
Higher Education Committee

HB 1982

Brief Description: Enhancing student completion through advising, mentoring, recapture initiatives, remedial programs, and accelerated precollege instruction and creating the innovations for student completion program.

Sponsors: Representatives Pollet, Walkinshaw, Gregerson, Carlyle, Tarleton and Orwall.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates the Innovations for Student Completion Program (ISCP) which includes elements of required advising, new student orientation, degree or certificate mapping and career counseling, and an early alert component for students at risk of not graduating.
- Requires an attendance pilot project to be established at a community or technical college.
- Establishes complete grant programs for those institutions wishing to pursue more rigorous student completion, mentoring, and advising programs.
- Requires the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges to administer an innovative grant program for those community and technical colleges that want to expand their Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training programs.
- Requires an evaluation at two and four years of the ISCP's inception and a report to the Legislature.

Hearing Date: 2/17/15

Staff: Megan Mulvihill (786-7304).

Background:

Many college students do not graduate within the traditional four-year timeframe, and many who attend college never complete their degree or certificate programs. Of the 2009-10 cohort who went directly from high school to college at one of Washington's public baccalaureate

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institutions, 9 percent graduated within four years and 63 percent graduated in six years. According to the Chronicle of Higher Education, the 2010 three-year graduation rate for Washington's public community and technical colleges was 25.8 percent. Many institutions have developed mentoring and advising programs to reach out to those students at risk of not completing in an attempt to help them finish. Some examples of those programs are below.

The Washington Campus Compact.

The mission of the Washington Campus Compact (Compact), hosted by Western Washington University (Western), is to create academic and co-curricular service opportunities for students to develop the skills and habits of citizenship, encourage the engagement of students and faculty in community-based scholarship that addresses societal concerns, and foster the development of collaborative partnerships among campuses and with communities.

Membership of the Compact includes all six public baccalaureate institutions, private and non-profit baccalaureate degree granting institutions, and community and technical colleges in both eastern and western Washington. A major project of the Compact is the Retention Project that was launched in 2006. Between 2010 and 2013 this project engaged over 10,000 college students to serve as mentors to low-income, at-risk, and first-generation college students and K-12 students. In 2013 the Retention Project served over 10,000 mentees.

Western Washington University's Destination Graduation Program.

Western has a recapture program called Destination Graduation. The program seeks to help students who left Western in good academic standing prior to completing their degree return to Western to graduate. The program targets students who earned at least 140 credits prior to leaving who did not complete their degree elsewhere. Western estimates that over the past 10 years, more than 2,400 students that fit this criteria have left before graduating. Many of the reasons given for why these students left include health, family, and financial issues. The program has helped over 147 students return to Western and complete their degree. Walla Walla Community College (Walla Walla) has a similar recapture program.

Walla Walla Community College.

Walla Walla has a comprehensive advising system which includes a number of elements. Walla Walla requires every student to attend orientation, each student has an advisor with required quarterly meetings, and students must map out their course-taking pathway. Walla Walla developed a degree navigation program to discover if a course on the student's schedule was going to count towards their degree. Walla Walla also developed a software program that shows students which jobs are within a 100-mile radius of Walla Walla, the pay, the number of openings, and which degrees or credentials the job requires.

Summary of Bill:

The State Campus Compact.

There are two comprehensive programs created. First, Western is directed to host a statewide consortium of public and private institutions of higher education to develop and administer the state Campus Compact (State Compact) with the purpose of providing and increasing the number of campus-based mentoring and service-learning opportunities in K-12 education and at eligible institutions of higher education. The mentoring and service-learning opportunities developed under the Compact are intended to serve students in K-12 who are:

- at risk of dropping out;
- are not on track to complete their high school diploma on time;
- from low-income families;
- in or transitioning from foster care; or
- from a family with no previous experience in attending college.

Students who are targeted for this program in postsecondary education are those who:

- are not on track to complete their degree or certificate program;
- enrolled in one or more pre-college level courses or programs;
- from a low-income family;
- in or transitioning from foster care;
- from a family with no previous experience in attending college; or
- veterans of the armed forces.

The State Compact must be designed to do four things: (1) increase student engagement in learning; (2) develop workforce, financial literacy, and citizenship skills; (3) improve student attitudes and behaviors; and (4) improve academic success and retention. The State Compact must address training and outreach to mentors, ways to increase the number and retention of participating mentors, coordination of service learning projects, training for successful partnerships between institutions and schools, financial literacy training for mentors and mentees, and methods to improve the State Compact's accountability by compiling data to measure the impact of mentoring programs. Data to be measured includes:

- academic improvement;
- retention and completion rates;
- access to institutions of higher education;
- development of workforce and citizenship skills, attitudes, and behaviors;
- increased tutoring support for developmental education students taking online math courses; and
- dissemination of best practices and impacts of mentoring programs statewide.

The Innovations for Student Completion Program.

Second, the Innovations for Student Completion Program (ISCP) is created and to be administered by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges and the Student Achievement Council (Council) for the public, four-year institutions. The ISCP includes a variety of student support services, mentoring, and advising initiatives for the purpose of boosting student retention, completions rates, and the number of certificates and degrees earned. The main element of the ISCP to be implemented at each institution is a proactive advising and mentoring system which includes:

- required meetings with academic advisors for students;
- new student orientation or a student success course;
- degree or certificate mapping and career counseling; and
- an early alert component that connects advisors with classroom data so they know when to intervene and connect with a student at risk of not completing.

The ISCP must also include a recapture program. A recapture program contacts students who completed a substantial portion of their program's requirements, but dropped out before graduating to help them reenter and finish their program. The institutions must eliminate barriers to help these students reenter their programs, provide counseling, and assist them in securing financial aid.

The third required element of the ISCP is a mentoring program that partners underrepresented, low-income students from middle and high schools with student mentors from the institutions. The college student mentors need to take a course in mentorship in order to be a mentor.

The State Board is to select a community or technical college to participate in an attendance pilot project. The project requires the advisors of students who miss a number of classes without an excused absence to reach out to the students to determine why they have not been attending classes. The advisor will provide guidance and help the student in finding appropriate resources if needed to successfully complete his or her program.

Those institutions that wish to pursue more innovative advising, mentoring, and service learning programs may submit an application to their respective agencies for a competitive grant.

The State Board is required to administer an innovative grant program for the community and technical colleges who wish to expand their Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training program. Interested community or technical colleges must submit an application to the State Board.

The State Board and the Council are to conduct a rigorous evaluation of the ISCP and attendance pilot project after two and four years. The evaluation should address whether some programs at different institutions were more successful than others and whether those practices can be replicated. The evaluation results are to be submitted in a report to the higher education committees of the Legislature by November 1, 2018, and by November 1, 2020. The report is to measure the following outcomes:

- retention and completion rates, including time to completion;
- number of degrees and certificates awarded;
- data regarding credits, such as the average number of credits successfully completed, credits taken due to failing grades, and excess credits taken but not required to graduate;
- grade point averages; and
- attendance rates.

The report must also include recommendations for the program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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