local top 5 pathways

Desire to revisit course sharing models (CTC-to-CTC, CTC-to-university)

Draft policy review
workflow created

ATC recommends (not
decides)

Use Canvas for polls &
discussions

AI-assisted synthesis
with human review

Preparing for DTA
changes once finalized

Admin-facing brief &
sample change-
management plan

Drafts to be posted in
Canvas for refinement

Common
Course
Numbering
(CCN)

CS& 131 title update

Add CS& 132

DATA& 101 new CCN request +
QSR consideration

Standard CIP coding discussion

No votes until Spring

AI & Academic Integrity

- Rise in AI-aided dishonesty reports
- Detectors unreliable → use multiple measures
- Assessment redesign & equitable practice
- Support systems for adjuncts
- AI tools OK with oversight

Action Items



Send PD & Transfer surveys

Distribute policy workflow draft

Draft implementation packets

CCN packets + feedback collection

Request for Help Pt. 2

Determine most frequent non-MRP/AS degree programs

Identify most frequently retaken courses within them



WINTER 2026 SBCTC UPDATE TO ICRC

State legislative update

Please see the Council of Presidents report for the combined legislative report for all institutions of higher education represented at the Joint Transfer Council. Thank you to Dr. Julie Garver for including SBCTC in the report.

For further information, please also see:

[2026 Supplemental Operating Budget Request](#)

[SBCTC Legislative News](#)

Federal legislative update

With passage of the fiscal year 2026 Labor, Health, and Human Services, Basic Education for Adults (BEEdA) programs remain level funded through June 30th, 2027.

Please see the 2026 SBCTC Federal Priorities accompanying this update.

Joint Transfer Council Activities

Direct Transfer Agreement

SBCTC will receive sector feedback on their latest proposal at the winter JTC meeting (February 9th) and will discuss and determine next steps after reviewing the feedback.

Biology Degree

SBCTC is providing written feedback to JTC on the draft Biology Degree at the winter JTC meeting.

Pre-Nursing DTA/MRP Revision

The first meeting of the pre-nursing DTA/MRP degree review and revision took place January 6th at South Seattle College. The plan is to rename the degree and revise it so that it is more aligned to a range of bachelor's degrees in the health professions. Future meetings will take place online, with the next scheduled for March 2nd. Participants are currently completing a degree mapping survey.

Math Faculty Community of Practice

The first Math Faculty COP meeting took place online on January 27th. Participants from all sectors engaged, and the group decided to focus on collecting more granular information on what is taught in each calculus course at each institution: more detailed than a course description, less detailed than a syllabus. A survey is going out to participants to complete. The next meeting will take place Tuesday, February 24th at 3:00pm.



2026 FEDERAL PRIORITIES

February 2026

Key Student Support Programs

Washington's community and technical colleges support stable student financial aid, basic needs, assistance, and innovative policies that enable student access and success in postsecondary education leading to high-demand, high-wage occupations.

Pell Grants

By expanding college access, Pell Grants help narrow the postsecondary achievement gap between low- and moderate-income students and those of greater means. They boost college enrollment, reduce drop-out rates, and improve student outcomes. We ask that Congress:

- Appropriate necessary dollars for the Pell Grant to accommodate program growth and keep pace with inflation.
- End the taxation of Pell Grants.
- Exclude Pell Grants from the American Opportunity Tax Credit.

Colleges as Drivers of Economic Growth

To maintain our colleges' ability to serve as drivers of economic growth for the state, we advocate for funding and policies that support institutional capacity to attract and train tomorrow's workforce:

- Protect and strengthen funding for Higher Education Act institutional aid programs in Title III and Title V.

- Provide grants to colleges for agricultural and natural resources programs that support the growing need for a highly skilled agricultural workforce.
- Pass the bipartisan DREAM Act or other comprehensive immigration reform to ensure an adequate supply of trained workers.

