

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1736

As Amended by the Senate

Title: An act relating to higher education operating efficiencies.

Brief Description: Concerning higher education operating efficiencies.

Sponsors: Representatives Zeiger, Seaquist, Haler, Pollet, Ryu, Sawyer, Bergquist, Magendanz and Farrell.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 2/13/13, 2/14/13 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/4/13, 98-0.

Senate Amended.

Passed Senate: 4/17/13, 47-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs the Office of Financial Management to work with institutions of higher education, the Department of Enterprise Services, the Department of Commerce, and the Department of Transportation to review the reporting requirements of institutions of higher education with the purpose of enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of their operations, and report recommendations by December 1, 2013.
- Permits institutions of higher education and state higher education agencies to use or accept electronic signatures, as defined, for any human resource, benefits, or payroll processes that require a signature.
- Permits the Washington Student Achievement Council to negotiate and enter into interstate reciprocity agreements with other state or multistate entities regarding the operations of degree-granting institutions in the state.
- Permits the Washington Student Achievement Council to enter into certain agreements for the purposes of ensuring consistent consumer protection in interstate distance delivery of higher education.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 18 members: Representatives Seaquist, Chair; Pollet, Vice Chair; Haler, Ranking Minority Member; Zeiger, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Fagan, Hansen, Hargrove, Johnson, Magendanz, Pedersen, Reykdal, Riccelli, Sawyer, Scott, Sells, Smith, Tarleton and Wylie.

Staff: Madeleine Thompson (786-7304).

Background:

Reporting Requirements.

Similar to other state agencies, institutions of higher education are required to submit a variety of reports to the Governor, the Legislature, the Office of Financial Management, or other state agencies to demonstrate compliance with certain state laws or rules, or report progress toward certain state goals.

Electronic Signatures.

State agencies are permitted to use electronic signatures for certain operations. For example, legislation enacted in 2009 authorized the Department of Social and Health Services and the Health Care Authority to accept electronic signatures for all programs the agencies administer.

Authorization of Degree-Granting Institutions.

The Washington Student Achievement Council (Council) is responsible for authorizing degree-granting institutions to operate in the state. This mainly applies to out-of-state institutions that wish to advertise their programs in Washington to recruit students, operate a physical teaching site in Washington, or include an internship, an externship, clinical training, or a practical component that must take place in Washington. The following higher education institutions do not fall under the Council's authorization requirements: the state's public colleges and universities, longstanding private institutions, and higher education institutions whose degree programs are wholly religious in nature.

Summary of Bill:

The Office of Financial Management (OFM) is directed to work with institutions of higher education, the Department of Enterprise Services, the Department of Commerce, and the Department of Transportation to review the reporting requirements of institutions of higher education with the purpose of enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of their operations. Reporting requirements specified relate to the following:

- state energy code building standards;
- high performance public buildings;
- motor vehicle transportation services;
- the Washington State Patrol retirement fund;
- air contaminants; and
- greenhouse gas emissions.

By December 1, 2013, the OFM must report to the Governor and the higher education committees of the Legislature with recommendations for coordinating and streamlining

reporting, and promoting the most efficient use of state resources at institutions of higher education.

Public institutions of higher education and state higher education agencies are permitted to use or accept electronic signatures for any human resource, benefits, or payroll processes that require a signature. For these purposes electronic signature is defined as a signature in electronic form attached to, or logically associated with, an electronic record including, but not limited to, a digital signature.

The Washington Student Achievement Council (Council) is authorized to negotiate and enter into interstate reciprocity agreements with other state or multistate entities regarding the operations of degree-granting institutions in the state. The Council is permitted to enter into agreements with degree-granting institutions based in Washington that are otherwise exempt from adhering to the minimum standards for degree granting institutions set by the Council, for the purposes of ensuring consistent consumer protection in interstate distance delivery of higher education.

EFFECT OF SENATE AMENDMENT(S):

The Senate amendment permits a recognized student government organization at each four-year higher education institution to form one student advisory committee with the purpose of advising and assisting the administration on issues that directly affect student ability to access and succeed in educational programs. Issues that the advisory committee may consider include tuition and fee levels among others.

The administration of the higher education institution is required to make available all nonconfidential information requested by the advisory committee and provide the committee an opportunity to present recommendations before final decisions are made. The advisory committee is required to make reasonable efforts to solicit feedback from students and keep students informed of deliberations and actions of the advisory committee.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This proposal was developed collaboratively between the public two-year and four-year institutions of higher education. Institutions of higher education fully support the state's goal to manage energy efficiently on campus and believe that the many reports with similar multiple requirements could be streamlined. Allowing the use of electronic signatures would prevent institutions from using up trees and other limited resources. Electronic signatures are a more efficient way of approaching human resources processes. The reciprocity proposal provides a way for schools in Washington to provide education in other parts of the country and have schools in other parts of the country offer programs here

in way that makes sense for the schools and students, including a system for filing and processing complaints.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Zeiger, prime sponsor; Paul Francis, Council of Presidents; Bill Saraceno, Columbia Basin College; Joann Wiszmann, Pierce College District; Margaret Shepherd, University of Washington; and Don Bennett, Washington Student Achievement Council.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.