

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5894

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, FEBRUARY 4, 1994

Brief Description: Requiring development of model student progression contracts.

SPONSORS: Senator Quigley

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5894 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Bauer, Chairman; Drew, Vice Chairman; Cantu, Prince, Quigley, Sheldon and West.

Staff: Scott Huntley (786-7421)

Hearing Dates: January 31, 1994; February 4, 1994

BACKGROUND:

Various studies over the past ten years have shown that only about one-half of the students attending public and private institutions graduate within six years of first entering college. It is maintained that, in a time of limited access to our higher education institutions, students that take longer to complete degree programs take valuable enrollment opportunities away from other potential students.

In 1993, legislation was enacted which required each public college and university to develop, as part of its strategic plan, strategies designed to improve graduation rates and shorten the time required for students to complete degree programs. These strategies are due to be reported to the Higher Education Coordinating Board by May 30 of this year. This legislation also authorized the state institutions of higher education to enter into student progression understandings with interested students. These understandings would be designed to allow a student to complete his or her course of study within the standard period of time assumed for a fulltime student.

SUMMARY:

The Higher Education Coordinating Board is directed to develop model student progression contracts, with the assistance of the Attorney General, student organizations, and institutions of higher education. The student progression contract will permit a student to graduate with a baccalaureate degree within four years of entering an institution of higher education.

The community colleges and each state four-year institution of higher education are directed to enter into a student progression contract with any interested fulltime undergraduate student. The contracts will be designed to permit a student to obtain a degree or certificate within two years (for community colleges), or four years (for baccalaureate degrees).

Tuition at a state four-year institution of higher education for any fulltime resident undergraduate student who has not entered into a student progression contract and who has accumulated more than 210 quarter credits or 140 semester credits shall be 90 percent of the educational costs at their respective category of institution (state or comprehensive). Tuition for nonresident undergraduates in the same circumstances shall be 110 percent of the educational costs at their respective category of institution.

EFFECT OF PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE:

The term student progression contract is changed to student progression understanding. Tuition for students at four-year institutions who have accumulated more than 115 percent of the number of credits necessary for their respective degree programs will be increased to 90 percent of educational costs for residents and 150 percent of educational costs for nonresidents. Exceptions to the higher level of tuition are allowed for: (1) any student who has entered into a student progression understanding and is in full compliance with the terms of the understanding; (2) any credits earned prior to the 1995-96 academic year; (3) credits earned at private institutions, out-of-state institutions or advanced placement program; and (4) any dislocated worker or any person engaging in a job training program.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: yes

Fiscal Note: requested January 21, 1994

TESTIMONY FOR: None

TESTIMONY AGAINST:

This bill conflicts with legislation passed last year which requires institutions to include in their strategic plans methods to accelerate the progress of students through the system. These plans are due to be reported in May of this year. The tuition provisions penalize students for problems which they may not have caused. It is almost impossible for students to plan their education in such detail, in advance, that they could avoid switching majors, programs or courses of study.

TESTIFIED: Cynthia Flynn, Council of Presidents (con); Tim Washburn, University of Washington (con); Ron Crossland, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (con)

