



WCTCCA Spring 2015 Newsletter

Did you take the survey?

The Washington Community and Technical College Counseling Association (WCTCCA) is now looking at the input to plan future activities and conferences.



In order to learn how we can better serve you, please complete the quick five-question anonymous survey. Also, if you know any counselors who are new to the community and technical college system, or who might not be familiar with the WCTCCA, would you please pass this survey on to them?

We are seeking as much input as possible.

WCTCCA Survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LMHGLDW>

*The link to the survey is also available on the front page of our website:
www.wcctcca*

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Are you on the WCTCCA list serve?



We have a free list serve that anyone can join. You can use the list serve to send messages to the membership and stay informed of events and issues.



We have had reports that some people are not receiving messages from the list serve. If this is happening to you try checking your filters or spam folder on your email, or try resigning up and if you still have problems please contact:

Annemarie Solbrack

Email: Annemarie.solbrack@cptc.edu

To sign up for the list serve go to:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/WCTCCA/>



Now Accepting Submission for CCA Newsletter.

If you would like to write an article or submit information for a future newsletter please send them to:

annemarie.solbrack@cptc.edu

WCTCCA April 27-28 2015 Spring Conference Report

We had a great time again this year at Rainbow Lodge Retreat Center. Our two formal presentations were available for CE credits and both were well received. The presentation was addressing Immigrant Advocacy with Hannah Stone. Our second training focused on Supporting and Responding to Victims of Sexual Assault and was presented by Emily Gassert from King County Sexual Assault Resource Center. Both presentations are available on our website under the tab "Past Conferences/Meetings".

Election of New officers

Chairperson

Annemarie Solbrack is stepping down as chairperson and Heidi Matlack will be the new chairperson.

Vice Chairperson

Congratulations and thank you to Devon Klein from Green River College who is the newly elected Vice Chairperson.

Secretary

Thank you to Margaret Vlahos from Whatcom community college for her years of diligent service to the organization as secretary. Congratulations and thank you to Brian Shook who is the newly elected Secretary, he has served as secretary in the past and has stepped up to serve the organization again.

Treasurer

A big thank you to Dale Zeretzke for his continued service to the organization for all of his work to support the organization.

2015-2016 WCTCCA Officers

Chairperson:

Heidi Matlack, Yakima Valley Community College,
email: hmatlack@yvcc.edu

Vice Chairperson:

Devon Klein, Green River College,
email: dklein@greenriver.edu

Secretary:

Brian Shook, Grays Harbor College,
email: bshook@ghc.edu

Treasurer:

Dale Zeretzke, Seattle Central Community College,
email: dale.zeretzke@seattlecolleges.edu



Student Retention Through Urgent Funding



*Jane Lowe-Webster, LMHC
Counselor, Bellingham Technical College*

If you had to think of one thing that could cause a student to have to drop out of school, what would it be? For me, one of the biggest obstacles to student success is unexpected financial difficulties. It is really sad when any student drops out, but when it is because they couldn't pay for a car repair, or to move from an abusive situation, or for a dental emergency, it is just heartbreaking.

At Bellingham Technical College, for years, we have had little pots of money in various departments that could be used for emergency funds. This includes the Foundation, the Associated Students, some extra funds in Financial Aid, and some grant funds through Workforce Funding and BFET. The problem was that there was no clear, consistent process for awarding emergency funds. It depended on who a student happened to talk to, and whether that person knew of funds, and sometimes their personal belief about the student's situation.

Having learned about the Financial Triage process used at Walla Walla Community College, we formed a group made up of representatives from all of the departments that received requests for emergency funds: The Foundation, the ASBTC, the 2 counselors, Financial Aid, and Workforce Funding. Together, we looked at all the pots of money that can be used for emergency/urgent funding, and what the requirements/restrictions are for the various funds. In addition, we found a small pot of money that had been used in the past for emergency funds by the Vice President for Student Services, (the pop machine funds) but with changes in that position, the emergency funding designation had been "lost". When this account was tracked down, having not been used by the last two VPSS in five years, we found that it had grown to \$35,000. What great seed money! Our current VPSS agreed to let us use it for urgent funds when there are no other funds available.

We created a very simple process where a student can come to any of the seven members of the team, and complete a request for funds that includes the following:

- ◆ What is the nature of the urgent need for funds?
- ◆ What plan is in place to assure that by meeting this need, the student will be able to meet their future expenses?
- ◆ How has the Financial Aid been used?
- ◆ Is their budget reasonable?
- ◆ Does the student have documentation for the need? (receipts, bills, etc.)

The application is completed at intake by the team member who first meets with the student and addresses the questions listed above. This form includes a budget showing all sources of income, Financial Aid, and expenses.

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Student Retention Through Urgent Funding *continued...*

The form is part of a database created where we can see the list of requests, the intake form for any particular student, comments by the person submitting the form, and comments from the rest of the group. When an application is submitted, all members of the team are automatically alerted and asked to read the request. Each member then submits comments and votes on the request. When any member votes or makes comments, the others are alerted by an auto-generated email. If four of the seven members approve a request, it is awarded. When approved, the originator gets an email asking them to arrange for funding. Sometimes there is discussion about the best fund to use. The advantage is that the whole process can be very fast. We have awarded funds in one day. Usually, if all documentation is in place, the funds can be put in the student's account in 2-3 days.

