

# Findings and Recommendations from Public Comments Delivered at the February 4, 2026, Board of Trustees Meeting

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This report synthesizes concerns raised during public comment by seven leaders from the Student Success Division at the February 4, 2026, Board of Trustees meeting. For each concern, a brief summary is provided, followed by factual findings and actionable recommendations. A concluding section highlights cross-cutting themes and next steps.

## Concern 1: Absence of Formal Written Procedures

### Summary

The lack of readily accessible, written departmental procedures has led to confusion, frustration, and inefficiencies. In some cases, the absence of documented processes may increase compliance risk for staff, faculty, or students. A specific concern noted during public comment relates to the requirement for the Financial Aid Director to annually attest to the U.S. Department of Education that appropriate internal controls and processes exist to support the accurate and accountable administration of federal funds. Without documented procedures, it is difficult to demonstrate this assurance.

### Findings

- The concerns raised focus on **department-level procedures and operational processes**, not **College-level policies** (which follow an established development and approval process and are posted on the college website).
- Some department-level operational processes are posted on the intranet, while others are not. Posting practices vary by department, resulting in inconsistent access to information. The primary concern expressed is the inconsistent application of processes and posting of these departmental materials.
- Making departmental procedures accessible, especially those with cross-department impacts, could improve shared understanding, streamline interdependent work, and protect operational continuity during staffing or structural changes.
- Opportunities already exist for input on interdepartmental procedures through informal channels and formal shared-governance bodies.

### Recommendations

- **Establish a college-wide standard** that each department maintain up-to-date, written documentation for key workflows and operational processes.
- **Clarify what processes should be posted** on the intranet for campus-wide access (e.g., procedures with cross-unit impacts, student-facing implications, or compliance significance) versus what remains internal to the department.

- **Engage the Communication Committee** to support the creation of a consistent process and location for posting departmental procedures and coordinate an inventory and projected timeline of departmental processes to be posted.
  - **Reinforce direct, face-to-face problem solving** and cross-department discussions as the first step when questions or conflicts arise, followed by a clear escalation pathway (see the standard escalation path included at the end of this document). Strengthening these early communication practices also helps ensure that concerns are addressed accurately and internally before they escalate or are raised in broader forums.
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## Concern 2: Findings of the 2022–2023 Financial Audit

### Summary:

Concern regarding internal financial controls was expressed based on the FY 2022–2023 financial audit finding: *“The College lacked adequate internal controls to ensure its financial statements and related schedules were adequately prepared and reviewed.”*

It was noted that delays and errors in financial operations during the first year of ctclink implementation affected other departments, such as Financial Aid. The example given involved loan allocations that were temporarily withdrawn in error, creating an overdrawn balance and triggering warning notices from the U.S. Department of Education. Similar issues reportedly occurred the following year.

### Findings

- The State Auditor’s Office attributed internal control issues primarily to the transition to a new general ledger (ctclink) in April 2022 and significant turnover in key positions during and after implementation, including periods without a Vice President for Finance, Controller, or Budget Director. These vacancies occurred during the early adoption of ctclink and coincided with unusually high staff turnover.
- The audit identified timeliness issues related to reconciliations and year-end adjusting entries. The auditors also noted three errors in the financial statements, all of which were corrected during the audit process.
- There is no indication of an attempt to conceal audit findings. Audit reports produced by the State Auditor’s Office (SAO) are publicly available on the SAO website. The College also posts these reports on its own website for easy access.
- Audit findings were appropriately communicated to Trustees. The SAO provided all audit materials, including the management letter, to CPTC’s Trustees through the Board Secretary upon completion of the audit; and two of the trustees attended the exit interview with the auditors.
- The College received a finding of “significant deficiency,” not the more serious “material weakness.” The College initiated a corrective action plan in response to the identified deficiencies.

- The college has made significant gains and demonstrated continuous improvement following fiscal year 2023 and the first year of CtcLink implementation.

## Recommendations

- **Post the audit follow-up plan** provided to the State Auditor’s Office on the intranet to demonstrate corrective actions and progress toward completion.
- **Offer high-level training** on the financial audit process so employees understand requirements, timelines, and compliance expectations.
- **Clarify College-wide communication standards** for raising questions around material operational risks.
- **Use the shared-governance website** to summarize major departmental process improvements and close-the-loop updates.

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## Concern 3: Increased Workload and Under Resourcing in Student Success

### Summary:

Student Success leaders reported heightened workload due to enrollment dynamics, expanded access initiatives, and rising student needs—without commensurate increases in staffing or operational resources. There is concern about sustainability, service quality, and staff retention.

### Findings:

- Student Success departments are indeed experiencing high levels of strain, especially as student needs evolve and as expectations for service coverage expand. The concern about sustainability is understandable and acknowledged as a serious concern. This is not unique to Student Success, as many departments across campus are facing comparable pressures. These collective challenges underscore the importance of addressing workload and capacity institution-wide.
- Implementation of ctcLink has caused many transactions to take longer and to require involvement from additional staff, often across multiple departments. This has increased the time needed to serve students and expanded overall staffing demands.
- The College has invested in Student Success staffing. Over the past three years, the following positions were added (including conversions and time increases):
  - Associate Director, Financial Aid Compliance
  - Enrollment Services Specialist
  - Financial Aid Specialist
  - Half-time Advisor
  - Student Success Specialist
  - Assistant Director, Career & Community Services
  - Entry Coordinator (Lakewood Campus)
  - Entry Coordinator (Eastside Campus)

- Financial Aid Navigator (Eastside Campus)
  - Disability Specialist (moved to full time)
- Like all Washington community and technical colleges, CPTC operates amid persistent structural underfunding at the state level, which constrains the ability to expand staffing and underscores the need for efficiency and selective technology support.

