

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1147

As Reported by House Committee On: Higher Education

Title: An act relating to a study of the transition to a three-track or four-track admission system for public institutions of higher education.

Brief Description: Requiring a study of the transition to a three-track or four-track admission system for public institutions of higher education.

Sponsors: Representatives Haler, Pollet, Manweller, Zeiger and Bergquist.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 2/3/15, 2/10/15, 2/11/15 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) to conduct a study on the transition to a three-track admission system for public institutions of higher education on a semester calendar and a four-track admission system for public institutions of higher education on a quarter calendar.
- Requires the WSIPP to report to the appropriate committees of the Legislature by November 1, 2015.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Hansen, Chair; Pollet, Vice Chair; Zeiger, Ranking Minority Member; Haler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Gregory, Hargrove, Holy, Stambaugh and Van Werven.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Sells and Tarleton.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Reykdal.

Staff: Megan Mulvihill (786-7304).

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.

Background:

Washington's Public Colleges and Universities.

All of Washington's public institutions of higher education, including the community and technical colleges, operate on a quarter system, except for Washington State University. Students typically start in the fall quarter or semester of an academic year, but it is also possible to begin at the start of a different semester or quarter depending on the institution and program of study.

The Brigham Young University-Idaho Three-Track Admission System.

The Brigham Young University-Idaho (BYU-Idaho) operates year round with three 14-week semesters known as fall, winter, and spring. Students are admitted to the university on a track. There are three tracks, each consisting of two semesters: fall/winter, winter/spring, and spring/fall. The BYU-Idaho has a two-step admissions process. The first step screens for admissibility, and once admitted, a student receives a questionnaire to determine that student's track assignment. A student indicates on their questionnaire which track they are first available to attend and answers additional questions about personal circumstances they might have. The BYU-Idaho uses that information to place a student into a track to begin at the university. For example, a student may list their availability to start in fall, but the university may assign them to the winter/spring track to start in the winter semester.

Washington State Institute of Public Policy.

The Legislature created the Washington State Institute of Public Policy (WSIPP) in 1983 to conduct non-partisan research at the direction of the Legislature or the WSIPP's Board of Directors. The WSIPP's Board of Directors is made up of 16 members that represent the Legislature, Governor, and public universities.

Summary of Bill:

The WSIPP must conduct a study on the transition to a three-track admission system for public institutions of higher education on a semester calendar and a four-track admission system for public institutions of higher education on a quarter calendar. The study must determine:

- how BYU-Idaho made the transition to a three-track admission system;
- how a transition to a three-track or four-track admission system would affect the public institutions of higher education;
- the cost savings of a three-track or four-track admission system compared to the current system; and
- how many additional students could be served by a three-track or four-track admission system.

The WSIPP must report the findings to the appropriate legislative committees by November 1, 2015. The act expires July 1, 2016.

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) The question is what does the state do in light of the *McCleary v. State of Washington* decision. There have been too many state cuts. In light of the high tuition, high debt model, the state needs to be innovative. This bill looks at three- or four-track admission systems. It helps get cohorts through as quick as possible which helps reduce student debt. The bill requires a study for this year, and then next year the Legislature can pass a bill that implements this.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Haler, prime sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.