Everett Community College
Visioning Event
April 20 and 21, 2012

Thematic Summary of Feedback

We sincerely appreciate the feedback we received from all those who participated in the Everett Community College Visioning Event on April 20 - 21, 2012. Many participants took the time to speak personally with college personnel and facilitators after the event, and nearly all who attended spent time providing careful written feedback about their impressions of the event and its outcomes.

A high percentage of participants expressed a desire to participate again in a community engagement event for Everett Community College.

What were your most important learnings from the two-day event?
The most frequent comments from participants who were asked to share what they learned spoke of the power of working together with a large group of committed stakeholders. Some cited the importance of being able to hear multiple perspectives in an open and caring environment; others wrote of the significance of high involvement, enthusiasm, and energy in the room; and others commented on the strong networking that came out of the event. Several commented on their surprise (and later their pride) in being able to work with over 150 community members and coming to agreement on a vision for the future. Many cited the process itself as providing them with a new and inclusive way to jointly address issues and work toward the common good.

Many participants commented that one of the core lessons for them was gaining a better and more in-depth understanding of the challenges facing Everett Community College. They said they had not been fully aware of the complexities of the operating environment – including the changing student demographics, changes in funding levels and opportunities, as well as the potential impact of major political and legislative shifts. Others commented on learning about the significance of the skills gap in America, and the need to address it at the community college level. Some had not known that community colleges provide open access, and are challenged with meeting significant remedial needs of many students.

While some commented on the fact that there appears to be some level of discomfort or fear about the changes being driven by the environment and changing needs of students, it was
heartening to hear that many feel that EvCC is looking to the future in a positive way, and they appreciate that the college is actively including the community in looking to the future.

As you think about the future, what are the most important areas of focus for Everett Community College to consider in ensuring future success?
Feedback from participants included clear recommendations about key areas on which to focus attention in the future. Participants acknowledged the significant financial challenges facing the college, its students, and its greater community. They encouraged the college to continue to pay close attention to changing student needs, to look to new and innovative sources of revenue, and to keep its focus on affordability for its students. Participants in the visioning event also supported an ongoing focus on increasing the college’s capacity to address the skills gap and global competition, as well as the need for increasing technological development. Partnerships were cited over and over again as a mechanism through which the college can enhance its ability to serve its multiple student constituencies.

What do we need to do to keep the momentum going?
When asked about how to keep the momentum going in this process, participants overwhelmingly reported that communication is the key to continued engagement and collaboration. Many asked for ongoing communication to update the community (internal and external) about progress in the strategic planning process. And many expressed interest in being included in the ongoing process. These recommendations reinforced the high level of mutual collaboration and commitment evident at the Visioning Event.

We sincerely appreciate the commitment and generosity of so many who gave us their time and wisdom in developing a new vision for Everett Community College. The feedback from participants is important and will help focus our next steps. We will continue to keep you informed of our progress as we move forward. We would not be where we are today without the support and caring of each and every one of you. Thank you.