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## Higher Education Committee

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### HB 1671

**Brief Description:** Regarding higher education accountability.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Anderson, Schmick and Angel.

#### Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs the Education Data Center to annually report the percentage of graduates from public institutions of higher education who are employed in the state, disaggregated by industry and student characteristics.
- Directs the Education Data Center to report, in even numbered years, on student progress toward degree, disaggregated by student characteristics.
- Requires the Higher Education Coordinating Board to convene a workgroup to develop an online degree/certificate verification system.

**Hearing Date:** 2/11/09

**Staff:** Andi Smith (786-7304)

#### **Background:**

##### Education Data Center

Chapter 401, section 3 of the Laws of 2007 established an "education data center" in the Office of Financial Management (OFM). The education data center, which uses the working title of "Education Research and Data Center (ERDC)," in collaboration with the Legislative Evaluation and Accountability Program (LEAP) committee, conducts analyses of early learning, K-12, and higher education programs and education issues across the P-20 system. The system includes the Department of Early Learning, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Professional Educator Standards Board, the State Board of Education, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB), and public and private non-profit higher education institutions. The ERDC also works with other agencies that have significant roles in

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conducting and supporting education research including the Employment Security Department, the Department of Information Services, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee, and the Washington Institute for Public Policy.

### Employment Outcomes

According to the 2007 study, "Employment and Earning of Graduates from Washington's Four-year Colleges and Universities" conducted by request of the House Higher Education Committee by the Workforce Training Education and Coordinating Board, 66 percent of baccalaureate graduates were employed in Washington within three quarters of graduation. That percentage fell to 58 percent employment for graduate and professional students.

The most common industries of employment for bachelors degree graduates, disaggregated by field of study were:

- Information and Professional Services - 17 percent;
- Education - 16 percent;
- Finance Insurance Administration - 16 percent; and
- Wholesale/Retail Trade - 12 percent.

The most common industries of employment for graduate or professional school graduates, disaggregated by field of study were:

- Education - 37 percent;
- Information and Professional Services - 19 percent;
- Health Care - 15 percent; and
- Public Administration - 8 percent.

### **Summary of Bill:**

The Education Research and Data Center (ERDC) must conduct an analysis of the percentage of graduates from Washington's public baccalaureate institutions that were employed in Washington three quarters and fifteen quarters after graduation. The employment rates must be disaggregated by major line of study and student characteristic including race and ethnicity, gender, and receipt of student financial assistance. The first report is due to the Legislature by December 1, 2010 and annually thereafter.

The ERDC must also report to the Legislature on student progress to degree. The report will include analysis of the impact of major selection and course taking behavior on total credits needed to earn a degree. This analysis must also be disaggregated by student characteristic including race, ethnicity, prior academic preparation, and whether the student transferred from a community or technical college. The first report is due to the Legislature by December 1, 2010, and in even-numbered years thereafter.

The Higher Education Coordinating Board must convene a workgroup to create a system through which employees and employers could verify the completion of a higher education degree or certificate. The Board must identify any obstacles around personal privacy protections, suggest solutions, propose a timeline for project implementation, and recommend necessary resources. The Board must report to the Legislature by September 1, 2010.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on February 9, 2009.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.