2025
KEY MESSAGES

*Our state has taken a lot of important actions for students like us – **thank you!***

- I am taking the time to invest in my future, and your support matters to me. Thank you especially for creating the Washington College Grant, a life-changing financial aid program for students and families!
- I support the state's goal that 70% of Washington students can start and complete postsecondary education.
- The state will see an estimated 1.5 million+ job openings through 2032. To fill those jobs, the economy is depending on me and my peers to earn a credential after high school, such as a degree, apprenticeship, or certificate.
- Without a degree or credential, it's very difficult to get a job with a living wage that includes opportunities to grow. Three in every four job openings in Washington will require education beyond high school. We are seeing reports that bachelor's and advanced degrees will be in highest demand – necessary for 45% of job openings.

We need to double-down and make sure students know the Washington College Grant and other resources are there to help and to make accessing them easier. We hope you can help keep this momentum and address the barriers that keep students like me/us from succeeding in education after high school.

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"They're lawmakers, so they're used to talking about specific bills. This meeting may be different from what they're used to."

Daniela Suarez
WA-SEN Alumnus

"As WA-SEN students, it is our responsibility to educate but not lobby."

Mustaphah Samateh
WA-SEN Alumnus

What should I say?

If a lawmaker starts talking about specific legislation, you might say:

We'd really like to draw the conversation back to talk about our stories and individual experiences.

Can we step back and talk a little bit more about this specific experience that [student] is sharing today?

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2025 PRIORITIES

Now is the time to redouble collective efforts to reduce barriers to postsecondary enrollment and support students' pathways to postsecondary credentials.

- ★ **#1 Protect the progress** we've made in expanding access to education after high school, reducing financial barriers for students, and recovering from challenges created by the pandemic. We urge the Legislature to build on the funding students receive for financial aid – **no group of students should receive less than they have in recent years.**
- ★ **Raise awareness of the Washington College Grant** (WA Grant) and advocate for FAFSA/WASFA completion, ensuring Washington students and families take advantage of the nation's most generous financial aid program.
- ★ **Support dual credit programs**, like Running Start, College in the High School, and CTE dual credit pathways so that all high school students can earn college credit and progress toward postsecondary credentials.
- ★ **Deliver high-quality career navigation and advising** to enable students to find and succeed on their best-fit education-to-career pathway.
- ★ **Support career-connected learning** opportunities that align with workforce needs and provide students with hands-on experiences.

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WA-SEN educates legislators by **sharing student stories.**
We address broad **social, economic, and similar issues**.
We do **not** address specific legislation.
Our flavor of advocacy is **Issue Advocacy.**

What should I say?

When a legislator asks, "What is your position on Senate Bill XYZ?" you can say:

I understand there may be some work happening to address this issue. I am not able to speak to this specifically, other than to reiterate my appreciation to you to please protect student aid, the progress made to address educational attainment after high school, and equity in education.

When a legislator asks a question that you can't answer, you can say:

Thank you for asking. I don't have the answer, but I will take your question back to the WA-SEN network organizers, and they will follow up.

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