



October 8, 2004

President Mark Emmert
Box 351230

Dear President Emmert:

It is with sincere pleasure that I submit to you the Report on the Future of the University of Washington, Tacoma.

As you know, UWT was charged by the Washington State Legislature, in what is commonly referred to as HB 2707, to conduct an internal examination of how it can best serve the educational and economic needs of the citizens of the South Sound. Following this legislative charge and the more detailed outline for content issued by the Higher Education Coordinating Board, a committee representing the University, the campus and all its many constituencies, and our external partners including the community colleges, did a thorough study of the possible future directions for UWT. The data collection procedures and multiple public meetings that were conducted are described in detail in the report. What is abundantly clear is that the committee's report reflected a strong consensus of those interested in UWT. The committee has my gratitude for its efforts.

The report I transmit to you is adjusted from the report I received from the Committee. It is adjusted to reflect the feedback we received subsequent to the Committee's September 1st release of its original study report. The adjustments do not dramatically change the recommendations made; they do balance the many views of our diverse community and augment the reasoning for the recommendations. But again, the document reflects an underlying community consensus of where UWT should be going.

To put this report in context, let us remember that UWT is only 14 years old. When UWT first opened its doors in 1990, we were in rented space and had one academic program. We now have seven strong academic programs (Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences, Education, Computing & Software Systems, Business, Nursing, Social Work, and Urban Studies) and a permanent campus. Our teenage status confronts us with new growing pains: over 2,200 students, programs that are of such quality that they cannot meet demand, and opportunities for change that come from all directions.

And as we further mature, so our parent, UWS, is experiencing its own age-related challenges. It has become so venerable and established that it cannot meet the demands for admission put upon it. And like all good parents, it has nurtured its offspring to be able now to share in its broadening responsibilities.

So here at UWT, we are prepared to step in as a fuller partner in the University family. This study has been a way for us to guide how, with UWS and UWB, we can best serve the educational needs of the state. But it is only a plan for the next ten years. When we reach the next stage of institutional development there must again be a call for a reexamination.

Over the next ten years we recommend that UWT change in the following ways so we can strengthen our calling as the destination for South Sound students to get their baccalaureate and master's level public education:

1. UWT must expand dramatically to provide sufficient opportunities for our South Sound community college graduates to complete their baccalaureate degrees. Fulfilling the dreams for baccalaureate education of these community college students mandates the expansion of our educational program variety and capacity.
2. UWT must redefine what it takes to offer upper-division students the fullest educational options necessary to complete their chosen degrees. This means that we must offer selected, appropriate, and related lower-division courses to fill out our various baccalaureate degree options.
3. UWT must work more closely with our community college partners to create new articulation models so high school graduates know there is a seamless pathway through the local community colleges to UWT. These partnerships – dual, early, and simultaneous admissions – can be innovative, creative, and completely functional.
4. UWT must transition to offer a public four-year baccalaureate program to qualified South Sound students who are placebound and timebound and who, because of high admissions demand and space limitations, cannot enter UWS. It is only to be a small fraction of the whole, but UWT can more fully serve the needs of the citizens of the South Sound if it offers those who would particularly benefit from a four-year education the option to stay home and get a high quality, publicly supported baccalaureate degree.
5. UWT must expand its outreach and attractiveness to faculty, staff and students of color. We offer a better education to all our students if all our society's perspectives are represented.
6. And just as we are better by being diverse, we are best by being global. UWT must increase its international outreach by adding greater global experiences to our students' education – both by having international student colleagues here, and by sending UWT students abroad.

These are not radical proposals, but the expected and normal maturation of a young campus into a university. Our fundamental commitment to interdisciplinarity in our educational offerings and our unwavering commitment to partner with our local community colleges are foundational to our upbringing. The evolutionary changes we suggest do not alter this commitment. They are but next steps in how we continue our development. Remembering and continuing our historical premises are what make us unique, and thus most attractive to our students and community.

So what is it we do not suggest we become? We are not advocating we become a replica of

UW Seattle. We are not transitioning to a multidepartmentalized Research I University. That is not what this state or even our local community needs. While the faculty we employ will excel at research as well as teaching, that research will inform our teaching and advance our broad metropolitan initiatives. We are not proposing to become a residential campus. We will maintain a commitment to serve primarily those who live and work in our South Sound community. Those placebound and timebound citizens who deserve a public baccalaureate University in their locale were our clientele when we opened our doors, and will remain so. We will not become a complete comprehensive college. Our community colleges excellently serve the South Sound's need, for the most part, for public lower-division education. And our nearby private colleges do a masterful job of broad liberal arts education. The addition of a small cohort of freshmen and sophomores is in keeping with our mission to serve the local community with additional – not supplanted – public baccalaureate opportunities. The demand for a four-year education has simply outpaced the current capacity of the region, and UWT can contribute to the solution. And, despite the demand and economic benefits that follow, we do not advocate for becoming involved in intercollegiate athletics. We do believe that a stronger student life program must evolve to enhance the campus experience.

We recognize that this broad vision of our future has substantial costs associated with it, both in increased operating expenses and extensive capital construction demands. But we believe that the vision of a University of Washington quality education in Tacoma justifies the resources required to offer thousands of South Sound citizens the educational opportunities they demand and deserve.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven G. Olswang
Interim Chancellor

cc: UWT community
Community college partners
Mr. Earl Hale
Ms. Jan Yoshiwara
UW President's Cabinet
UW Deans
Chancellor, UW Bothell
Chancellor, WSU Spokane
Chancellor, WSU Tri Cities
Chancellor, WSU Vancouver

The full text of the report and related appendices can be found at:
<http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/uwtfuture/>