

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 5195

C 248 L 13
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Allowing nonprofit institutions recognized by the state of Washington to be eligible to participate in the state need grant program.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Rolfes, Hill, Tom, Bailey and Fain).

Senate Committee on Higher Education
Senate Committee on Ways & Means
House Committee on Higher Education
House Committee on Appropriations

Background: State Need Grant Eligibility. The State Need Grant (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 \$57,500 per year for a family of four.

Under current law, an institution of higher education is eligible to participate in the SNG program if it is a public university, college, or community or technical college operated by Washington State, or any other accredited university, college, school, or institute in Washington. However, any institution, branch, extension, or facility that is affiliated with an out-of-state institution must be a separately accredited member institution or a branch of an accredited institution that is eligible for federal financial aid, has operated as a nonprofit college or university delivering on-site classroom instruction in Washington for a minimum of 20 consecutive years, and has an annual enrollment of at least 700 students.

Western Governors University (WGU). WGU is a private, nonprofit, online university. WGU offers undergraduate and graduate degree programs in business, teacher education, information technology, and health professions, including nursing.

In 2011 the Legislature expressed its intent to partner with WGU to establish WGU-Washington as a self-supporting institution. The Legislature authorized the Student Achievement Council to recognize WGU-Washington as an important component of Washington's higher education system and required the Council to work with WGU-Washington to create data sharing processes to assess the institution's performance and determine how it helps Washington achieve its higher education goals.

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.

Summary: The Legislature finds that WGU-Washington serves a non-traditional and geographically diverse student population that deserves to have access to affordable postsecondary education, including baccalaureate degree-granting institutions; that the Legislature intends to provide WGU-Washington access to the SNG program; and that the Legislature intends for WGU-Washington to comply with all reporting requirements required for participation in the SNG program.

A nonprofit institution recognized by Washington State under current law is eligible to participate in the SNG program.

The definitions of eligible institutions are modified for the Get Ready for Math and Science Scholarship Program, and the Gaining Independence for Students with Dependents Scholarship Program so that they do not include nonprofit institutions recognized by Washington State.

Votes on Final Passage:

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| Senate | 47 | 2 |
| House | 75 | 21 |

Effective: August 1, 2013.