

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5133

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As of February 16, 2015

**Title:** An act relating to a study of higher education cost drivers.

**Brief Description:** Concerning a study of higher education cost drivers.

**Sponsors:** Senators Bailey, Baumgartner, Kohl-Welles and Frockt.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Higher Education: 2/12/15.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

**Staff:** Kimberly Cushing (786-7421)

**Background:** The Joint Higher Education Committee (Committee). In 2012 the Legislature created the Committee to annually review the work of the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) and provide legislative feedback; create greater communication, coordination, and alignment between the higher education system and expectations of the Legislature; and provide recommendations for higher education policy. The Committee must meet at least twice after the close of session and is made up of four senators and four representatives.

Washington State Joint Transportation Committee. In 2013 the Legislature appropriated \$325,000 for the Washington State Joint Transportation Committee to study transportation cost drivers and potential efficiencies. The Committee was directed to convene an advisory panel to provide study guidance and discuss potential efficiencies and recommendations.

**Summary of Bill:** The Legislature intends to use the 2013 Joint Transportation Committee cost driver study as a model to study cost drivers for the public four-year institutions of higher education.

The Committee must conduct a study of higher education costs at the public baccalaureates. The study must describe the cost drivers for each institution and the cost drivers for students over the last 20 years, including the cost of research, faculty and staff salaries, administration, health care and benefits, capital, student services, textbooks, and student housing. The study must compare these cost drivers to those for institutions and students in

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the Global Challenge States and other comparable states. By November 1, 2016, the Committee must issue a report of its findings to the Legislature.

The Committee must convene a 14-member advisory panel to meet four times and provide study guidance, data, and recommendations. Membership must include the Committee members and one representative each from the Office of Financial Management, WSAC, the Council of Presidents, the Washington State Auditor's Office, the largest labor union at the regional universities, and the faculty at the research universities.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** Yes.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: Understanding the cost drivers will allow students and families to understand what is driving the cost at their universities.

OTHER: There are many other information requests from the Legislature. We want this report to be additive. Is there a way to coordinate information? The Education Research and Data Center already does a report on higher education costs and institutional budgets are on each institution's website.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Hayley Hohman, Associated Students of WA State University.

OTHER: Cody Eccles, Council of Presidents.