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Community Colleges of Spokane Best Case Scenario for the Future (10+ years)

This Best-case Scenario describes an ideal future for the Community Colleges of Spokane, centering on (a) the mission and values of CCS, (b) students, (c) educational programs and student services, (d) facilities and technology, (e) administrative/business operations, and (g) institutional culture for change. The scenario was created based on two assumptions: first, the *economy* (national, state, and local) is good and second, CCS has the capacity to “*adapt*.”

Mission Vision Values

The Community Colleges of Spokane, collaborating as a district, is committed to providing quality, relevant and affordable learning opportunities for students in support of the social and economic well being of our six-county region. CCS considers it important to:

- Be student centered
- Pursue excellence
- Operate as a district
- Be recognized as a leader
- Increase educational access
- Optimize the use of technology
- Recruit and retain high-quality faculty and staff
- Pursue fiscal development
- Improve the quality of life for our constituents
- Demonstrate respect for all people

CCS (a) sets the standard for community colleges, inspiring students to transform their lives, build the nation, and uplift humanity; (b) inspires learning that builds the nation, leads society, and enriches the world; and (c) builds leaders whose work and civic action transforms lives.

Students in 2021

CCS continues to serve students who come from many segments of the Spokane community, with special attention to the underserved, those who struggle to make ends meet and who, otherwise, may not have access to a post secondary education. The student population is diverse in terms of ethnicity, SES, age, educational background, and work-experiences. The vast majority of students enter CCS with high technical skills—they are tech savvy in that they can use the computer for word processing and connect to the web for educational and social networking purposes.

Students successfully complete their educational goals and their AA/AFA degrees, and do so in a timely manner. They are motivated to succeed by doing their very best work. CCS Graduates who transfer to four-year institutions are successful and find this transfer to be “seamless” given the quality of the CCS education they have received. ABE/GED/ESL students successfully transition on to degree programs. All CCS graduates have high competencies in basic knowledge and skills needed to succeed in life. Not only are they able to think critically and communicate effectively, they also are globally aware and culturally competent. Students enrolled in certificate or licensure programs successfully pass qualifying exams. These accomplishments result in graduates being able to fulfill their educational dreams and to find gainful employment in their chosen fields of study.

Graduates of all CCS programs consider their lives to be improved as a result of their educational experiences. They are self-disciplined, life-long learners who can make good choices that enhance their lives. Graduates of CCS work-training programs find meaningful work and are able to practice self-sustaining behaviors in the workplace. They make decent wages and find their standard of living to be improved. Given their commitment to life-long learning, alumni continue to support CCS by becoming mentors for students, attending various CCS events, and contributing to the Alumni Foundation.

CCS graduates make a difference in society. They contribute to the economy by improving their standard of living, which decreases dependence on local, state, or federal financial assistance. They become active citizens, applying their knowledge and skills to improve society. They actively engage in service activities and become leaders in their communities. Through their work, service, and civic action they are able to “transform the world.”

Educational Programs and Student Services in 2021

Educational Programs

All CCS’s educational programs have an unshakable focus on student learning and success in life. The AA and AAS degree programs and the ABE/GED/ESL programs follow “best practices” and are recognized locally, statewide, and nationally for their strength in providing clear pathways to student success. CCS’ educational programs help students develop special talents and attitudes that enable them to gain a sense of social responsibility and a desire for life-long learning. The programs have clear, common foci and maintain high standards and expectations for both faculty teaching and student learning. Best practices applied are innovative, creative, and effective in achieving desired student outcomes and ultimately in building stronger, healthier communities.

Each program has a well-designed curriculum that actively engages students in the learning process through in-class discussions and dialogues and through work-related skill training and development. Real-life issues are woven into the curriculum to encourage students to think critically, to be sensitive to cultural differences, and to consider course content from a global perspective. Service learning opportunities are integrated into several program offerings to help build a sense of social responsibility among students.

