Ana Mari Cauce, President
University of Washington
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Seattle, WA 98195

May 18th, 2020

Dear President Cauce,

On March 26, University of Washington Continuum College (UWCC) announced its intention to close the International English Program (IEP), the flagship program of the University’s internationally respected International and English Language Programs (IELP), resulting in the job losses of many long-term University employees.

We understand the financial challenges facing the UW and all our colleges at this difficult time. However, we are nonetheless disappointed with this decision and ask that the UW undertake a serious re-evaluation of it in light of the university's educational and public service missions as well as the economic climate these faculty members would be dismissed into. We think this is the wrong message to be sending if other options can be realized.

We are familiar with the incredible value to UW programs that rely on the well-regarded English language programs from IEP and the entire set of programs, preparing students to be able to succeed in their UW courses. Without this, the UW will either seriously diminish student success and retention for vulnerable limited English proficiency students or they will not enroll at all. Eliminating the program will actually harm the University’s equity mission and state overall.

Businesses in our State also rely on enrolling students in the program. These partnerships are critical for the University’s role in the State.

The public service mission of the UW includes English language preparation. The UW risks damaging its global reputation and its ability to support the UW community and its students by discarding its English language instructors. Closing the IEP eliminates longstanding fulltime jobs and removes the ability of the instructors to support themselves and their families and reflects a disturbing trend toward the “*gigification*” of education. While faculty and support staff are to be laid off, higher paid management positions are retained. The intent to utilize contract staffing to provide similar programming sounds as if the Continuum College is merely seeking to replace a highly skilled unionized workforce with part-time contract instruction under the cover of deficits which are of the College’s own making.

The stated pretext for the closure is that the program is running at a loss. However, it appears that unjustifiably high administrative overhead costs have placed an excessive burden on this program. In 2017 and 2018 indirect cost charges were 77% and 72% respectively. We understand the need for all programs to pay for university wide overheads. However, the Continuum Colleges’ overhead and indirect charges (separate from the university’s) for these two years were 70% and 65% respectively. In 2019, with greatly reduced costs, the Continuum College’s overhead and indirect charges were still 38% of revenues (see attached spreadsheet). The overhead charged to the program appears to us to be excessive. There is a growing concern about how the money is being used and a lack of transparency and accountability.

Ironically, programs in the Continuum College pay what is supposed to be an insurance fee to cover losses in a program. We are aware that the College fails to either suspend those required payments or to use the pooled funds to cover short-term deficits in other programs. Our concerns about this policy extend beyond IELP. If the Continuum College did not charge the “risk” pool fee to the IEP for 2019, $198,064 of the $329,499 deficit would not exist. In other words, nearly two thirds of the deficit cited to justify closing the program is the cost of paying into the pool intended to cover programs’ deficits.

If IELP were viewed as one budget unit, there would be no deficit. The programs under IELP are so interrelated, including enrollment and teaching, that they should be one unit for budget.

The Continuum College’s budget needs to be reviewed to assess overhead and indirect items.

The levels exceed all contracting and public administration principles. IEP isn’t the only program with unjustifiable levels of overhead with complaints that the College lacks the understanding and capabilities to assist in the marketing of the program (a major portion of the claimed rationale for overhead).

**Please consider taking these steps:**

* Create one budget unit for IELP for considering activity-based budget and self-sufficiency
* Review and reduce the Continuum College’s overheads and indirects.
* Move the faculty and programs to an integrated non self-sufficient department or program, or to UW Bothell or Tacoma
* Halt any planned job losses within IELP
* Conduct an independent performance audit of UWCC’s accounting and financial practices.
* Examine how to better maintain and expand English language support of students and the UW community.

Thank you for your considering keeping this vital program alive,



Senator David Frockt Representative Gerry Pollet Representative Javier Valdez



Senator Patty Kuderer Senator Bob Hasegawa Representative Frank Chopp





Representative Joe Fitzgibbon Representative Cindy Ryu Representative Zack Hudgins



Representative Sharon Tomiko Santos