Job Training and Workforce Development

Washington state's community and technical colleges serve people right in their local communities, providing the education and training that leads to well-paying jobs, career mobility, and university studies. Whether students are 16 or 60, urban or rural, just out of high school or working adults, our colleges prepare our current and future workforce. We ask that Congress:

- Reauthorize the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).
- Expand the Strengthening Community College Training Grants program.
- Continue support for Adult Basic Education programs as an integral and dedicated component of workforce development in WIOA.
- Protect dedicated Perkins funding streams for postsecondary education and keep pace with inflation.
- Increase support for registered apprenticeships along with other innovative workforce programs.

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2026 Winter ICRC Report

Admissions season is open - 2026

Applications for 2026 admissions are now open for Washington public universities. **Please encourage students to apply now!**

We are excited to welcome Washington students to any one of Washington public universities! If a student wants to go to college, is thinking of college, or has not yet considered college, there is a place for them in Washington to achieve their dreams, receive an education, earn a degree, and follow their passion. Together, we are committed to serving all students by identifying and reducing gaps among student populations.

Postsecondary policy and engagement

[Launched a centralized sector website focused on awareness and information for Washington students and families](#)

In the fall, Washington's public universities, through Council of Presidents, launched a new initiative: wpublicuniversities.org, funded through a grant from the Gates Foundation.

The initiative provides a centralized website and awareness campaign to better serve students and families in increasing the college-going culture among Washingtonians at public universities. This initiative directly responds to feedback from state, district, and school partners seeking clear information and accessible tools. It also aligns with the universities' continual work to increase clarity and transparency for Washington students and families as they explore and prepare for a future with a Washington public university.

Over the past year, COP's six member institutions worked together to develop a shared site that unites admissions information and tools for students navigating the transition from high school to university, while preserving each institution's individual processes. The initiative builds on the leadership and expertise of our sector's admissions directors, with valuable input from our enrollment leaders whose combined contributions have been central to its success. The result is an inviting, accessible resource that helps prospective students explore options and plan their future at a Washington public university.

The new site features tools such as a degree finder and dual credit database, allowing students to identify programs of interest and understand course equivalencies. A statewide digital media campaign continuing through January 2026 will reach students ages 14–19 and their families, directing them to the site.

Revisions to the direct transfer agreement

For the last year, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) has engaged with the Joint Transfer Council (JTC) and Intercollege Relations Commission (ICRC) to develop proposed modifications to Washington State's Direct Transfer Agreement (DTA). Over the fall, COP and the Independent Colleges of Washington (ICW) worked with the universities in their respective sectors to gather feedback on the proposed modifications. COP convened two meetings of transfer and academic-related leaders to review the

proposed modifications. At the fall JTC meeting, Washington’s public universities provided feedback on the following proposed changes to the degree.

- Distribution area requirements. Our sector supports the proposed change from 15 to 10 credits for each distribution area. We do not support the proposed movement of 15 credits from the distribution area to elective credits. The credits should remain in one or more of the distribution areas.
- Elective course definition. Increasing the elective maximum to 30 credits, coupled with changes in distribution, raises concerns about the lack of structure and openness of elective credit without any guidance. We are also concerned about potential conflicts with financial aid, residency, major readiness, and accreditation requirements. We do not support the increase to 30 credits within elective credits. We do not support the removal of the phrase “as defined by the receiving institution” from elective credits.
- Mathematics classification in natural sciences. As proposed, students may complete the DTA with only one natural science course, which is a significant departure from the current requirement. The proposal lacks clarity regarding lab sciences. Clear language must be included that the remaining science requirement includes a lab science. The proposal lacks clarity regarding how the QSR math and the natural science distribution requirements align. Clear language must be included stating that the QSR math requirement cannot be double-counted with the natural science distribution requirement.
- Further discussion is needed to understand the impacts and intention regarding the following proposed change. “... allowing the remaining 5 credits to come from the expanded list, including mathematics.”
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) requirement. While supportive of embedding DEI within the 90-credit framework, clear language must be included that states the completion of a DEI requirement at a community or technical college may not satisfy graduation-level DEI requirements at the receiving institution. Clear guidance to students is essential to prevent misalignment of degree expectations.
- Further considerations. As we looked at the changes together, this prompted larger questions about the ongoing relevance of the DTA, which may require further conversations. The conversation within our sector also highlighted the need for work to develop an intentional consensus among the sectors regarding advising expectations for students who transfer with the DTA, AS-T, and MRPs.

