

A Message from Washington's Colleges and Universities to Washington's Students

What to Know and Consider as You Plan Ahead During the COVID-19 Crisis
April 9, 2020

Washington's public and private not-for-profit four-year colleges and universities and community and technical colleges are committed to meeting the college and career goals of Washington's students. We know that many Washington students want to further their education after high school or transfer to a four-year college or university. **We want Washington students who have yet to decide where they will enroll—or are re-thinking or just now making their college plans—to consider the terrific options available here at home.**

Everyone—students, families, communities, and institutions—is experiencing the extraordinary circumstances around the COVID-19 pandemic together. We recognize the hard work of making college a reality; we mourn with you what may be missed—ceremonies, recognitions, research, study abroad—and we understand the uncertainty that still lies ahead. We also strongly believe that living through this crisis will strengthen the resiliency of Washington students for years to come.

We are here collectively, and as individual colleges and universities, to help current and future students achieve their goals, navigate this crisis, and plan for their futures. You are not alone.

Moving forward, we believe that **students should:**

- **Continue to seek challenges in current academic studies.** [Research](#) tells us that students who engage in advanced and rigorous coursework in high school enroll, continue and graduate from college at higher rates.
- **Know Washington's colleges and universities are proactively engaged.** We are consistently communicating with current and future students to support access to, enrollment in, and successful completion of a college education.

We believe that secondary schools and higher education institutions should:

- **Continue to emphasize the role and value of learning.** Provide students with learning opportunities that allow for meaningful student engagement with content through different modes and teacher and faculty feedback to align with student outcomes and needs.
- **Continue to provide flexibility in the admissions process.** Students who complete high school coursework in spring 2020 and receive a "pass" in lieu of a letter grade will not be negatively affected in the admission process at Washington's public and private, not-for-profit four-year colleges and universities. This includes 8th-12th grade students taking **high school coursework** during this term at a high school in the state of Washington. Washington's public four-year and Independent Colleges of Washington member colleges and universities do not re-calculate pass/no pass scores into numeric grade equivalents.
- **Help students consider, discuss, and plan for long-term impacts when deciding between grading options for college credit-bearing courses.** When considering pass/no pass as an alternative to ranked grades for college credit-bearing courses, we urge students to consider the long-term impacts for their education and career goals including, but not limited to, preparation for majors (e.g. nursing, engineering, and other STEM fields); prerequisite requirements; admission and transfer to out-of-state and graduate and professional schools. Alignment with Washington and national higher education requirements, NCAA and NAIA requirements, transfer, military enlistment and veteran benefits is critical for students' long-term success.
- **Facilitate student agency.** Honoring students' recognition of their own learning and readiness and preparation for college coursework is important to a successful transition from K-12 to postsecondary pathways. Students should be confident in seeking college placement exams to access readiness for the next step in their education. We strongly encourage families and teachers to assist students in understanding their readiness for next-level coursework and support students for future success.

Washington's public and private, not-for-profit colleges and universities continue to collaborate across their sectors and in partnership with K-12 schools and districts. Together, we recognize that the impact of COVID-19 on students, families and institutions is fluid and changing. We are committed to communicating, collaborating and engaging with students, families and partners now and in the future.