



# Connections

*January 7, 2021*

## Message of Affirmation

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, the Independent Colleges of Washington, and the Council of Presidents released the following joint statement regarding events that occurred yesterday in Washington, D.C.

“As leaders of public and private, not-for-profit colleges and universities in the state of Washington, we stand strongly together in denouncing yesterday’s attack on the U.S. Capitol and on democracy. Since the earliest days of this nation, higher education has prepared an engaged, informed and civic-minded citizenry. In this way, our shared mission is fundamental to democracy and is in sharp contrast to the shocking scenes that unfolded in Washington, DC. Collectively, we redouble our commitment to preparing our students and future generations to help ensure that our democracy continues to thrive.”

Walla Walla Community College affirms its commitment to its mission--educating the communities and enhancing the well-being of those we serve. Our shared values transcend the divisiveness on display yesterday, and we remain dedicated to serving all those who seek our assistance in pursuit of a better life for themselves, their families, their communities, and our nation.

## Weekly Highlight - VPI Search Update

The Vice President of Instruction screening committee has identified four finalists, having narrowed the field from over four dozen applications. Those four finalists are engaging with the College this week and next week in a series of virtual tours, interviews/meetings with faculty, deans, and ELT, and culminating in individual all-college forums with each candidate, scheduled for Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday of next week, starting at 4:15 p.m. via Zoom. Brief bios and photos are posted at <https://ww.wwcc.edu/vpi-search/> I ask that you complete a comment form for each candidate to provide feedback to me as we enter the final stage of the search process. Those forms may be found at [www.wwcc.edu](https://www.wwcc.edu)<https://www.wwcc.edu/vpi->

[search/feedback-form/](#)

I will review every comment form submitted, and factor that input into my final hiring decision. Background and reference checks will be completed over the following days. Without committing to a firm deadline, I anticipate making an offer to the successful candidate before the end of January. Many thanks to all those who have participated in this search and to the many more who will welcome these candidates to our virtual campus in the coming days.

## Introducing WWCC's Interim Director of Safety and Security

It is my pleasure to introduce the new Interim Director of Safety and Security, Tracy Klem. Tracy's first day was January 4th, and he joins us after having recently retired from a distinguished career with the Walla Walla Police Department. Tracy has an extensive background in Incident Command Structures of the kind that was initiated at the onset of the pandemic. He also has a deep personal commitment to serving our college, students, and employees.

Given the critical role played by the Director of Safety and Security in our Covid response, as well as federal reporting requirements (Clery Act in particular), and various other vital roles, we decided to fill this position on an interim basis while we prepare for a full hiring search process later this year. Please welcome Tracy. We are very pleased to have him join our college community. His email is [Tracy.Klem@wwcc.edu](mailto:Tracy.Klem@wwcc.edu) and his cell phone is the same number as Jacquelyn's—509.520.5317.

## Other quick takes

- **Sports.** The Athletics department has begun to welcome student athletes back to practice, following extraordinarily strict safety protocols. It remains unclear whether full-scale practices, scrimmages, or games will be possible this year, but we are monitoring the infection rates in Walla Walla County very closely. Governor Inslee's guidelines and the statewide vaccination plan are factors as well. Enough men's soccer players have decided to take time off school that men's soccer will neither practice nor play this year. We are planning to hire a coach, recruit actively, and field a team next season. All other sports are still viable this year, pending changes in the pandemic conditions.

Governor Inslee's office has provided the following guidelines for the state to emerge from pandemic conditions. Please see [Healthy Washington Roadmap to Recovery](#).

- **Strategic planning.** WWCC's strategic planning process is under way, and a key component is collecting information from students, employees, advisory council members, trustees, and others affiliated with the College. To facilitate maximum involvement, a survey will be circulated via email and on Canvas next week. It will be a short needs and climate assessment survey to collect information about what issues matter to you. Please watch for that survey link, and please give it your serious attention. We need to hear from you, since we are writing the story of WWCC's future, and setting our course for that shared future. This is a collaborative and inclusive endeavor, so we need your input.
- **Recognition of good work.** The John Deere program was recently notified that it has been awarded the John Deere College of Tomorrow Platinum award. This is not the first time we have achieved this level of recognition, but it is an honor, and testimony to the great work done by everyone associated with that program. Congratulations, and thank you!
- **Board of Trustees:** The next Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 27th, at 9:30 a.m.

## Looking Ahead

Guided Pathways work continues with the creation of a faculty task force under the leadership and direction of Diana Herrmann and Erika Bockmann. The SBCTC has provided two extremely experienced "coaches" to mentor/guide us through implementation as well. Guided Pathways is the initiative most likely to yield concrete gains in student retention, persistence, and completion, and WWCC is poised to make Guided Pathways a reality. Please watch for updates and the opportunity to join this important effort.

Comments or questions? Please email [Connections@wwcc.edu](mailto:Connections@wwcc.edu)