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges communicated the proposed comments from both Washington’s public universities and ICW institutions to their colleges for further conversation. It is anticipated that a revised proposal will be shared in late December.

[Apprenticeship and Higher Education Coordinating Committee \(AHECC\)](#)

The October 30 AHECC meeting focused on aligning apprenticeship and higher education partners around shared goals for improving Related Supplemental Instruction (RSI) funding models and strengthening pathways for apprentices to access degrees and supports. The committee received updates from WSAC, SBCTC, and the Ruckelshaus Center, including new statewide financial-aid tools, tribal apprenticeship funding, and the contracting of CAEL for technical assistance. Members discussed the fiscal pressures facing both apprenticeship programs and community and technical colleges, emphasizing the need to better understand RSI costs, cost categories, and the wide variations across programs. They also underscored the importance of strong, mutually beneficial partnerships between apprenticeship programs and colleges, particularly as they consider sustainable funding approaches.

Discussion also generated a preliminary set of principles for evaluating future RSI funding models, including equity, efficiency, sustainability, responsiveness to enrollment cycles, and the need to move beyond the current system. Members requested further data and analysis from CAEL on cost structures, funding sources, and comparisons across programs and states. The committee agreed to form a new workgroup to focus on

RSI funding (tasks 4 and 5), with representation across apprenticeship programs, SBCTC, and other partners. Additional updates highlighted ongoing federal and state budget shifts affecting CTCs and apprenticeships, as well as upcoming legislative initiatives, including participation in a national Youth Apprenticeship Policy Academy. The meeting concluded with plans to continue refining recommendations in early 2026 and a request for strong in-person participation at the December meeting.

Digital sharing of high school transcript data

The Washington School Information Processing Cooperative (WISPC) is partnering with COP on the digital transcript and direct admissions project. In October, stakeholders from across Washington's educational ecosystem gathered to advance the digital transcript project, an initiative to modernize and streamline the way student academic records are managed and shared between institutions. This collaborative effort, supported by the Gates Foundation and facilitated by WSIPC, brought together representatives from K-12 districts, higher education institutions, state agencies, and educational technology providers to map current systems, identify challenges, and envision a more equitable future for transcript management.

The meeting was structured to bring clarity and alignment for the implementation of digital transcript file sharing between K-12 school systems, public universities, independent colleges, and community colleges, targeting a statewide fall launch date. The outcome of the meeting was to leave with a shared vision, defined roles, and an actionable plan.

The time spent together centered around protocols for data agreements, data extraction, CADR and course code alignment, data security, and file sharing mechanisms. Discussion focused on data sharing models and agreement, roadmaps, and the vision beyond 2026. Stakeholders will come together in February.

College in the High School (CiHS) state review

In November, the CiHS State Review Committee completed the 2025 review cycle for College in the High School programs offered in Washington. Ten Washington institutions of higher education and one out-of-state institution are now NACEP accredited. An additional ten Washington institutions completed the state review process, along with one out-of-state institution.

Dual credit outreach and FAQs

Each year, K-12 and higher education partners update the dual credit FAQs. [The latest dual credit FAQs for Running Start, CiHS, and AP/IB/Cambridge are now available.](#) In addition, COP joined the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges and OSPI to host a joint dual credit webinar in late October. The webinar focused on policy and legislative updates, OSPI bulletin highlights, FAQ updates, summer Running Start review, College in the High School Alliance cohort work, and CTE Dual Credit/Pilot work. [The webinar can be accessed here.](#)

New Degrees

New public four-year university degrees implemented since the fall 2025 ICRC meeting:

- WSU Pullman and Global; BA Economic Sciences

COP Contact and Resource Information

Discover the latest information about Washington's public baccalaureate sector and COP on our [website](#) and on [LinkedIn](#).



