

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2680

As Reported by House Committee On:
Higher Education

Title: An act relating to the Washington open education pilot grant program at the state universities, regional universities, and The Evergreen State College.

Brief Description: Establishing the Washington open education pilot grant program for the four-year institutions of higher education.

Sponsors: Representatives Stambaugh, Frame, Zeiger, Riccelli, Van Werven, Magendanz, Kochmar, Kilduff, Hargrove, Stanford, Johnson and Hickel.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 1/29/16, 2/5/16 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Establishes the Washington Open Education Pilot Grant program (program) within the Student Achievement Council (Council) to award up to 100 grants per year, subject to funds appropriated, to faculty to develop or obtain open educational resources and materials.
- Encourages the Council to model the program after the Massachusetts Amherst Open Education Initiative and the California Textbook Affordability Act.
- Requires the Council to report to the Legislature by September 1, 2018, on the implementation and data of the program.
- Includes an emergency clause and a null and void clause.
- Expires June 30, 2019.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Hansen, Chair; Pollet, Vice Chair; Zeiger, Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Frame, Hargrove, Holy, Reykdal, Sells, Stambaugh, Tarleton and Van Werven.

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.

Staff: Megan Mulvihill (786-7304).

Background:

Open Educational Resources.

Open Educational Resources are educational materials and resources that are free and available for use by anyone. Some resources are under license to re-mix, improve, and redistribute. Open Educational Resources include full courses, course materials, learning objectives, software, and intellectual property licenses, among other things.

The Massachusetts Amherst Open Education Initiative.

The University of Massachusetts Amherst (UMass) created the Open Education Initiative (Initiative) in 2011. Through the Initiative, the UMass libraries offer grants for instructors who use low-cost or free alternatives to expensive course materials. The Initiative awards \$1,000 to instructors teaching courses with enrollments of fewer than 200 students, and \$2,500 to instructors teaching courses with enrollment of 200 or more students. The instructors can use open-access scholarly resources, library-licensed and owned resources, or create their own resources. Since 2011, the Initiative has saved students over \$1 million.

The California Textbook Affordability Act.

The California Textbook Affordability Act (Act) was enacted in 2015 to encourage faculty to adopt open educational resources. The Act requires the academic senates of the California State University and the California Community Colleges to adopt local campus plans to increase and adopt open educational resources by June 30, 2016. After adoption of the plans, the Act provides funding to support faculty and professional staff development for those who choose to use open educational resources, supports curating activities for open educational resources, curriculum modification and release time for faculty to adopt open educational resources, and technology support.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Beginning in the 2016-17 academic year, the Washington Open Education Pilot Grant program (program) is established within the Student Achievement Council (Council). The program provides competitive grants to faculty to develop or obtain open educational materials and resources. Subject to funding, the Council must award up to 100 grants per year to faculty and develop a process for reviewing and selecting grant applicants. The Council is encouraged to use the UMass Initiative and the Act as models for the program.

Beginning September 1, 2017, and by September 1, 2018, the Council must submit a report on the program to the appropriate committees of the Legislature. The report must include:

- how the program is being implemented, including a comparison between the program and programs at the UMass, the Act, and other institutions with similar models.
- the number of faculty to apply for a grant and the number of faculty to receive a grant.
- the courses and departments of the faculty members that received the grants.

- the total cost savings to students and the cost savings per student enrolled in a course taught by a grant recipient.

The program expires June 30, 2019.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

A null and void clause was added to the substitute bill.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This allows faculty to use and build resources. There were major advances in the two-year sector a couple of years ago when the Open Course Library (OCL) was created. The OCL saved students lots of money. This bill brings this opportunity to the four-year sector. There are a lot of initiatives geared at textbook affordability, but the struggle is often to find the funding to support open educational resources.

Faculty play a crucial role in expanding open educational resources. Senior faculty have often accumulated different teaching materials over the years and compile their own teaching resources. Faculty has become clever about what to do for students who cannot afford textbooks. However, this can be time consuming. Therefore, faculty supports a more formal process so that it does not need to be redone every year and with cheaper textbooks.

Traditional freshman spend hundreds of dollars in their first year on textbooks, often because they do not know where to go for cheaper alternatives. In addition, students do not always buy the required textbooks due to the costs. In some cases, the textbook can cost as much as the class. If students have cheaper alternatives, the retention rates can increase. The hard sciences have the most expensive textbooks, so this could also help science programs grow. It is possible to have a good education without traditional textbooks.

It would be recommended to clarify the language in the bill that open educational resources created under this would not be used for corporate purposes. The creative commons has different licensing options for faculty. These are established licenses, so faculty are usually comfortable with using them.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Alicia Kinne-Clawson and Patty Chantrill, Eastern Washington University; Connor Haggerty and Emily Strode, Washington State University; Becca Kenna-

Schenk, Western Washington University; Joan Wu, Council of Faculty Representatives; Mykyeke Chatham, Tacoma Community College; Anna Nepomuceno, University of Washington-Tacoma; and Sam Ranslem, Associated Students of the University of Washington-Tacoma.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.