## Recommendations:

- Given ongoing structural funding limitations, review areas where efficiencies may be gained through different models of staffing and technology supports.
- Investigate ways to create windows where flexible scheduling can support opportunities for focused departmental processing to occur.

## Concern 4: Accountability and Transparency in Decision Making

### Summary:

Concerns were raised that although data is collected on various initiatives, there is limited transparency regarding how that data informs decisions to continue, revise, or discontinue initiatives. This has contributed to uncertainty about institutional alignment and the effective use of resources. Additional concerns were expressed about not being included early in conversations or decisions that directly affect certain departments.

### Findings:

- Decisions made in other departments often have direct operational impacts on Student Success units. When these teams are not consulted early, they are frequently left to address confusion or unintended consequences after decisions are implemented.
- CPTC's communication channels have room for improvement, as inconsistent informal communication sometimes limits transparency and leaves departments out of early planning.
- The shared governance structure, updated in fall 2025, expanded engagement and strengthened alignment with CPTC's mission. The revised structure includes four operational Councils supported by committees, taskforces, and a data team. Student Success leaders serve on these bodies, and their ongoing participation is essential for staying informed and contributing to key institutional decisions.
- Inconsistent professional standards around workplace expectations and interpersonal interactions continue to cause frustration and strain relationships across departments.

### Recommendations:

- **Engage Student Success early and often** on planning that affects the student experience (e.g., scheduling, program changes, new program development). Use current shared governance structures where applicable. For day-to-day department work, regular planning

and implementation meetings co-led by the instructional and student services Deans could prevent downstream issues and reduce rework.

- **Strengthen transparency and communication** around initiative development and college direction.
  - **Establish collegewide expectations** for responsive communication, cross-department collaboration, and professionalism.
  - **Provide supervisor training** on essential institutional processes to promote aligned and effective practices across the College.
  - **Invite Student Success to propose a data-informed evening-service model** that balances student outcomes, utilization patterns, and staffing realities. Review drafts within Student Success Council and route through shared governance for alignment.
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## Concern 5: Feeling Under-Valued and Overlooked

### Summary of Concern

Student Success leaders expressed feeling undervalued and overlooked for the essential role their departments play in supporting students and ensuring smooth operations across the College. They noted that their responsibilities are often not fully understood, that decisions made elsewhere can significantly impact their work, and that they are not always included early enough in discussions that affect student-facing services. These experiences are valid and point to areas where the College has room to improve collaboration and communication.

### Findings

- The College acknowledges these concerns and recognizes the need for more consistent inclusion, collaboration, and recognition. Continued effort is needed to strengthen understanding and support for Student Success roles.
- Student Success work spans the full student lifecycle and involves managing time-sensitive requirements, compliance obligations, and high-stress student situations. These teams rely on stable processes across the College, and disruptions elsewhere can directly affect their ability to serve students.

### Recommendations

- **Create regular cross-department touchpoints**—such as brief monthly or bi-monthly meetings—so Student Success, Instruction, and Finance can share upcoming changes and coordinate proactively.
  - **Increase visibility and recognition** of Student Success contributions through leadership messaging, standing agenda items at college-wide meetings, and internal communication highlights.
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## Cross-Cutting Themes and College Commitments

Across all concerns, the following themes recur:

1. **Documentation and Continuity** — Clear, accessible procedures reduce rework, support compliance, and protect continuity during change.
2. **Transparency and Early Consultation** — Sharing decisions, explaining rationales, and inviting input early build trust and improve implementation.
3. **Resource Stewardship and Efficiency** — Within state funding constraints, the College will continue to pursue targeted efficiencies.
4. **Cross-Department Collaboration and Alignment** – Coordinated planning across units reduces rework, improves implementation, and supports a more seamless student experience.
5. **Professional Standards and Workplace Culture** – Consistent expectations for communication, responsiveness, and professional conduct support a respectful and effective work environment.

### Cross-Department Escalation (Standard Pathway)

- **Step 1:** Direct, face-to-face discussion among involved units to clarify facts and impacts.
- **Step 2:** If unresolved, escalate to immediate supervisors for mediation and decision support.
- **Step 3:** If still unresolved or time-critical, escalate to relevant Vice Presidents.
- **Step 4:** Use shared-governance bodies for broader, policy-level or cross-institutional implications.

### Summary Comments

The concerns raised during public comment point to opportunities to strengthen documentation, transparency, and resource stewardship across the College. They also highlight the need for more consistent cross-department collaboration and shared professional standards that support a respectful and effective workplace. In addition, the findings underscored the importance of professional inquiry and responsible escalation, ensuring that significant questions, especially those involving compliance or financial integrity, are addressed through established internal channels. By reinforcing these shared practices, the College can continue improving operations and supporting the success of students and employees alike.