
Higher Education Committee

HB 1375

Brief Description: Providing students at community and technical colleges with the costs of required course materials.

Sponsors: Representatives Van Werven, Tarleton, Orwall, Griffey, Haler, Holy, McCabe, Young, Dent, Riccelli, Bergquist, Buys, Kraft, Kagi, Ryu, Muri, Goodman, Lovick, Frame and Hargrove.

<p>Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Requires the community and technical colleges to indicate the cost of any required textbook or other course material to students in the online course description.
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Hearing Date: 1/31/17

Staff: Megan Mulvihill (786-7304).

Background:

Higher Education Opportunity Act.

The federal government passed the Higher Education Opportunity Act (Act) in 2008, which required institutions of higher education receiving federal assistance to post textbook costs and information on their internet course schedule, such as the International Student Book Number (ISBN) and retail price. However, if the disclosure is not considered practicable, the institution may state "To be determined." The Act also required the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to study the implementation of this requirement. In a 2013 study, the GAO found that 81 percent of schools sampled provided textbook information online. Washington passed a similar textbook law in 2006.

Washington's Course Material Price and Information Disclosure Law.

The institutions of higher education are required to have rules to ensure their affiliated bookstores:

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- provide students with the option of purchasing materials that are unbundled when possible;
- disclose to faculty and staff the costs to students;
- disclose publicly how new editions vary from previous editions;
- actively promote and publicize buy-back programs;
- disclose retail costs for course materials on a per course basis to faculty, staff, and the public; and
- disclose information to students regarding the titles, authors, editions, prices, and ISBN at least four weeks before the start of class for required course materials.

Faculty and staff are also supposed to consider the least costly practices in assigning course material, such as using the cheapest edition available, using free online web and library sources, or using free, open source textbooks when available.

Summary of Bill:

The community and technical colleges must indicate the cost of any required textbook or course materials to students in the online course description used during the registration process.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on 01/17/2017.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.