

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6029

As of January 23, 2012

Title: An act relating to the opportunity to complete a baccalaureate degree in three years.

Brief Description: Regarding the ability to obtain a baccalaureate degree in three years.

Sponsors: Senators Shin, Tom, Hargrove, Hatfield, Harper, Pridemore, Delvin, Haugen, Honeyford, McAuliffe and Roach.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education & Workforce Development: 1/17/12.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Staff: Kimberly Cushing (786-7421)

Background: Some public and private colleges and universities offer students the opportunity to obtain a baccalaureate degree in three years. The requirements of these accelerated baccalaureate programs vary. In 2011 the Legislature gave Washington's institutions of higher education the authority to develop accelerated baccalaureate degree programs to allow academically qualified students to obtain a baccalaureate degree in three years without attending summer classes or enrolling in more than a full-time class load during the regular academic year. The institutions were required to report back on their plans to the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) for approval.

In 2011 the Legislature also required community and technical colleges, jointly with four-year institutions, to develop a list of academic courses that are equivalent to one year worth of general education credit that would transfer to any other two- or four-year institution. A student taking these courses may be issued a one-year academic completion certificate.

The Legislature also passed the Launch Year Act, which requires all public high schools in the state, within existing resources, to work toward the goal of offering a sufficient number of high school courses to give students the opportunity to earn the equivalent of one year of postsecondary credit toward a certificate, apprenticeship program, technical degree, or associate or baccalaureate degree. Starting December 1, 2011, and biennially thereafter, institutions of higher education must develop a master list of postsecondary courses that can be fulfilled by taking the Advance Placement, International Baccalaureate, or other

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recognized college-level proficiency exams by achieving a qualifying score or meeting demonstrated competencies.

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

Summary of Bill (Proposed Substitute): By July 1, 2012, state and regional universities and The Evergreen State College must report their plans for accelerated baccalaureate degree programs to the HECB or its successor agency. Additionally, each institution must clearly include in its admissions materials and on its web site any accelerated baccalaureate degree programs as well as additional opportunities to complete a baccalaureate degree program in three years. By August 1, 2012, this information must be provided to the HECB, or its successor agency, in a form that the Superintendent of Public Instruction is able to distribute to school districts.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Students are eager to graduate early and become gainfully employed. This bill expands the base of opportunity and supports the need to get into the workforce, and is a good way to continue the conversation and be more effective. In the United Kingdom, three-year degrees are very common. We need to look at building on dual credit opportunities through Running Start and Advanced Placement. We don't want people to think there is a limited degree pattern for three-year degrees, because there is a wide range available. The University of Washington (UW) already has the Husky Advantage program that is three years, and students are very satisfied. All reporting requirements should match with currently existing programs. There should be one place for information and processes. Institutions are already reporting Launch Year activities. A three-year degree is not about compressing time-to-degree; it assumes that the student is very motivated with precollege learning in high school. Institutions must maintain integrity and quality of the degree.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Shin, prime sponsor; Michael Reilly, Council of Presidents; Andrew Lewis, Associated Students, UW; Margaret Shepherd, UW.