There are several advantages to this process:

- ⇒ Each urgent funding request is treated exactly the same, by the same individuals.
- ⇒ Funds are available quickly so the urgent need is addressed.
- ⇒ No one person has to feel responsible when faced with a difficult decision. This also prevents manipulation of the system.
- ⇒ Having representatives from multiple departments allows different perspectives to be brought forward. Often one member knows the student and can provide additional information.
- ⇒ A common database allows us to track funding from all sources, run reports, and determine trends in student needs.
- ⇒ The creation of a common fund has allowed the Foundation to solicit additional funds from the campus community specifically for Urgent Needs.

Our team meets weekly, if needed, to discuss current requests or to revise the process. There is no set amount for these awards. It might be \$35 for a tool, or it could be \$800 for rent/deposit on a place to rent. Generally funds are not awarded for regular expenses that a student needs to budget for. They are for urgent, unexpected expenses that the student had no way of planning for. We generally limit the awards to no more than \$500, but each situation is treated individually. Students are made aware that it is a one-time award. Students are not required to take out loans before requesting these funds unless it seems that their budget is not workable without loans.

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Student Retention Through Urgent Funding *continued...*

We started the process in December, 2014. To date, we have awarded \$11,000 to 31 students, primarily in the categories of housing, transportation, and educational expenses. Here is a testimonial and nomination of the team for an Excellence Award from a student who received \$500 and is graduating this spring:

"The Urgent Funding Team at Bellingham Technical College can make all the difference in whether a student, due to lack of finances, can continue their education or will have to drop out. In my three years at BTC, I have met many of these students including those who are single parents, dealing with disabilities, working full time, have no personal or financial support system, or are otherwise disadvantaged. I have witnessed their courage, commitment and dedication to not give up under dire circumstances. I have also witnessed those who are unable to keep their heat on, buy groceries, have enough money to buy gas to get to school, pay their daycare, afford to purchase the needed software for a class, etc. The list goes on. The most heartbreaking is when I have witnessed some of these students having to drop out because of this.

The Urgent Funding Team's ability to help in these situations is critical to the ability of the student to complete their education and succeed in life which not only affects them but all those they care for. Despite my brain injury I was determined to go back to college and be able to return to work. After three years of extremely hard work and completing all courses, I only needed to complete a 180 hour internship. However, due to lack of finances to completely support myself during the internship, I needed to find work immediately and would have to forego my degree and graduation. After trying several other avenues for financial help, I contacted the Urgent Funding Team but expected nothing. However, I was amazed to hear back immediately. I completed the application and due to the dedication and caring of the Urgent Funding Team, I was approved and sent a check within days! I felt like a million pounds had been lifted from my shoulders, I could finally breathe and knew that everything would be alright. I could start my internship, complete my degree, graduate and become a contributing employee and member of society.

I can never praise or thank the members of the Urgent Funding Team enough. They are a dedicated, caring, dynamic force who helps those in desperate need so they can continue with their education. Everyone deserves the right to attend college, especially those who are facing impossible challenges and personal and financial circumstances. I and all the other students whose lives have been transformed by the grace and blessings of the Urgent Funding Team strongly speak out in nominating them for the 2015 Excellence award!"



I would encourage all colleges to form an Urgent Funding team. The benefits are substantial.

WCTCCA Membership Applications

Membership Dues are due each *Fall Quarter* and are good for one academic year: *September through August*.

WCTCCA is the only professional association of community college counselors in Washington State. Full membership in WCTCCA is a very reasonable \$30 per academic year and is tax-deductible. Student membership is \$20 per year. Members receive a reduced rate for the annual WCTCCA Spring Conference.

Washington Community and Technical Colleges Counseling Association (WCTCCA)

Membership Application

Name (First, Last) _____ [] Counselor \$30 [] Student \$20

Institution _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Payment Type () Personal Check (check # _____) () Institutional Check

Please keep a copy of this completed form for your records.

Full members are voting members who have paid the annual dues and who: have been employed as a counseling faculty member by a Washington State community or technical college within the past two years and either have earned at least a Masters degree in a field which included a counseling practicum or have worked for at least two years as a counseling faculty member.

Student members: are non-voting members and pay a reduced fee of \$20 a year. Student members must be enrolled in a graduate level counseling program at an accredited college or university.

Make Payment to: WCTCCA

Mail Payment and Completed Membership Form To:

Margaret Vlahos, Counselor
Whatcom Community College
237 Kellogg Rd.
Bellingham, WA 98226

Join Our List Serve



Members are encouraged to register with Yahoo groups and join our WCTCCA listserv. This is a great way to connect with your colleagues across the state.

To sign up go to: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/WCTCCA/>

Check out our Website: www.wctcca.com



We have posted links to useful websites, forms and articles and hope to continuing update the information.