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## Higher Education Committee

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### HB 2717

**Brief Description:** Creating innovations in higher education.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Seaquist and Pollet.

#### Brief Summary of Bill

- Encourages the public baccalaureate institutions to design innovative approaches to increase the number of resident students gaining baccalaureate degrees or further updating their academic credentials with a focus on high-growth sectors of the economy.
- Encourages the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) to charter a consortium of volunteer community and technical colleges to design innovative approaches to rapidly and substantially increase the cost-effective delivery of developmental and remedial education, and test these innovations in pilot projects where possible.
- Directs the public baccalaureate institutions and the SBCTC to report to the Governor and the Legislature by August 1, 2012, and again by December 1, 2012.

**Hearing Date:** 1/30/12

**Staff:** Madeleine Thompson (786-7304).

#### **Background:**

A 2011 study of education levels compared to earnings and unemployment in the U.S. conducted by the Georgetown University, found that workers with higher levels of education have more opportunity to increase earnings and stay employed during recessions. The study estimated that by 2018, about two-thirds of all employment will require some college education or better.

According to the U.S. Census, nearly 31 percent of adults over age 25 in Washington state have a bachelor's degree or higher. State analysis conducted by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) estimated that about one in three working-age adults had a high

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school diploma or less as their highest level of education and found that to reach the "Tipping Point" to have the best chance of earning a wage to support oneself and one's family, an individual needs at least one year of postsecondary education and a credential.

In Washington, approximately 26 percent of employers hiring during 2010, could not find enough qualified applicants. The biennial survey conducted by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board) found that over 28,000 employers hiring in 2010, reported difficulty finding applicants with the right levels of education and skills, and reported impacts such as lowering productivity, more outsourcing, and moving part of their operation out of state.

Another state report completed in January 2012, estimates gaps between the supply of educated individuals and the labor market demand forecast over a five-year period. The report, "A Skilled and Educated Workforce," conducted jointly by the Higher Education Coordinating Board, the SBCTC, and the Workforce Board, estimated that, in order to meet labor market demand, Washington will need to increase the number of additional degrees and certificates per year between 2014 and 2019, as follows:

- 9,000 more mid-level associate degrees and certificates;
- 10,000 more bachelor's degrees; and
- 9,000 graduate or professional level degrees.

#### **Summary of Bill:**

Public baccalaureate institutions are encouraged to collaborate in the design of innovative approaches to greatly increase the number of resident students working toward and gaining baccalaureate degrees or further updating or advancing their academic credentials. They are required to submit an interim report to the Governor and the Legislature by August 1, 2012, and a final report by December 1, 2012. The interim or final report must include a survey of relevant innovations by the institutions, and propose a comprehensive plan for implementing further, system-wide innovations with a focus on the high-growth sectors of the state's economy. The public baccalaureate institutions are directed to work with the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) or its successor agency, business, and other partners as appropriate.

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) is encouraged to charter a consortium of volunteer community and technical colleges to design innovative approaches to rapidly and substantially increase the cost-effective delivery of developmental and remedial education. Wherever possible, those innovations are to be tested in immediate pilot projects. The SBCTC is required to submit to the Governor and the Legislature an interim report by August 1, 2012, and a final report and proposals for implementation by December 1, 2012.

The SBCTC must include in the interim or final report, a survey of relevant innovations by any of the colleges, and propose a comprehensive plan for implementing further, system-wide innovations designed to rapidly and substantially increase the cost-effectiveness of remedial and developmental education instruction for the full range of students seeking access to college and university education. The SBCTC is directed to work with the HECB or its successor agency, business, and other partners as appropriate.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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