
Higher Education Committee

HB 2436

Brief Description: Requiring quarterly academic advising for students at institutions of higher education.

Sponsors: Representatives Haler and Pollet.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires public institutions of higher education to provide academic advising to students at least once per quarter and when a student has completed 75 percent of the requirements needed to obtain his or her degree or certificate.
- Requires the successor agency to the Higher Education Coordinating Board, in consultation with the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, to report on the impact of student advising on student retention and completion by December 1, 2014.

Hearing Date: 1/18/12

Staff: Madeleine Thompson (786-7304).

Background:

Examining student retention and persistence have found that academic advising is at the core of successful institutional efforts to educate and retain students.

In 2011, the Walla Walla Community College was one of five community colleges in the nation to be named a "Community College of Excellence" by the Aspen Institute. The award recognizes community colleges with outstanding outcomes in performance and improvement over time. Walla Walla Community College's advising system is one of the practices highlighted for contributing to student graduation rates that are well above national averages.

Students at Walla Walla Community College are required to meet with an advisor once per quarter, and faculty members who advise receive regular training. The college has also

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developed an online Advisory Data Portal that provides faculty and counselors, as well as students, with ways to track performance, attendance, program requirements, and other information related to student performance. Student services and technology staff collaborate to develop tools that assist student completion. One tool is a "degree estimator" that automatically maps students' transcripts against program requirements to determine their proximity to completion.

Summary of Bill:

By September 1, 2012, and within allocated resources, public institutions of higher education are required to provide academic advising to students at least once per quarter for the purpose of assisting students to articulate educational program goals, identify program requirements, track progress, and promote completion of a degree or certificate.

Academic advising must also take place when a student has completed 75 percent of the requirements needed to obtain his or her degree or certificate to identify requirements remaining to be completed. Advising meetings may take place either in person or through digital synchronous contact such as on the phone or using a real time web application.

The successor agency to the Higher Education Coordinating Board, in consultation with the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, must conduct an evaluation of student advising practices and impact on student retention and completion and report to the Governor and Legislature by December 1, 2014.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested January 16, 2012.

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