

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1982

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Higher Education

**Title:** An act relating to enhancing student completion through advising, mentoring, recapture initiatives, remedial programs, and accelerated precollege instruction and creating the innovations for student completion program.

**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 History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Higher Education: 2/17/15, 2/20/15 [DPS].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Requires Western Washington University to host a statewide consortium to develop a State Campus Compact for mentoring and service-learning opportunities for K-12 and college students.
- 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 competitive 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.

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*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.*

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## HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Hansen, Chair; Pollet, Vice Chair; Haler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Gregory, Reykdal, Sells and Tarleton.

**Minority Report:** Without recommendation. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Zeiger, Ranking Minority Member; Hargrove, Holy and Stambaugh.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Van Werven.

**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 institutions, 9 percent graduated within four years and 63 percent graduated within 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 helps students who dropped out of Western in good academic standing 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 leaving 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, every 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, and a software program that list jobs within a 100-mile radius of Walla Walla, including the job's pay, the number of openings, and which degrees or credentials the job requires.

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**Summary of Substitute Bill:**

The State Campus Compact.

Two comprehensive programs are 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 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 the institutional 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.

The second program created is the Innovations for Student Completion Program (ISCP) which is to be administered by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (State Board) 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, completion 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. The purpose of the recapture program is to contact 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 the reason for missing classes. The advisor will provide guidance and help the student to find appropriate resources to successfully complete his or her program.

Institutions that wish to pursue more innovative advising, mentoring, and service learning programs may submit an application to either the State Board or the Council 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.

### **Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:**

In the substitute bill the ISCP and the early alert component of the ISCP are both made subject to appropriations. It is clarified that there are many institutional programs under the State Campus Compact rather than one program for purposes of accountability, and the details regarding what kind of nonprofit organizations the statewide consortium should partner with are removed.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

### **Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) A lot of discussion in the Higher Education Committee has been about access to higher education. The flipside of access is success and completion. The focus cannot be entirely on the input unless you ensure students are successfully completing their programs. The college going rate has increased, but the completion gap between low-income students and high-income students has widened.

The drop in state funding decimated advising in the schools. Current staffing levels require an institution to use a voluntary advising system with no required advising. It puts the effort on the student to seek out advising. There are stories about students who have never met with an advisor, who have no access to an advisor, or their faculty advisor changed three times in the course of a year. Many students think they are on track to graduate and then find out they need one or two more courses. This bill will help provide support for the institutions to hire professional, academic advisors.

Looking at best practices across the state is important to see what is working well, and the policy is cost-effective because it works within existing infrastructure. Programs with heavy advising often demonstrate better retention rates. The recapture program is appreciated because it helps to recapture the state's investment. Career counseling and educational plans help students have a clear idea of what they want to do and how to achieve it.

(In support with amendment(s)) The overarching goals and focus on advising, mentoring, and career counseling is supported. However, even though student enrollment has increased, the staffing levels have not. The institutions cannot expand efforts without additional funding.

(In support with concerns) The concern is that if the bill passes without additional funding, the institutions are left with unfunded mandates.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support) Representative Pollet, prime sponsor; Becca Kenna-Schenk and Heather Heffelmire, Western Washington University; David Buri, Eastern Washington University; Jennifer Hine, Washington Campus Compact; Maddy Thompson, Washington Student Achievement Council; Mary Chikwinya, Tacoma Community College; Julie Garver, The Evergreen State College; Antonio Sanchez, Central Washington University; Ashlyn Salzman, Associated Student of Washington State University Vancouver; and Paul Bell, Bellevue College.

(In support with amendment(s)) Genesee Adkins, University of Washington.

(In support with concerns) Jan Yoshiwara, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.