



## 2025-27 OPERATING BUDGET REQUEST

October 21, 2024

Washington's 34 community and technical colleges are asking the Legislature to keep our colleges whole and to invest in core operational support and employee compensation. These investments are vital for delivering high-quality instruction and services to our 290,000 students, as well as for supporting the local communities and employers that rely on their skills and contributions.



### Maintain previously approved state allocation (\$28.6 million in fiscal year 2025, carried forward in 2025-27)

We respectfully request the Legislature preserve funding already approved for our colleges in the 2023-25 operating budget for fiscal year 2025 (\$28.6 million) and carry forward those investments for each year of the 2025-27 biennium (for a biennial total of \$57 million). A proposed rollback of funding due to a state budget error would effectively amount to a budget cut this academic year. Our colleges were advised of the error at the start of fall quarter and, by then, had already dedicated the funds in good faith to support programs and services, hire staff, enter vendor contracts, and pay for increasing operating costs — all in service to students. Rolling back approved funding for the college system would be a budget cut when colleges are already struggling to retain employees and manage rising costs.

### Provide Fully Funded, Competitive Compensation (\$183 million)

Faculty and staff are at the heart of our students' success, but we are losing them to better paying jobs in private industry, K-12 schools, and other colleges and universities. Along with faculty, we are struggling to hire and retain administrative and classified staff who serve in crucial roles in financial aid, business operations, and advising. A salary increase of 6.5% for each year of the biennium, for a total wage increase of 13%, would help colleges provide competitive compensation, fill vacant positions, and reduce turnover. We urge the Legislature to continue to provide 100% funding for compensation in the 2025-27 operating budget. Otherwise, colleges would have to make budget cuts elsewhere to close the funding gap.

### Support College Operations (\$90 million)

Community and technical colleges urgently need additional, core operational support to cover the true cost of running a college. College operating costs have increased dramatically over the past five years and Washington's tuition formula has not kept pace with the increases. Rising costs and capped tuition rates have squeezed college operating budgets and, within those narrow funding margins, colleges must dedicate a significant portion to unavoidable costs: About 80% of college funding is dedicated to salaries and a significant amount is tied to specific purposes under legislative provisos. Faced with rising costs, capped tuition rates, and inflexible funding, colleges have limited ability to secure or shift resources to where they are needed the most. Legislative funding for core operational support would help cover essential costs, ensure sufficient funding for student programs and services, and enable colleges to meet their unique local needs.

#### CONTACT INFORMATION

**Stephanie Winner**  
Operating Budget Director  
phone: 360-704-1023  
email: swinner@sbctc.edu