
Higher Education Committee

HB 1674

Brief Description: Improving the effectiveness and efficiency of institutions of higher education.

Sponsors: Representatives Anderson, Schmick and Angel.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates a work group to review all aspects of the provision of higher education and recommend action items and systemic changes designed to improve efficiency and effectiveness.
- Charges the Higher Education Coordinating Board with reporting to the Legislature regarding work group recommendations, implementation, savings, and redirection of resources.

Hearing Date: 2/11/09

Staff: Cece Clynch (786-7195)

Background:

Higher education systems are coming under increasing scrutiny regarding what they do, how well they do it, and at what cost. At the same time that the economy is experiencing a downturn, pressure to increase quantity and capacity within institutions of higher education is simultaneously increasing.

Washington has six baccalaureate institutions with five branch campuses as well as 34 community and technical colleges. About 56 percent of Washington high school graduates enroll in postsecondary education within one year of high school graduation. Approximately 15,000 students transfer from the community and technical colleges to four year institutions annually.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Summary of Bill:

The Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) is directed to convene an effectiveness and efficiency work group composed of representatives from the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, the Council of Presidents, and the six baccalaureate institutions. The work group is tasked with reviewing all aspects of the provision of higher education and recommending action items and systemic changes designed to optimize the use of resources and yield savings and cost avoidances that can be redirected into maintaining academic and research quality, accommodating enrollment demands, and moderating tuition increases.

Consideration shall be given to:

- increasing institutional collaboration in academic offerings, technology applications, and the procurement of materials, equipment, and energy;
- identifying means for shortening the time to degree;
- establishing and reaching faculty workload goals;
- packaging need-based financial aid in order to increase access;
- eradicating unnecessary barriers to transfer between institutions; and
- other means for optimizing efficiency and achieving savings for the state, institutions, and students.

The various entities with representation on the work group are tasked with making every effort to implement the recommended action items and systemic changes. By December 1, 2010, the HECB shall report to the higher education committees of the House of Representatives and the Senate regarding action items recommended and systemic changes identified by the work group, as well as the status of implementation of each item or change, quantification of the associated efficiencies and savings achieved, and identification of how the savings were redirected. The HECB shall also identify any legislative action needed for implementation.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 10, 2009.

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