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**SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1651**

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**State of Washington 65th Legislature 2018 Regular Session**

**By** House Higher Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Pollet, Doglio, Kilduff, Gregerson, Peterson, Frame, Bergquist, Orwall, Goodman, Fey, Haler, and Stanford)

AN ACT Relating to supporting students' success by increasing retention and graduation rates with evidence-based programs; adding a new section to chapter 28B.10 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 28B.50 RCW; adding new sections to chapter 28B.77 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 28B.20 RCW; and creating a new section.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1)(a) The legislature recognizes that student success is often a product of a good support system, and the legislature finds that student supports such as academic and career advising, tutors, cohort-based classes, peer mentor programs, and orientation programs can help students achieve their dream of a postsecondary education. The legislature finds that student retention term-to-term and year-to-year significantly increases when students attend required orientation programs or enroll in student success courses. Orientation programs and student success courses help new and transfer students become familiar with the institution and its resources, and offer students opportunities to develop relationships with their peers and faculty, thereby creating a sense of community. Student success courses also teach students about study skills, the expectations of college, and potential career pathways.

(b) Investment in student success programs promotes timely graduation, which is a cost benefit to the student who pays less tuition and can enter the workforce faster, and to the state, which has reduced operating costs. In addition, college graduates earn more over their lifetime than high school graduates, while federal, state, and local governments enjoy increased tax revenues, less dependence on social programs, and more civic engagement.

(2) The legislature finds that there are effective, evidence-based examples of student success programs here in Washington state. Some examples of those programs include:

(a) Columbia Basin College requires mandatory academic advising and required enrollment in Human Development 101 for all students who test into two or more remedial areas. The class is focused on creating academic success by teaching students about learning strategies, campus tools and resources, and how to develop an academic plan to support their career and educational goals. For both the 2012 and 2013 cohorts, students who took the class had higher rates of retention than students with remedial needs who did not take the class.

(b) TRiO is a program for student support services that increases access and success for low-income and first generation students, and students with disabilities, at the community and technical college level. The program helps students complete their associate degree and successfully transfer to a four-year institution. TRiO services include academic advising, counseling, mentoring, academic planning, financial aid guidance, tutoring, library resources and textbook rentals, and tours of four-year institutions.

(c) Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement (MESA) is a nationally recognized program that supports and encourages underrepresented students in an associate's program to pursue four-year degrees in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. MESA provides students with an orientation course, academic workshops, academic advising, a designated study center for students to work together, assistance with transferring to a four-year university, and direct administrative support. Many of the students also have internships with industry partners or speak at conferences about their research. According to Washington MESA, for the first MESA graduating class of 2011-12, one hundred percent of the students who earned bachelor's degrees majored in STEM fields. Seattle Central College MESA students who transfer to a four-year university to pursue a STEM degree graduate at one hundred percent, compared to non-MESA students who graduate at ninety percent.

(d) The state board for community and technical colleges' Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) program is nationally recognized for its team teaching model of providing both remedial education and career education concurrently, thereby accelerating students' progress. An evaluation from the Community College Research Center in December 2012 found three key facts: (i) The highly structured I-BEST programs focus students' decisions and support retention; (ii) I-BEST cohorts have higher rates of performance; and (iii) on average, I-BEST students earned eighteen credits compared to non-I-BEST workforce students who only earned nine credits. A cost-benefit analysis of the program indicates that while the I-BEST program costs more and the state funds the program at a rate of 1.75 times the normal rate for a full-time equivalent student, the return on investment justifies the cost.

(e) Guided pathways is a proven program for increasing retention and completion by providing students with structured choices for their chosen field of study or career path. The legislature recognizes that guided pathways should be provided to students at all the community and technical colleges and intends to support the state board for community and technical colleges' implementation plan.

(3) The legislature finds it is vitally important to ensure all community and technical college students have access to behavioral and mental health counseling services. There are many barriers to providing on-campus or community counseling services for students, but the legislature intends to examine the needs with the help of a nationally respected body of experts, the western interstate commission on higher education, a leader in evaluating state and higher education behavioral health programs.

(4) The legislature recognizes the state board for community and technical colleges' requests to expand the I-BEST program by an additional nine hundred students annually for the 2017-2019 biennium; increase use of the guided pathways model, which provides intensive and targeted advising, structured educational experiences, and specific career paths to lead students to successfully complete; to grow the opportunity grant program which helps low-income students train for careers in high-demand fields with grants to assist with tuition, books and supplies, emergency child care, and transportation servicer; and to expand the current six MESA pilot programs to all thirty-four community and technical colleges across the state.

(5) Recognizing the evidence-based examples of student support programs currently available, and the institutions' intent to provide additional supports, it is the legislature's intent to provide a framework to expand student supports.

