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## Higher Education Committee

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### HB 1482

**Brief Description:** Requiring an analysis of regional higher education capacity to meet educational attainment goals.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Pollet, Zeiger, Stanford, Haler, Bergquist and Tarleton.

#### Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Student Achievement Council (Council) to conduct a study to assess the gap between demand for higher education in various regions of the state and the capacity of higher education institutions to meet demand.
- Allows the Council to hire a consultant to conduct all or part of the study.
- Requires the Council to submit a status report to the Governor and Legislature by December 1, 2015, and the initial report by December 1, 2016, that includes the results of the study and options for capacity expansion.

**Hearing Date:** 2/3/15

**Staff:** Megan Mulvihill (786-7304).

#### Background:

##### Washington's Institutions of Higher Education.

There are six public baccalaureate institutions in Washington, and each of those six institutions have branch campuses or other locations scattered throughout the state. There are 34 community and technical colleges that have an open door policy in which anyone, regardless of academic background, may attend. Of those, seven are located on the eastern side of the Cascade Mountain Range. In addition to the public institutions, there are over 70 for-profit and non-profit private institutions. There are also over 300 licensed private career schools that offer programs of two-years or less.

##### Educational Attainment Goals.

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The Student Achievement Council (Council) provides strategic planning, oversight, advocacy, and programs to support students and higher education in the state. The Council is statutorily required to propose educational attainment goals and priorities to meet the state's higher education needs. In 2013, the Council established two educational attainment goals for 2023 that the Legislature adopted in 2014. These goals are:

1. All adults in Washington, ages 25-44, will have a high school diploma or equivalent.
2. At least 70 percent of Washington adults, ages 25-44, will have a postsecondary credential.

According to the National Center for Higher Education which uses data from the 2011 American Community Survey, approximately 45 percent of Washington's population in the age group of 25-44 has a postsecondary credential. This includes certificates and every level of degree.

In order to reach the second educational attainment goal, it is estimated, based on population projections, that approximately 1.42 million individuals in 2023 would have to have a post-secondary credential. This is an increase of approximately 56,123 additional people each year. In 2014, there were 94,554 post-secondary credentials earned in Washington.

#### Enrollments.

Enrollments at the public institutions of higher education have steadily increased about 1 percent annually. According to data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, there were more than 249,000 full-time equivalent students attending public institutions of higher education in the 2013-14 academic year. Of those, 143,292 were enrolled at a community or technical college. In addition, the private two-year and four-year institutions enrolled just over 68,000 full-time equivalent students.

#### **Summary of Bill:**

The Council must conduct a study to assess the gap between demand for higher education in various regions of the state and the capacity of higher education institutions to meet demand. The Council must collaborate with the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (State Board), the public four-year institutions of higher education, the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, and the Office of Financial Management in conducting the study. The Council may also hire a consultant to do all or part of the study.

The study must include an assessment of the:

- operational and physical capacity at institutions of higher education;
- projected student demand for postsecondary education through 2023 in various geographical regions of the state;
- ability to meet the statewide educational attainment goals in different regional areas of the state; and
- lack of accessible public baccalaureate degree granting institutions to serve the demand in regional areas of the state.

When considering physical and operational capacity, projected expansion through capital and e-learning must be considered. The projected student demand assessment must consider multiple educational pathways, student backgrounds, the mix of degrees and credentials needed, current

trends, and improvements in educational delivery. The Council must use data provided by the State Board and the public four-year institutions of higher education.

The Council must submit a status report by December 1, 2015, and an initial report by December 1, 2016, to the Governor and the appropriate committees of the Legislature. The initial report must recommend options for meeting regional capacity deficiencies and additional resources needed to meet the educational attainment goals. The options for higher education capacity expansion may include:

- increasing capacity at existing institutions;
- allowing branch campuses to become regional institutions;
- establishing new regional institutions;
- expanding partnerships between community and technical colleges and the public four-year institutions; and
- allowing community and technical colleges to grant traditional and applied baccalaureate degrees.

The act will expire July 1, 2017.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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