

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 6121

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Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Requiring the office of student financial assistance to provide a financial aid counseling curriculum for institutions of higher education.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Development (originally sponsored by Senators Frockt, Tom, Kastama, Shin and Kline).

Senate Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Development **House Committee on Higher Education**

Background: In Washington, two- and four-year institutions of higher education currently offer a range of online and in-person financial aid orientation options.

Under current law, the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB), which administers the State Need Grant (SNG) program, is required to consider counseling as a paramount function of SNG and other state student financial aid programs, and in most cases could only be properly implemented at the institutional levels. Additionally, HECB must display all available student financial aid programs (except federal student loans and aid granted outside the financial aid package) if it develops a one-stop college information web-based portal to include financial, academic, and career planning information.

Currently, federal law requires a school to ensure that federal loan borrowers fulfill entrance and exit counseling requirements in person, by an audio-visual presentation, or electronically.

SNG program assists needy and disadvantaged students by offsetting a portion of their higher education costs. To be eligible, a student's family income cannot exceed 70 percent of the state's median family income, currently \$57,000 for a family of four.

Summary: By, July 1, 2013, the Office of Student Financial Assistance must provide a financial aid counseling curriculum to all higher education institutions participating in the SNG program. The curriculum must be available via a website. The curriculum must include, but not be limited to:

- an explanation of SNG program rules;
- information on scholarships and work study options;
- an overview of student loan options and consequences;
- an overview of financial literacy;
- average salaries for a range of jobs;

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- perspectives from students who are or were recipients of financial aid, including loans; and
- contact information for local financial aid resources and the Federal Student Aid Ombudsman's Office.

By the 2013-14 academic year, higher education institutions must take reasonable steps to ensure that each SNG recipient receives information outlined in the bill by directly referencing or linking to the website on the Conditions of Award statement provided to each recipient. Institutions may also require non-SNG students to participate in all or portions of the counseling.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	48	0
House	96	0

Effective: June 7, 2012