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**SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 2686**

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**State of Washington 64th Legislature 2016 Regular Session**

**By** House Higher Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Sullivan, Walkinshaw, Bergquist, Kilduff, Rossetti, Pike, Zeiger, Stanford, Magendanz, Farrell, Santos, Ormsby, and Pollet)

AN ACT Relating to making the cost of textbooks and other college course materials more affordable; adding new sections to chapter 28B.50 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 28B.77 RCW; creating new sections; and providing an expiration date.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The legislature recognizes that the cost of textbooks has increased at three times the rate of inflation since 1977. The average undergraduate student at a public four-year institution of higher education spends about one thousand two hundred dollars per year on textbooks and other course supplies. While alternatives exist to purchasing new textbooks, such as renting, buying used, digital versions, or finding open source textbooks, many students are still not able to afford textbooks and may opt out of purchasing them. Open course databases have emerged as an alternative for faculty to provide low-cost or free textbooks and other course materials to students, thereby increasing the affordability of higher education.

(2) The state board for community and technical colleges completed an open course library of eighty-one high enrollment courses in 2013. The Student Public Interest Research Groups (Student PIRGs) conducted an analysis of the student savings from the open course library and estimated that, during the 2012-13 academic year, the open course library saved students an estimated two million nine hundred thousand dollars. In addition, they estimated that the open course library saves students an average of ninety-six dollars per class. The legislature recognizes that the open course library and similar efforts help to make higher education more affordable and should be expanded.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28B.50 RCW to read as follows:

The definitions in this section apply throughout sections 3 through 6 of this act unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Open course library" means the collection of shareable course materials, such as digital textbooks, syllabi, readings, assignments, and assessments, provided online by the college board for free or for less than thirty dollars for the community and technical college system's highest enrolled courses.

(2) "Open educational resources" means freely accessible, openly licensed educational textbooks, documents, material, and media that reside in the public domain for free use and repurposing for the intention of teaching, learning, assessing, and researching.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28B.50 RCW to read as follows:

By fall 2017, the community and technical colleges shall revise their college catalogs and course descriptions to designate which courses qualify as having open educational resources. A course qualifies as having open educational resources if the majority of the required materials' costs are eliminated through the use of open educational resources.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28B.50 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The college board shall administer a grant program to fund campus level coordinators to promote and facilitate expansion of the open course library. To be eligible for the grant program, a community or technical college must submit an application to the college board along with a pledge of financial or in-kind resources to support the expansion effort. The application must indicate how the community or technical college will contribute to the goal of expanding access to free and low-cost textbooks and other course materials.

(2) The college board shall select grant recipients based on the following priorities:

(a) Those that project the lowest textbook costs to students;

(b) Those that demonstrate the largest reduction in textbook costs to students; and

(c) Those that most efficiently and effectively distribute resources across an array of colleges and courses, factoring in course enrollments; different subject matters; required courses for general education requirements; and diversity in class size, degree and certificate programs, disciplines, student populations, and geographic locations.

(3) The college board is authorized to receive private, nonstate funding to support the grant program.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28B.50 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The college board shall administer a grant program to support colleges that seek to develop an entire degree or certificate program composed of courses designated as having open educational resources.

(2) To be eligible for the grant program, the community or technical college must submit an application to the college board describing its plan to assemble a pathway of courses designated as having open educational resources into a complete degree or certificate program, with the goal that a student could complete the degree or certificate program without having to purchase textbooks or spend a minimal amount on textbooks and other course materials.

(3) The college board shall select grant recipients by considering geographic diversity, a variety of academic and workforce credentials and programs, and high-demand programs among students and employers.

(4) The college board is authorized to receive private, nonstate funding to support the grant program.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28B.77 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The council shall administer a grant program to fund campus level coordinators to promote and facilitate access to open educational resources for the four-year institutions of higher education. To be eligible for the grant program, a four-year institution of higher education must submit an application to the council along with a pledge of financial or in-kind resources to support the expansion effort. The application must indicate how the four-year institution of higher education will contribute to the goal of expanding access to free or low-cost textbooks and other course materials.

(2) The council shall select grant recipients based on the following priorities:

(a) Those that project the lowest textbook costs to students;

(b) Those that demonstrate the largest reduction in textbook costs to students; and

(c) Those that most efficiently and effectively distribute resources across an array of colleges and courses, factoring in course enrollments; different subject matters; required courses for general education requirements; and diversity in class size, degree and certificate programs, disciplines, student populations, and geographic locations.

(3) The council is authorized to receive private, nonstate funding to support the grant program.

(4) The definitions in section 2 of this act apply to this section.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28B.50 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The college board and the student achievement council shall report to the governor and appropriate fiscal and policy committees of the legislature by December 1, 2018, in accordance with the reporting requirements in RCW 43.01.036, on the impact of the grant programs in sections 4 through 6 of this act, along with recommendations for how to further reduce the cost of textbooks and other course materials for students.

(2) This section expires August 1, 2019.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  If specific funding for the purposes of sections 4 through 7 of this act, referencing sections 4 through 7 of this act by bill or chapter number and section number, is not provided by June 30, 2016, in the omnibus appropriations act, sections 4 through 7 of this act are null and void.

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