

President's Day Comment Cards: Responses to Feedback and Questions

During the North Seattle College President's Day on Sept. 18, President Warren Brown asked employees to share their feedback and questions on comment cards. Over the past month, the President has written individual responses to the questions and comments. Did you submit a question? View the responses below.

Q. Succession planning! We have an extremely talented and knowledgeable E-Team who are reaching, have reached retirement age. What happens to our institutional memory when they all decide to enjoy their golden years?

A. With the various positions that we are currently recruiting for and for soon to be established screening committees, North is making sure that there is either some overlap so that the new employee can learn from the one that is leaving; or that we have the outgoing employee be available to spend a few days to meet and “download” information to the new employee. The outgoing employee is also asked to prepare a briefing document for the incoming employee.

Q. Can you send around your “first 100 days” SLIDE. & “Road Ahead” SLIDE.

Of course. Click [here](#) to see the slides. As you can see, there has been a lot of work toward advancing the college. Within the first 100 days, I met with many politicians, community leaders and key stakeholders. As noted in my goals for the coming year, I noted “politics, politics, politics”. My approach is not only to introduce myself to politicians—but also to get their support of North Seattle College and the economic plight of state-employees. Given this is an election year, a great deal of effort has been made to ‘raise the profile’ of North and to educate politicians on our impact with hopes that they can be strong advocates for us.

Q. I am curious what strategies you are thinking of using to help those of us working on providing professional development in diversity get the message across to all employees, especially those who have the privilege of not having personal experience of oppression and don't see the need and relevance to our work and success.

A. It will be critical to merge the Leadership Development Institute with diversity training. Previously, employees had to choose between these professional development opportunities. Yet, we know that effective leadership and teamwork is framed around multicultural competence. Replacing “managers meetings” (which have been exclusive) to “leadership meetings” (which allows all to be engaged and also invited to be engaged) will frame the importance that we all share as we become leaders and colleagues in our work groups.

Q. What is the long-term plan to procure the funding and the staff to overhaul the IT infrastructure to bring the entire campus up to speed (literally) in the 21st century?

A. IT and Administrative Services have been working over the past year in identifying equipment issues, age of systems, and inappropriate server rooms. Funds have been set-aside with campus remodels to include upgrading the IT infrastructure. Given several buildings that have concrete design create barriers to effective Wi-Fi, new expanded range routers have been included in the long-range plans. Beyond including these costs in remodeling projects, I expect that our budget processes must be transparent about the costs of IT infrastructure, so we as a college community are aware of the costs and can mindfully prioritize those costs with other competing budget requests.

Q. Are we going to work on bringing any TRIO Programs here to North?

A. TRIO programs create invaluable support to students and also provide funds that can help expand our student success efforts. I have asked our Grants office to meet with a consultant (for an initial fee-free meeting) who will look to see if we would be competitive in a TRIO application. One challenge is that with declining federal funding, it is very difficult for a non-TRIO school to get funding. The rules are such that funding only goes to existing TRIO programs. Thus, North Seattle (even if we had a perfect application) could likely not get a TRIO grant unless another school lost theirs.

Q. Mark Mitsui started the “Arts Taskforce.” I am wondering how you will engage and support this project?

A. The Arts Taskforce has made significant headway to showcase the outstanding work of our students. This is a mission that I support. I recently met with the student art committee president and look forward to supporting their on-campus efforts and their annual silent auction.

Q. WWW (I think) President was in the news recently regarding the challenge he and other presidents have received about potential budget cuts. In response to being asked to develop a plan, he said, “No.” He pointed out Higher Ed cannot handle further cuts. What is going on at the community college level? Are presidents working together?

A. The community college presidents were also reviewing the WWU president’s comment. No matter the public statement of the WWU President, the reality is that if the state cuts higher education we will all be forced to make hard choices. Other state four-year schools also said “no”. Yet, WSU and UW are feeling that the diminishing state support that comes with greater constraints, that it is in their best interest to ask the state to free them from the state rules and let them set their own tuition levels.

