

---

HOUSE BILL 1736

---

State of Washington                      63rd Legislature                      2013 Regular Session

By Representatives Zeiger, Seaquist, Haler, Pollet, Ryu, Sawyer, Bergquist, Magendanz, and Farrell

Read first time 02/06/13. Referred to Committee on Higher Education.

1            AN ACT Relating to higher education operating efficiencies;  
2 amending RCW 28B.85.020; adding a new section to chapter 28B.10 RCW;  
3 creating a new section; and providing an expiration date.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5            NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 1.** (1) In order to enhance the efficiency and  
6 effectiveness of operations of institutions of higher education, the  
7 office of financial management shall work with the department of  
8 enterprise services, the department of transportation, the department  
9 of commerce, institutions of higher education, and others as necessary  
10 to comprehensively review reporting requirements related to the  
11 provisions in RCW 19.27A.020, 19.27A.150, 70.235.020, 39.35D.020,  
12 43.19.565, 43.41.130, 47.01.440, 70.94.151, 70.94.161, 70.94.527,  
13 70.120A.010, 70.120A.050, 70.235.030, 70.235.040, 70.235.050,  
14 70.235.060, 70.235.070, 80.80.030, 80.80.040, and 80.80.080. By  
15 December 1, 2013, the office of financial management shall report to  
16 the governor and the higher education committees of the legislature.  
17 The report shall include recommendations for coordinating and  
18 streamlining reporting, and promoting the most efficient use of state  
19 resources at institutions of higher education.

1 (2) This section expires July 1, 2014.

2 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.10 RCW  
3 to read as follows:

4 (1) Institutions of higher education and state higher education  
5 agencies may use or accept electronic signatures for any human  
6 resource, benefits, or payroll processes that require a signature.  
7 Such signatures are valid and enforceable.

8 (2) For the purposes of this section, "electronic signature" has  
9 the definition in RCW 41.05.014.

10 **Sec. 3.** RCW 28B.85.020 and 2012 c 229 s 543 are each amended to  
11 read as follows:

12 (1) The council:

13 (a) Shall adopt by rule, in accordance with chapter 34.05 RCW,  
14 minimum standards for degree-granting institutions concerning granting  
15 of degrees, quality of education, unfair business practices, financial  
16 stability, and other necessary measures to protect citizens of this  
17 state against substandard, fraudulent, or deceptive practices. The  
18 rules shall require that an institution operating in Washington:

19 (i) Be accredited;

20 (ii) Have applied for accreditation and such application is pending  
21 before the accrediting agency;

22 (iii) Have been granted a waiver by the council waiving the  
23 requirement of accreditation; or

24 (iv) Have been granted an exemption by the council from the  
25 requirements of this subsection (1)(a);

26 (b) May investigate any entity the council reasonably believes to  
27 be subject to the jurisdiction of this chapter. In connection with the  
28 investigation, the council may administer oaths and affirmations, issue  
29 subpoenas and compel attendance, take evidence, and require the  
30 production of any books, papers, correspondence, memorandums, or other  
31 records which the council deems relevant or material to the  
32 investigation. The council, including its staff and any other  
33 authorized persons, may conduct site inspections, the cost of which  
34 shall be borne by the institution, and examine records of all  
35 institutions subject to this chapter;

1        (c) May negotiate and enter into interstate reciprocity agreements  
2 with other state or multistate entities if the agreements are  
3 consistent with the purposes in this chapter as determined by the  
4 council;

5        (d) May enter into agreements with degree-granting institutions of  
6 higher education based in this state, that are otherwise exempt under  
7 the provisions of subsection (1)(a) of this section, for the purpose of  
8 ensuring consistent consumer protection in interstate distance delivery  
9 of higher education;

10       (e) Shall develop an interagency agreement with the workforce  
11 training and education coordinating board to regulate degree-granting  
12 private vocational schools with respect to degree and nondegree  
13 programs; and

14       (~~(d)~~) (f) Shall develop and disseminate information to the public  
15 about entities that sell or award degrees without requiring appropriate  
16 academic achievement at the postsecondary level, including but not  
17 limited to, a description of the substandard and potentially fraudulent  
18 practices of these entities, and advice about how the public can  
19 recognize and avoid the entities. To the extent feasible, the  
20 information shall include links to additional resources that may assist  
21 the public in identifying specific institutions offering substandard or  
22 fraudulent degree programs.

23       (2) Financial disclosures provided to the council by degree-  
24 granting private vocational schools are not subject to public  
25 disclosure under chapter 42.56 RCW.

--- END ---