
Higher Education Committee

HB 1320

Brief Description: Requiring an online higher education transfer and student advising system.

Sponsors: Representatives Zeiger, Seaquist, Haler, Pollet, Magendanz, Bergquist, Moscoso, Morrell and Tarleton.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Washington Student Achievement Council to establish and maintain a statewide Online Transfer and Student Advising system by September 1, 2014, in conjunction with other state agencies and higher education institutions.
- Directs that the purpose of the Online Transfer and Student Advising system is to assist students to access higher education programs quickly and speed completion of their educational programs by clarifying and simplifying the process for exploring programs, resources, and transferability of courses.

Hearing Date: 2/5/13

Staff: Madeleine Thompson (786-7304).

Background:

Student Transfer.

The development of statewide articulation agreements are designed to improve transfer and to reduce the number or excess credits. According to a report of the Washington Student Achievement Council, more than 19,000 students transferred credits from community and technical colleges to public and private baccalaureate programs in Washington in the 2011 -2012 academic year. Approximately 13,000 students (68 percent) transferred to one of the six public baccalaureate institutions. Nearly 5,700 students (30 percent), transferred to private four-year institutions. This includes the addition of nearly 1,900 transfer students to Western Governors University in 2011-12. Transfers from community colleges to the Bachelor of Applied Science

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degree programs offered at the community and technical colleges have grown to over 300 transfers in the 2011-12 academic year.

Online Student Advising.

One model for online student advising is the Florida Academic Counseling and Tracking for Students system also known as FACTS.org. It was launched in 2000 as a one-stop statewide student advising system. The system was designed by the Florida Department of Education for the purpose of providing an online service for students to access resources and assist high school and college students to make informed choices about their education. Students can use FACTS.org to monitor their high school progress, learn about postsecondary opportunities, plan their career objectives, apply to college online, choose majors, and evaluate their progress towards a degree. The system is administered by the Florida Center for Advising and Academic Support.

Summary of Bill:

The Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC), in conjunction with the public baccalaureate institutions, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, and the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board), is required to establish and maintain a statewide Online Transfer and Student Advising system (OTSA) by September 1, 2014. The purpose of the OTSA is to assist students to access higher education programs quickly and speed completion of their educational programs by clarifying and simplifying the process for exploring programs, resources, and transferability of courses. The purpose is also to create greater efficiency for higher education institutions through online transfer and advising.

The OTSA must provide an integrated system of online student advising, registration information, and comprehensive admissions and transfer information for transfer between community and technical colleges and public baccalaureate institutions. The OTSA must be easily accessible to all Washington high school students and their parents or guardians, higher education students, faculty, counselors, advisors and other professional staff.

There must be integration with websites maintained by four-year public baccalaureate institutions, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, the Workforce Board, and other websites to provide an inventory of postsecondary degrees and certificates available in the state, including online options.

Various types of information must be available through the OTSA:

- educational requirements for various occupations, including labor market information;
- admissions requirements and pre-requisites for all postsecondary programs;
- identification of course options that meet the requirements of a selected path toward a degree or certificate;
- registration and admissions information for programs at any public higher education institution in the state; and
- information regarding student financial aid and other services that assist students to complete degrees and certificates.

The OTSA must provide a method for students to assess which courses and programs are transferrable from one higher education institution to another, and which programs will transfer with credit towards completion of their chosen degree or certificate

The four-year public baccalaureate institutions, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, the WSAC, and the Workforce Board, are directed to sign a memorandum of understanding that specifies roles and responsibilities regarding the design, implementation, promotion, development, maintenance, and analysis of the effectiveness of the Online Transfer and Student Advising system.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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