Winter ICRC Meeting 2026 Legislative Session Update

Overview

The 2026 supplemental legislative session convened on January 12, 2026. The session is in Week 4 of a 60-day session. The first major deadline of the session passed on February 4. All bills must have moved from the policy committee of the chamber of origin to either the fiscal committee or the floor of the respective chamber. The session is scheduled to adjourn on March 12, 2026.

Key Deadlines

*Please note bills deemed necessary to implement the budget (NTIB) are not required to meet the deadlines.

- February 9: All bills must move from the fiscal committee of their respective chamber of origin to the floor of their respective chamber.
- February 17: All bills must have moved from their respective chamber to the opposite chamber.
- February 25: All bills must move from the policy committee of the opposite chamber of origin to either the fiscal committee or the floor of the opposite chamber.
- March 2: All bills must move from the fiscal committee of the opposite chamber of origin to the floor of the opposite chamber.
- March 6: All bills, unless deemed necessary to implement the budget (NTIB), must have moved from the opposite chamber to the Governor's desk.
- March 12: Legislature adjourns.

Bills of Interest for ICRC

Admissions

- [SB 5978](#): Establishing the Washington guaranteed admissions program and requiring student notifications.
 - Referred to Senate Ways & Means Committee.
- [SB 6052](#): Establishing a statewide digital transcript data-sharing environment.
 - Referred to Senate Ways & Means Committee

Athletics

- [HB 2205/SB 6137](#): Concerning the regulated sports wagering industry.
 - Referred to House Rules Committee
 - Referred to Senate Floor

Budget/Tuition/Revenue

- [HB 2289/SB 5998](#): Making 2025-2027 fiscal biennium supplemental operating appropriations.
 - Public hearing January 12 and 14 House Committee on Appropriations
 - Public hearing January 13 Senate Committee on Ways & Means
- [HB 2295/SB 6003](#): Concerning the capital budget.
 - Public hearing January 15 House Committee on Capital Budget
 - Public hearing January 12 Senate Ways & Means Committee
- [HB 2324](#): Concerning tuition waivers for children of eligible veterans.

- Referred to House Appropriations
- [HB 2515/SB 6171](#): Addressing emerging large energy use facilities.
 - Executive action taken February 2 House Committee on Environment & Energy
 - Referred to Senate Ways & Means Committee
- [SB 5954](#): Concerning veteran survivor tuition waiver eligibility.
 - Public hearing February 2 Senate Ways & Means Committee
- [SB 6113](#): Concerning taxes administered by the department of revenue.
 - Public hearing January 22 Senate Committee on Ways & Means

College and University Employees

- [HB 1570](#): Concerning collective bargaining for certain employees who are enrolled in academic programs at public institutions of higher education.
 - Referred to House Rules Committee

Credentialing/Degrees/Academic Programs

- [HB 2309](#): Reducing barriers to state employment by eliminating postgraduate degree requirements that are unnecessary.
 - Referred to Senate State Government, Tribal Affairs & Elections
- [HB 2438](#): Establishing the supporting our early education degree seekers scholarship.
 - Executive action taken February 3 House Committee on Postsecondary Education & Workforce
- [SB 5909](#): Reviewing and discontinuing low-enrollment undergraduate programs at public baccalaureate institutions.
 - Public hearing February 3 Senate Ways & Means Committee
- [SB 6278](#): Concerning the ongoing review of approved teacher and principal preparation programs.
 - Referred to Senate Rules Committee

Data

- [HB 2606](#): Concerning performance measures, duties, and reporting requirements for the office of privacy and data protection.
 - Referred to House Rules Committee
- [HB 2637](#): Safeguarding personal information entrusted to agencies that is of no legitimate concern to the public.
 - Executive action taken February 3 House Committee on State Government & Tribal Relations
- [SB 6227](#): Formalizing data collection protocols to support parenting students.
 - Referred to Senate Rules Committee

Dual Credit

- [SB 6260](#): Implementing efficiencies and programming changes in public education.
 - Referred to Senate Ways & Means Committee

