
Higher Education Committee

SB 6626

Brief Description: Creating a work group on accelerated baccalaureate degree programs.

Sponsors: Senators Bailey, Frockt, Baumgartner, Liias and McAuliffe.

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establishes a work group to develop best practices and make recommendations for promoting students' ability to earn baccalaureate degrees in three years.

Hearing Date: 2/19/16

Staff: Trudes Tango (786-7384).

Background:

Some public and private colleges and universities offer students the opportunity to obtain a baccalaureate degree in three years. There are various models for accelerated degree programs. Some models rely on prior learning credits earned during high school through programs such as Advanced Placement and Running Start. Other models require enrollment in summer courses and taking the maximum credits allowed per term.

In 2011, the Legislature authorized state universities, regional universities, and The Evergreen State College to develop accelerated baccalaureate degree programs that will allow students to obtain baccalaureate degrees in three years without attending summer classes or enrolling in more than a full-time class load during the regular academic year. The state universities, regional universities, and The Evergreen State College must report on their plans for the accelerated degree programs to the Washington Student Achievement Council.

Summary of Bill:

The "Degree in Three" work group is created and includes one representative from each of the regional universities and The Evergreen State College. The representatives must be selected by

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the institutions they represent. The work group may invite representatives from other public and private institutions of higher education and agencies.

The work group's purpose is to:

- develop best practices to promote students earning baccalaureate degrees within three years;
- identify challenges or obstacles preventing wider adoption of accelerated degree programs;
- evaluate programs in other states; and
- develop recommendations to increase the rate of students achieving baccalaureate degrees within three years.

The work group must report its findings and recommendations to the Legislature by December 31, 2016.

The provision creating the work group expires August 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.