

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 6354

As Passed House:
March 2, 2016

Title: An act relating to developing higher education reverse transfer agreement plans.

Brief Description: Concerning the development of higher education reverse transfer agreement plans.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Senators Liias, Baumgartner, Carlyle, Frockt and Bailey).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 2/23/16, 2/24/16 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/2/16, 97-0.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires the state universities, the regional universities, The Evergreen State College, and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges to develop and adopt plans to facilitate reverse transfer policies by December 31, 2017.
- Defines students eligible for reverse transfer policies as those who transfer from a community or technical college to a four-year institution of higher education before attaining an associate degree, but after completing 60 quarter credits or more.
- Expires July 1, 2018.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Hansen, Chair; Pollet, Vice Chair; Zeiger, Ranking Minority Member; Haler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Frame, Hargrove, Holy, Reykdal, Sells, Stambaugh, Tarleton and Van Werven.

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:

There are many transfer policies in place in Washington, and these are agreed to and maintained by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (State Board), the Washington Student Achievement Council, and the four-year institutions of higher education. A few of the transfer policies are listed below.

Washington 45.

The Washington 45 is a list of general education courses that a student can take at any Washington public community, technical, or four-year college or university and be able to transfer the credits to any other public and most private institutions of higher education in the state. The student must have a minimum grade of a C or better in the course and is only allowed to transfer a maximum of 45 quarter credits towards their general education requirements at the new institution.

Direct Transfer Agreements.

The community and technical colleges offer associate degrees that are designated as Direct Transfer Agreements (DTAs). The DTA associate degrees are designed to transfer to most Bachelor of Arts degrees at all of the state's four-year institutions of higher education. These degrees allow students the opportunity to complete lower division general education requirements at a community or technical college and receive priority admissions consideration and a smooth transition to a four-year institution.

Reverse Articulation Agreements.

Reverse articulation agreements, also known as reverse transfer, are for students who transferred from a community or technical college to a four-year institution before receiving their associate degree. Reverse transfer allows the student to transfer credits back to the community or technical college to receive their associate degree after they complete the rest of the associate degree requirements at the four-year institution. Three of the universities in Washington have reverse transfer agreements in place with all or some of the state's community and technical colleges: Western Governor's University, Eastern Washington University (Eastern), and Washington State University (WSU). Reverse transfer agreements allow a student to earn a credential while working towards their bachelor degree.

Summary of Bill:

The state universities, regional universities, The Evergreen State College (State College), and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (State Board) must develop plans for facilitating the reverse transfer of academic credits from an institution of higher education to a community or technical college. The plans must address two things: (1) a policy to allow eligible students to transfer credits back to a community or technical college to use towards completion of a two-year academic transfer degree; and (2) procedures for notifying students of their eligibility for reverse transfer. The universities, the State College, and the State Board must adopt the plans by December 31, 2017.

In addition, "eligible students" are defined as transfer students who enroll as degree-seeking students at a four-year institution of higher education before attaining an associate degree,

but after completing 60 quarter credits or more of transferable coursework at a Washington community or technical college.

There is an expiration date of July 1, 2018.

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) Washington has a great higher education transfer system. All six of the universities do reverse transfer in some capacity, such as on demand or through agreements with their local community and technical colleges. The universities are working on formalizing those agreements. The WSU has a statewide agreement in place with a formal memorandum of understanding, and Eastern is working on a statewide agreement. The other reverse transfer agreements are less formal and based on location. The universities are trying to do this in a more efficient manner and are working on determining a best practice.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Cody Eccles, Council of Presidents.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.