(6) The legislature also recognizes that an unintended consequence of reduced state support for the research universities, coupled with increased tuition, has led to fifty-five percent of all graduate and professional degree programs at the University of Washington becoming fee-based, self-sustaining programs. These fee-based, self-sustaining graduate programs do not offer lower in-state tuition to Washington residents and may not be eligible for certain financial aid programs. The increased cost of these fee-based, self-sustaining graduate programs leads to decreased diversity, increased student loan debt, and a decrease in the availability of students willing to enter traditionally low-compensated occupations, such as public service professions in the areas of public health, librarianship, information services, and social work, or physician assistants in the University of Washington MEDEX program. Therefore, the legislature intends for the public service graduate conditional grant program to provide a long-term reinvestment that will enable Washington residents to obtain graduate degrees necessary for public service careers.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28B.10 RCW to read as follows:

Within existing resources, the four-year institutions of higher education shall report to the appropriate committees of the legislature by December 1, 2018, on whether all students who are receiving need-based federal or state grant aid are provided with a student success program, and if not, recommendations for providing one. The student success program may take the form of a credit-based class, orientation program, or peer mentoring program that is based on research or documented evidence of success at other institutions with comparable student populations. The student success program may include elements of:

(1) Learning about study skills, time management, and college success skills;

(2) Academic advising and career planning;

(3) Basic financial literacy and information and requirements for financial aid, including student loan programs and debt, particularly for students from cultural or economic backgrounds with limited knowledge of student loans and debt;

(4) Acclimating students to the institution's campus, resources, services, and culture, including the expectations and demands of postsecondary education;

(5) Tutoring or peer tutoring;

(6) Cohort-based programs; and

(7) Peer mentorship.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28B.50 RCW to read as follows:

(1) By the beginning of the 2019-20 academic year, the community and technical colleges shall implement the following for all students receiving need-based federal or state grant aid:

(a) A student success program that is either a credit-based class, orientation program, or peer mentoring program that is based on research or documented evidence of success at other institutions with comparable student populations. The student success program may include elements of:

(i) Learning about study skills, time management, and college success skills;

(ii) Academic advising and career planning;

(iii) Basic financial literacy and information and requirements for financial aid, including student loan programs and debt, particularly for students from cultural or economic backgrounds with limited knowledge of student loans and debt;

(iv) Acclimating students to the institution's campus, resources, services, and culture, including the expectations and demands of postsecondary education;

(v) Tutoring or peer tutoring;

(vi) Cohort-based programs; and

(vii) Peer mentorship;

(b) An evidence-based remedial program, such as the integrated basic education and skills training program, for those students with remedial mathematics or English education needs. The remedial program may include elements of:

(i) Team teaching;

(ii) Mixed basic skills and college-level curriculum;

(iii) Accelerated basic skills curriculum; and

(iv) Flipped classroom instruction.

(2) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the guided pathways program must be implemented at every community and technical college in the state.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28B.77 RCW to read as follows:

Subject to availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the council shall administer a competitive grant program to award grants to the institutions of higher education and nonprofit organizations that partner with the institutions of higher education to provide precollege or ongoing peer mentoring by the 2018-19 academic year. The council shall prioritize grant proposals that assist underrepresented, low-income, or first-generation college students. The peer mentoring programs must focus on increasing retention and graduation rates. The council shall develop requirements for the grant program, including an application process, criteria for awards, and a review process. Each institution of higher education that receives a grant under this section may provide space free of charge to the partner nonprofit organization providing mentoring services on campus. The institutions of higher education that receive a grant under this section may use state work-study funds for training and supporting student mentors as a part of the partnership created under this section, provided that students meet eligibility requirements in RCW 28B.12.060.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28B.77 RCW to read as follows:

(1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, but not to exceed three hundred thousand dollars, the council shall contract with the western interstate commission for higher education to conduct an evaluation on mental health counseling and services provided for students at the community and technical colleges as defined in RCW 28B.50.030. This evaluation must include a description of:

(a) How these services are provided;

(b) How the services are funded and at what capacity the services are funded;

(c) How many students are being served and the types of students being served;

(d) Whether students have immediate access to services and, if not, the average wait time for services;

(e) On-campus and off-campus behavioral health counseling services available; and

(f) Any additional information that provides a picture of the current needs and demands for mental health services at the institutions of higher education.

(2) A report on the evaluation of mental health counseling and services is due to the appropriate committees of the legislature by September 1, 2019, and in accordance with the reporting requirements in RCW 43.01.036. The report must include recommendations on how to best provide mental and behavioral health counseling to students at each community and technical college.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28B.20 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The definitions in this subsection apply throughout this section.

