
Higher Education Committee

HB 1669

Brief Description: Concerning self-supporting, fee-based programs at four-year institutions of higher education.

Sponsors: Representatives Pollet, Haler, Cody, Tarleton, Johnson, Seaquist, Farrell, Magendanz, Riccelli and Ryu.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires public baccalaureate institutions to provide at least six months notification to students prior to establishing a new self-supporting, fee-based program or moving a degree program that is supported by state funding to a self-supporting, fee-based program.
- Requires the establishment of a committee to create criteria for establishing self-supporting, fee-based programs, and sets out minimum criteria.
- Directs the committee that creates the criteria to establish a process for moving self-supporting, fee-based programs that do not meet the criteria, to degree programs that receive state funding.

Hearing Date: 2/12/13

Staff: Madeleine Thompson (786-7304).

Background:

Public baccalaureate institutions in Washington offer a variety of fee-based programs that are self-supporting, and are not funded through state funding. These programs are primarily aimed at students who would benefit from alternative delivery options such as evenings and weekends, and via distance learning. Self-supporting, fee-based programs range from the certificate level to doctorate-level programs, and are offered in a variety of disciplines.

At the University of Washington, for example, self-supporting programs are managed by the Educational Outreach program. For the 2011-2012 academic year the university's provost

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permitted certain degree programs to be created or transferred to the Educational Outreach program, only if they: (1) were offered in an alternative format from an existing campus-based, daytime, full-time degree program; (2) served primarily non-traditionally-aged students in undergraduate programs, professionals in masters-level programs, part-time students, or international students; or (3) were new interdisciplinary programs that did not align well with exiting academic units. In 2012 the University of Washington placed a moratorium on transferring state-supported programs to fee-based, self-supporting programs. That moratorium is in place until July 1, 2015.

Summary of Bill:

The governing board of a public baccalaureate institution must provide at least six months notice to current and prospective students when a decision is made to change a degree program that is supported by state funding to a program that is self-supporting and fee-based. This notice must include an estimate of tuition and fees.

The governing board of each public baccalaureate institution is required to establish a committee comprising administrators, faculty, and students to create criteria upon which to base decisions for moving state-supported degree programs to self-supporting programs. Criteria to be considered must include, but are not be limited to, the following:

- Whether moving the program to a self-supporting program will result in the loss of student financial aid;
- Whether the program prepares students for careers in public service, such as public health, nursing, and librarianship, among others;
- Whether the program is designed to serve professional advancement, and serves students who are already employed and on a career track; and
- The median income in the field of preparation.

The committee that creates the criteria for establishing self-supporting, fee-based programs is required to establish a process for moving self-supporting, fee-based degree programs that do not meet the criteria to programs that receive state funding.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 8, 2013.

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