

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – April 30, 2014

U.S. Sen. Patty Murray Meets with Student Veterans at WCC

*Colleges thank Sen. Murray for her service on behalf of veterans.
Students and advisors share ideas to improve success following service.*



From left, WCC President Kathi Hiyane-Brown, Skagit Valley College veterans services coordinator Jim Jolly, WCC veterans services coordinator Jarid Corbitt, WCC student veteran Robert Rayford, Sen. Patty Murray, WWU student veteran Samuel Courtney, WCC student veteran David Aguilar, Everett Community College veterans services coordinator Arlene Cahoon, WWU veterans services coordinator Wendy Gegenhuber and BTC veterans services coordinator Malcolm Oliver.

BELLINGHAM, Wash. – U.S. Sen. Patty Murray visited Whatcom Community College April 24 to host a roundtable discussion with local student veterans and campus veterans services coordinators. Sen. Murray is a tireless advocate for veterans and has sponsored legislation that has positively impacted the success of veterans who enter college following service. The event was an opportunity not only for the senator to hear directly from students and veterans services coordinators about their experiences, but for administrators and students to thank her for her service on behalf of veterans.

“It was an honor to sit down with student veterans and their academic advisors, who have been outstanding advocates in the community and will be leading the fight for our veterans in Bellingham in the years to come,” said Sen. Murray. “I will take the stories I heard back to Washington, D.C., with me as I continue to work to ensure our young veterans have a seamless transition into higher education.” Sen. Murray is chair of the senate veterans affairs committee and is a member of the senate appropriations subcommittee that funds the Department of Veterans Affairs.

During the roundtable, student veterans and advisors shared ideas that will help veterans transition to college after military service and to succeed following enrollment and graduation. Currently, 220 veterans are enrolled at Whatcom. They credit the College’s veterans affairs office – notably staffed by vets – for their success. The team helps veterans access benefits, connect with community resources and create an academic plan. Campus veterans officials from

Western Washington University, Everett Community College, Bellingham Technical College and Skagit Valley College also attended the April 24 roundtable. The schools offer similar services. Veterans stressed having a dedicated space on campus with people who can empathize with their experiences and connect them with the resources they need is critical for their success.

“We were honored to welcome Sen. Murray to campus,” said WCC President Kathi Hiyane-Brown. “This was a wonderful occasion for students to share their experiences and to suggest how they can be better prepared for success once they leave the service. We valued this opportunity for the senator to have a first-hand look at the meaningful work that is being done on our campuses on behalf of student veterans.”

About Whatcom: Whatcom Community College is an accredited, comprehensive two-year college with an accomplished faculty and staff who serve 11,000 students annually. On its campus in Bellingham, WA, and through online courses, Whatcom offers transfer degrees, professional and technical training programs, as well as basic education, job skills, and Community & Continuing Education classes. For more information, visit www.whatcom.ctc.edu.

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