



SOUTH SEATTLE COLLEGE

One of the Seattle Colleges

May 21, 2018

Dear Interim President Peter Lortz:

Thank you for giving the College Council the opportunity to provide you with feedback regarding the 2018-2019 budget development process. Based on the feedback we received from our May 16th Budget Hearing, we present you a summary of themes, concerns, and suggestions for further clarification and communication to the campus community.

First of all, given how much change the campus and district is experiencing, we wondered if now is a good time to refocus on our mission and vision as a college. Several questions regarding change and “who we are” surfaced in our discussion. Has our mission and vision gotten lost in the development of a district mission and vision? How do we serve our students? Are all of the decisions in line with our campus’s core themes? There is a concern that we are letting our students down. South is a place where a sense of community and family are valued. Are we moving away from this? To remind us all of what we promise our students, we included South Seattle College Mission and Core Themes here:

Our Mission

South Seattle College is a constantly evolving educational community dedicated to providing quality learning experiences which prepare students to meet their goals for life and work.

The college values and promotes a close involvement with the community and strong partnerships with business, labor and industry.

The college commits to meeting the diverse needs of students by providing:

- Applied baccalaureate, associate degree, college transfer, certificate, technical and professional, and pre-college programs which prepare students to succeed in their careers and further their education.
- Responsive technical and professional training programs developed in collaboration with business, labor and industry.
- Student-centered and community-centered programs and services which value diversity, support learning, and promote student success.
- Lifelong learning opportunities for the cultural, social, professional and personal development of the members of our communities.

Our Core Themes

- Student Achievement
- Teaching and Learning
- College Culture and Climate
- Community Engagement and Partnerships

There were a few **themes** that emerged from the Budget Hearing feedback:

- Generally, there was support for no further cuts to Student Services and Administrative Services.
- Support for Grant Manager position with openness to restructure the position, possibly as a district function.
- Focus efforts on generating revenue.
- Administrative roles are too top heavy-support for reorganization in this area.
- Student services is essential to retention.
- Focus efforts on adapting to our market/community needs.
- Importance of connecting industry to our college's program offerings.
- Environmental sustainability and energy efficiencies as a cost savings-several ideas in this area including, but not limited to:
 - Completely close campus on Fridays
 - Consolidate evening and weekend classes into one (or fewer) building(s)
 - Helping our custodial staff more efficiently use their time (ex. offices put their trash in one central bin each day)
- Exploring how we use our campus spaces as a revenue source.

There were several **questions or points for further clarity** that this feedback revealed and the College Council representatives wish to elevate. In no particular order:

- The description of the impact of headcount vs. FTE was helpful, but there were some questions and desire to understand this further.
- A request for more detailed information about the overall "pie" that was alluded to and the percentages in each area. How has that pie changed over time?
- What are the individual cost to run each of the offices/departments/divisions of the campus? While it was stated that district allocation numbers were not known at the time of the meeting, many people expressed a desire to see numbers for each area.
- Further clarification on the impact of the cost of the new AVP EDI, as well as their specific role and function on the campus.
- How do we justify reducing the area (instruction) that brings revenue? Are we concerned how this lack of revenue will impact the future of the college?
- Potential cuts to evening classes—who does that impact? How do we know what demographics are impacted by the cuts we choose to make? Who do we serve?
- What will happen to the rest of the college when we keep cutting instruction?
- What kind of admin restructuring is being done? How will this help the overall budget situation?
- How we will revitalize our resources after this storm is over? How we will bounce back?
- How will the District support us through ASI? We want to know that the Chancellor and Board of Trustees have our back. What can the Board do to step up in this difficult time?
- Where's the light at the end of the tunnel? Morale is low.
- What does a healthy balance sheet look like? And how do we get there? How far away are we?

Finally, there were also a few key **recommendations** for the process moving forward:

- We all need to remind ourselves that it is not helpful to pit different services/areas against one another – we are stronger as a community when we all work together.
- Keep students at the forefront of all decisions. There is a lot of concern for student livelihood and for the negative impact on students.
- In terms of future communication:

- As soon as numbers are known, share them. If you feel like you are over-communicating, you are probably communicating just enough.
- Include students in communications early and often – this is a particular concern.
- When will the budget website be available? In conjunction with the website, it would be helpful to send out all the budget documents again.
- For the next president, we encourage them to lead the campus in a culture shift to one of retention and completion.

We heard from attendees that they appreciated the high level of transparency of each presentation and that people felt fairly well informed despite a high level of anxiety. There was a sense of gratitude about how hard the VPs are working on these issues. There are remaining concerns regarding fairness in how cuts are being made or will be made.

We know that the next decisions will not be easy ones to make, but hopefully these recommendations will help make it clearer where the priorities of the faculty, staff and students lie at this time. Thank you for this opportunity to give you our recommendations and the campus community looks forward to future communication regarding the budget development process.

With respect,

South Seattle College Council