Financial Aid/Affordability

- [HB 2132](#): Concerning applications for state financial aid.
 - Public hearing February 2 House Appropriations Committee
- [HB 2458/SB 6217](#): Expanding access to the Washington college grant to students enrolled in eligible postsecondary nondegree credential programs.
 - Executive action taken February 3 House Committee on Postsecondary Education & Workforce
 - Referred to Senate Ways & Means Committee
- [HB 2586/SB 5963](#): Modifying funding for the passport to careers program and eligibility for the Washington college grant.
 - Executive action taken February 3 House Committee on Postsecondary Education & Workforce
 - Public hearing February 3 Senate Ways & Means Committee
- [SB 5828](#): Concerning the Washington college grant and college-bound scholarship program for students attending private four-year not-for-profit institutions of higher education in Washington.

- Public hearing scheduled February 6 Senate Ways & Means Committee
- [SB 5841](#): Concerning the completion of postsecondary financial aid applications.
 - Referred to Senate Floor
- [SB 6082](#): Safeguarding student financial aid from fraud.
 - Public hearing scheduled February 5 Senate Ways & Means Committee
- [SB 6209](#): Concerning financial aid awards for students attending private four-year institutions of higher education.
 - Referred to Senate Ways & Means Committee

Governance

- [HB 2311/SB 5931](#): Concerning workforce education investment accountability and oversight board administrative changes.
 - Referred to House Rules Committee
 - Referred to Senate Floor
- [HB 2474](#): Concerning postsecondary education consumer protections in the event of school or program closures.
 - Executive action taken February 3 House Committee on Postsecondary Education & Workforce
- [SB 6089](#): Increasing coordination and alignment throughout the P20W system.
 - Referred to Senate Rules Committee

Public Records

- [HB 2244](#): Adopting the recommendations of the public records exemptions accountability committee in its 2025 annual report.
 - Referred to House Rules.
- [SB 6049](#): Protecting student and employee information from public disclosure.
 - Referred to Senate Rules Committee

Student Supports

- [HB 1316](#): Expanding the scope of programs for postsecondary students experiencing homelessness and former foster youth.
 - Public hearing scheduled February 6 House Committee on Appropriations
- [HB 2087/SB 6248](#): Addressing travel insurance.
 - Executive action taken February 4 House Committee on Consumer Protection & Business
 - Referred to Senate Rules Committee
- [SB 5826](#): Concerning access at public postsecondary educational institutions to medication abortion.
 - Public hearing February 3 Senate Ways & Means Committee
- [HB 2550/SB 6252](#): Adding certain students at certain community and technical colleges to the passengers that must be allowed to ride transit for free under the transit support grant program.
 - Public hearing January 28 House Committee on Transportation
 - Public hearing February 3 Senate Committee on Transportation
- [HB 2727](#): Creating the educational transit access grant program to reduce the cost of public transportation for community and technical college students.
 - Public hearing scheduled February 6 House Transportation Committee

Technology

- [HB 2365](#): Advancing digital opportunities for all.
 - Public hearing scheduled February 6 House Appropriations Committee



JOINT TRANSFER COUNCIL

Fall Meeting Executive Summary

The Joint Transfer Council (JTC) convened at Yakima Valley College to review transfer policy and degree frameworks across Washington's higher education sectors. Key topics included updates on the Pre-Nursing DTA/MRP, finalizing signatures to the Computer Science DTA/MRP and an update on Washington's participation in the College in the High School Alliance (CHSA) initiative to expand dual credit access and the Universal Transfer Explorer tool.

The JTC discussion centered on proposed revisions to the DTA degree and alignment of transfer pathways. COP and ICW provided detailed feedback to the proposed draft revisions. The group emphasized the need for clarity and continued collaboration to ensure reforms strengthen transfer student outcomes. JTC agreed to move forward on three major initiatives: revising the DTA with a final version expected by spring 2026; aligning statewide transfer degrees with guided pathways, including new degrees in social sciences and humanities/arts; and developing new statewide transfer degrees tailored for dual credit students, with planning discussions to continue at the winter JTC meeting.