CCS faculty continue to foster collaborative partnerships with the business community, four-year institutions of higher learning, and K-12 schools that feed into the community college system. Partnerships provide an open resource for

understanding trends in the workforce and relevant educational experiences needed for student success. As new industry breaks through, new programs and partnerships are established. Partnerships with four-year institutions are ongoing to clarify educational expectations and to assure students transferring to these institutions can readily complete the bachelor degree. Relationships inherent in these partnerships are important in building stronger community ties and in assuring the AA and AAS program curricula are up-to-date and delivered in a state-of-the-art fashion.

Delivery of the programs is flexible and fluid to help meet varied student needs and to assure students are able to complete their educational goals in a timely manner. There is continuous and flexible scheduling, more accelerated program options, greater access to tutorial programs, and opportunities for students to make up classes missed by accessing lectures through podcasts located on the web and through online course modules. Technology has changed the way courses are delivered. While maintaining rigor some courses are offered fully online, some in a hybrid format, and some with supplemental modules available to students. The use of technology for the delivery of programs maximizes the use of time, thereby accommodating the varied lives of students.

There is a sufficient number of full-time faculty members in each program to ensure ongoing curriculum development and continuous improvement. These faculty members play a critical role not only in developing programs but as well in engaging in conversation with other community college professionals through their scholarly writing and presentations.

Student Services

Student Services use best practices to improve educational opportunities for all students, and are recognized regionally and nationally for the work they do. CCS students, faculty, and community members praise the role student services play in helping students reach their educational goals in a timely manner. Decreasing

dropout rates for low-income students who are particularly vulnerable to dropping is a priority goal for student services as staff members work closely with “at risk” students to help them cope and manage everyday pressures of work, family, and school.

CCS’ Student Services are many and varied including admissions, registration, financial aid and scholarships, academic and personal counseling, and academic tutorial assistance. Students are invited to connect with one another and build a sense of belonging to the CCS community outside the classroom by attending planned CCS activities such as sporting and cultural events and career fairs. All services provided are focused on students having positive and successful educational experiences at CCS.

Delivery of student services involves a deep caring for all students. Students feel they belong at CCS and gain confidence they will succeed in meeting their educational goals. Student services are delivered in an effective and efficient manner by using a “center” approach, which involves an intentional collaborative effort among staff to carefully monitor students’ needs and to provide services seamlessly and quickly. Technology further enhances the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery as students are able to access orientation classes, register for classes on line, and connect with counselors and mentors online at a time that is convenient to the student.

Technology and Facilities in 2021

Technology has significantly changed how CCS does business. New technologies continue to surface and redefine the way CCS’ delivers educational programs and student services, manages facilities, and oversees administrative/business operations. CCS is committed to using state-of-the-art technologies throughout the institution to assure students are prepared for the world of work and for furthering their education in four-year institutions, and to enhance efforts toward evidence-based best practices throughout the system. State-of-the art technology contributes

to student success by providing supplemental interactions, online student support services, online support groups, easy access to a myriad of educational materials, and increased interactions with faculty and staff. Technology greatly facilitates students being able to accomplish their educational goals in a timely manner and makes them life-long learners of the 21st century. Administration continues to benefit from the use of state-of-the-art technology by being able to establish databases that provide critical information on a continual basis concerning student outcomes.

There is a high level of interface/integration among units and programs in the CCS district. Integration is important to ensure that technology use is both effective and efficient and is aligned with CCS mission and values and statewide initiatives for the use of online learning, accreditation requirements, etc. Using consistent platforms, CCS is effectively interfacing instruction, administrative systems, social networking, and student services across the district. Data warehouse and business intelligence are used to expand the use of data base technologies; reporting tools facilitate decision-making. Hardware and software use is effective, efficient, and user friendly. Training is readily available for students, faculty, staff, and administrators, and tech support is available 24x7 to assist students and employees.

Buildings are designed to meet educational needs in the classrooms. Instructional technology is readily accessible and labs are well equipped to enhance learning. The learning spaces are flexible, allowing for various large and small group configurations. CCS facilities are economically and environmentally sustainable. Attention is paid to the use of energy for lighting and chemicals for cleaning and grounds keeping. Controls in each building are HVAC and LEED standards are followed. Faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to recycle all recyclable materials.