(a) "Conditional grant" means a loan that is forgiven in whole or in part in exchange for service in a public service career in Washington.

(b) "Eligible student" means a student who is accepted into a public service fee-based, self-sustaining graduate program, is a resident student as defined in RCW 28B.15.012 and 28B.15.013, and has a declared intention to complete an approved public service-oriented fee-based, self-sustaining graduate program.

(c) "Equalization fee" means the additional amount added to the conditional grant under this section to equate the debt to that which the student would have incurred if he or she would have received a loan through the federal direct loan program.

(d) "Forgiven" or "to forgive" or "forgiveness" means to render service in a public service career in the state of Washington in lieu of monetary repayment.

(e) "Participant" means an eligible student who has received a conditional grant under this section.

(f) "Public service" includes employment with a public agency, public entity, or a nonprofit organization, and careers in the fields of librarianship, information services, public health, social work, and research and teaching in public service programs.

(g) "Satisfied" means paid-in-full.

(2) The public service graduate degree conditional grant program is created at the University of Washington. The program must be funded exclusively with private funding for the purpose of providing conditional grants. State funding may be used for the administration of the program. The University of Washington shall administer the program and has the following responsibilities:

(a) To adopt necessary rules and develop guidelines to administer the program;

(b) To collect and manage repayments from participants who do not meet their service obligations;

(c) To solicit and accept grants and donations from public and private sources for the program;

(d) To publicize the program; and

(e) To select eligible students to receive conditional grants based on an application process and selection criteria established by the University of Washington. The selection criteria must emphasize whether the eligible student has financial need, is a first-generation college student, is from a traditionally underrepresented population, and the student's commitment to public service, including a commitment to working in underserved communities for which recruitment of credentialed professionals is difficult.

(3) To receive a conditional grant, the recipient must maintain enrollment and make satisfactory progress toward completion of his or her graduate degree.

(4) The University of Washington may award conditional grants to eligible students from any private donations or any other funds given to the university for this program. The amount of the conditional grant awarded to a participant may not exceed the difference between the fees charged for the participant's public service fee-based, self-sustaining graduate degree program and a similar graduate degree program's in-state tuition and fees at the University of Washington. If there is no similar tuition-based program at the University of Washington, a similar program at a peer public institution of higher education should be used.

(5) A participant in the conditional grant program incurs an obligation to repay the conditional grant, as a loan with interest and an equalization fee, unless:

(a) He or she is employed in a public service field in Washington for five years following graduation, under rules adopted by the University of Washington; or

(b) He or she receives the conditional grant in the form of a research assistantship or teaching assistantship with an applicable department at the University of Washington in a similar field as their graduate degree. A research assistantship or teaching assistantship funded under this program is subject to any collective bargaining agreements between graduate students and the University of Washington.

(6) In developing the repayment requirements for a conditional grant that is converted into a loan, the terms and conditions of the loan must follow the interest rate and repayment terms of the federal direct subsidized loan program. In addition, the University of Washington must consider the following repayment schedule:

(a) For less than one year of service in a public service career, the loan obligation is eighty-five percent of the conditional grant the student received, plus interest and an equalization fee;

(b) For less than two years of service in a public service career, the loan obligation is seventy percent of the conditional grant the student received, plus interest and an equalization fee;

(c) For less than three years of service in a public service career, the loan obligation is fifty-five percent of the conditional grant the student received, plus interest and an equalization fee;

(d) For less than four years of service in a public service career, the loan obligation is forty percent of the conditional grant the student received, plus interest and an equalization fee;

(e) For less than five years of service in a public service career, the loan obligation is twenty-five percent of the conditional grant the student received, plus interest and an equalization fee.

(7) The University of Washington is responsible for collection of repayments made under this section and shall exercise due diligence in such collection, maintaining all necessary records to ensure that maximum repayments are made. Collection and servicing of repayments under this section shall be pursued using the full extent of the law, including wage garnishment if necessary. The University of Washington is responsible for forgiving all or parts of such repayments under the criteria established in this section and shall maintain all necessary records of forgiven payments.

(8) The public service graduate degree conditional grant account is created in the custody of the state treasurer. An appropriation is not required for expenditures of funds from the account. The account is not subject to allotment procedures under chapter 43.88 RCW except for moneys used for program administration. The University of Washington shall deposit in the account all moneys received for the public service graduate degree conditional grant program. The account shall be self-sustaining and consist of funds appropriated by the legislature for administration of the public service graduate degree conditional grant program, private contributions to the program, and receipts from participant repayments from the public service graduate degree conditional grant program. Expenditures from the account may be used solely for conditional grants to participants in the public service graduate degree conditional grant program established by this section and costs associated with program administration by the University of Washington. Disbursements from the account may be made only on the authorization of the University of Washington.

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