Community college presidents have a platform (which can be found at: http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/documents/2014LegislativeAgenda_FINAL.pdf.) Within the Seattle Colleges District, we are pushing to have the student achievement initiative re-written to provide greater funds for our unique student populations. The District Presidents have also been active in two task-forces that are developing a new funding model. Ultimately, this is a political issue that requires not just presidents talking to politicians; about five years ago voters turned down a tax that would have provided funding to higher education. Thus, Washington state not having a stable source of higher education funding, is because politicians and voters are supporting that. As such, we all have a role in sharing how detrimental our current fiscal state is AND at the same time noting just how invaluable supporting higher education is to the greater community.

Q. What will be done to improve International Program/Outreach, student's accommodations, assistance, concerns—students complain about not having “good” ESL instructors for their high tuition they are paying.

A. Thank you for notifying me of this issue, this is the first time I have learned about this. I will work with the administration in International programs to make sure a program review has (or will) occur. Given this question deals with both program questions and also individual faculty, for personnel reasons I cannot comment on the faculty quality claim. Thank you for bringing this to my attention.

Q. Why aren't PTK officers ever included in these events as student leaders?

A. That is a good question. Many of this year's president's day was based on reviewing comments from previous years. There wasn't any notation of PTK in any of the comments from the last 3 years worth of employee comments. So, now it is certainly on my radar for the next year. Thank you for bringing this to my attention.

Q. I would love to hear your thoughts on the best practices for student success and what you see as advising's role in that success. What are your plans for helping us to become innovative and effective in helping our student's succeed? There are opportunities to bridge the divide between Instruction & Student Services. Rather than put more on us students to be that “bridge,” how can we, as faculty and staff, better come together to bridge that divide? It's more than a courtyard that separate us.

A. Over the years, I have done some research on this topic. I am a big supporter of Alan Siedman's work. His work notes that advising must occur before, during, and after a student enrolls. Typically institutions only focus on while a student is enrolled. Yet, critical pre-enrollment information about the student is critical in supporting their success. Also, I have served on the Washington state career and employment council. That council (and myself) believe that part of the entry process should include career guidance to assist the students in a defined path for their degree. Additionally, there are several other methods that I have recently shared with the Strategic Enrollment Committee. I have also told the Strategic Enrollment Committee that I will fund the development of a mission and strategic plan that connects with roles that student support services and instruction can play to increase student success.

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Q. The College Council voted to make north a smoke-free campus. (Spr'14) Will you follow their recommendation?

A. This was before my time, but my understanding is that College Council provided their recommendation to E-Team and the former President. E-team and the former President decided that a smoking ban wouldn't be practical at this point. My understanding is that the decision was to take an incremental approach and review how successful those efforts are. As such, smoking shelters have been estimated and facilities has assembled a task-force to determine the best places on campus for the three shelters.

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Q. When will we update signage for Peter Ku Education Building like we have already done for Roy Flores Wellness Center?

A. I had to research this answer since it has been nearly a decade ago when this decision was reached. It is my understanding that in the North end of the building there is a plaque naming the building. At that time it was never requested that the lettering of the building would change.

Suggestions:

- For current VP and HR searches, have committee members go through diversity hiring training that last year's Presidential Search committee underwent. I'd like to see our
- Use last year's presidential search as a rough template for communicating to candidates, in detail, what values and goals the college is pursuing and soliciting from candidates evidence of depth in thinking and experience in these areas.

Absolutely. I am expecting that all of the search committees go through diversity training and I know that is currently happening. For the VPI search, the faculty get to select who they want on the committee – this year it didn't reflect a lot of diversity, so I made sure that the non-faculty committee members reflected larger diversity. At the same time, I want to make sure that varied people are participating in the various committees. As a result, with the committees that we have some committees will be more diverse than others. However, the critical issue is the diversity training and making sure that I hold the committee responsible for bringing a diverse group of finalists to the college for a public college Q&A session.