Local community members actively use buildings as a place to connect, engage in conversations, and attend planned CCS events. Both students and community

members feel welcome in the buildings. They are comfortable, safe, clean, and accessible. The aesthetics of the buildings include multicultural art, reflecting CCS' values of diversity and inclusiveness. Areas surrounding the buildings are beautifully landscaped and well maintained, adding to the aesthetics and giving an immediate impression that space is important, it serves a function, and needs to be well cared for.

Administrative/Business Processes and Operations in 2021

CCS considers good governance to be focused on student success, paying close attention to current trends and driving forces that influence students being able to complete their education and find meaningful work. CCS governance works toward unifying the district, assuring that operations are streamlined, LEAN, efficient, and effective. It leads change in the district by clarifying goals and objectives and by modifying attitudes and behaviors through group processes that help manage change that is effective and lasting. Attention is paid to meeting challenges forthrightly with the intent of improving processes, relationships, and operations for the good of the institution.

Policies and procedures deemed important by CCS governance have meaning and value, with a focus on actions and behaviors that are for the good. Policies and procedures are made openly, collaboratively, and prudently. They are clear, concise, accessible, and culturally sensitive, and are faithfully implemented. Policies are continually reviewed for their impact on desired outcomes, with changes being made accordingly.

Budget and Finance administrators serve in an advisory role to CCS' governance regarding the operational functions needed to accomplish district strategic initiatives, goals, and objectives. Budget and Finance administrators' work is based on the principle of producing the best long-term results for the district by making budgetary decisions that are wise and LEAN. Wise decisions mean being fiscally

responsible now and in the district's future, making decisions that are collaborative, transparent, dependable, predictable, and stable. Being LEAN means funding the right programs to meet emerging educational needs of CCS students, with no duplication of programs and no unnecessary spending. Budget and Finance administrators continually seek innovative practices to maximize the efficient use of resources based on needs and benefits and to find cost effective ways to improve operations.

CCS has established a culture of evidence, clarity of responsibility and accountability. The main purpose of the accountability system is to establish an open, supportive, and information rich environment, which sets the stage for future developmental practices for the institution. Students are aware of accountability data and this becomes a reason why they choose CCS. They want to attend a college that has a good reputation for offering high quality programs and services.

Meaningful data are available to gain insights about student success at CCS, using student metrics that speak of educational outcomes. Participation in assessment and the evaluative review of programs and services is a high priority. The climate and culture of the institution is monitored to gain awareness of the health of the system and its capacity to engage in meaningful change. The district's accounting system itself is continually reviewed to ensure its validity and reliability. Of interest is whether the accounting system provides meaningful information that indeed leads the district toward continuous improvement.

Institutional Culture for Change in 2021

CCS promotes a culture of change that is based on the notion of productive communities, communities that engage in collaborative efforts to discover new ways to better serve students. Productive communities build committed teams that are innovative, collaborative, self-motivated, and accountable; they consider the collective "big-picture" to supersede self-interest and critical thinking to supersede routine behaviors; feedback becomes a critical aspect of the creative process.

Dialogue, the act of thinking and talking together that requires people to confront their assumptions, concerns, fears, and dreams, facilitates individual and group learning. Dialogue helps community members become productive by encouraging honest, open communication at times when ambiguity is high and the need for new insights is critical.

CCS attracts, hires, and retains high quality faculty, staff, and administrators who have the desire and capacity to implement best practices in the work they do. CCS employees provide balance and a sense of sustainability across the district. Not only are they highly knowledgeable and competent in work performance, they care deeply about CCS students and are committed to their success. They model the very outcomes they desire for students; they too are life-long learners, critical thinkers, globally aware and culturally competent, and are able to communicate effectively with students and colleagues. One-by-one, faculty, staff, and administrators make a difference in the lives of students. Collectively, through extraordinary accomplishments, CCS is recognized as a leading educational institution able to transform the world.