
Higher Education Committee

HB 1651

Brief Description: Supporting students' success by increasing retention and graduation rates with evidence-based programs.

Sponsors: Representatives Pollet, Doglio, Kilduff, Gregerson, Peterson, Frame, Bergquist, Orwall, Goodman, Fey, Haler and Stanford.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the public four-year institutions of higher education to implement student success programs for all students receiving need-based grant aid.
- Requires the community and technical colleges to implement student success programs for all students and an evidence-based remedial program for students with remedial needs.
- Establishes a grant program to fund peer mentoring programs.
- Requires an evaluation from the Student Achievement Council and the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education on the student success, remedial, and grant programs established, and on mental health counseling services available at the public institutions of higher education.
- Establishes the Public Service Graduate Degree Conditional Grant Program at the University of Washington.

Hearing Date: 1/23/18

Staff: Megan Mulvihill (786-7304).

Background:

Student Supports.

Student supports include a variety of assistance to help students integrate into post secondary education and continue through and complete their programs. Often grouped into the category of student supports are advising, mentoring, tutoring, orientation programs, courses oriented to new

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students to teach them about post secondary skills and culture, and remedial programs. There are a variety of programs implemented across Washington's campuses that touch on one or a few of these supports. Many institutions of higher education require orientation for new or transfer students, many require students to meet with an advisor before they register for classes, and many have developed programs for peer support and mentoring.

Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Program.

Washington's community and technical colleges created the Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Program (I-BEST) to teach students literacy, work, and college-readiness skills to help them move through remedial courses faster. The I-BEST program uses a team-teaching approach, in which there are two teachers in the classroom at a time. One provides job-training instruction and the other teaches basic skills. The I-BEST model allows students to work on remedial needs and college-level skills at the same time.

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education.

The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) is a regional organization created by the Western Regional Education Compact that Washington joined in 1955. The WICHE helps facilitate resource sharing among western higher education systems. WICHE conducts research, collects data, and issues reports on a variety of higher education topics.

Conditional Scholarship Programs.

Conditional scholarships, or grants, are loans that are provided to a student for higher education purposes that may be forgiven in full or in part if the student completes their post secondary education and a service requirement. The scholarships are used as an incentive to get students to work in either high-demand professions or in professions with shortages and high need. There are a variety of conditional scholarship programs in statute, although all are not currently funded. These include the Health Professional Conditional Scholarship Program, Future Teachers Conditional Scholarship Program, National Guard Conditional Scholarship Program, Pipeline for Paraeducators Conditional Scholarship Program, Educator Retooling Conditional Scholarship Program, and the Food Animal Veterinarian Conditional Scholarship Program.

Summary of Bill:

Student Success and Remedial Programs.

Beginning the 2018-19 academic year, the four-year public institutions of higher education must implement student success programs for all students receiving need-based federal or state grant aid, whereas the community and technical colleges must implement student success programs for all students enrolled in a degree-granting program. The student success programs must be evidenced-based forms of either a credit-based class, orientation program, or peer mentoring program. The program must include learning about study skills, time management, and college success; academic advising and career planning; basic financial literacy and information on financial aid; acclimating students to the institution's campus, resources, services, and culture; tutoring; cohort-based programs; and peer mentorship.

In addition to the student success program, the community and technical colleges must implement evidence-based remedial programs, such as I-BEST, for students with remedial needs. The remedial program may include elements of team teaching, mixed basic skills and college-level curriculum, accelerated basic skills curriculum, and flipped classroom instruction.

Peer Mentoring.

Subject to appropriation, the Student Achievement Council (Council) must administer a competitive grant program to award grants to the public institutions of higher education and nonprofit organizations to provide precollege or ongoing peer mentoring by 2018-19. The Council must develop requirements and processes for the grant program, and must prioritize grant proposals that assist underrepresented, low-income, or first-generation college students. A public institution of higher education that receives a grant may provide space free of charge to the partner nonprofit organization providing mentoring services. In addition, the institutions may use state work-study funds for training and supporting student mentors.

Student Achievement Council and Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education Evaluation.

The Council is required to contract with the WICHE to conduct an evaluation on the student success, remedial, and peer mentoring grant programs required under the act. The evaluation must address whether the programs:

- improve student retention;
- improve graduation rates;
- reduce time to degree;
- reduce barriers to degree completion;
- target student populations with the most need;
- are cost-effective; and
- reduce time spent in remedial classes and improve students basic skills.

In addition, the evaluation of the peer mentoring grant program must describe the grant programs funded, who is served, and which grant programs show greatest improvement in measures of success. After the evaluation, the Council and State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), in consultation with WICHE, shall make recommendations on how the programs may be improved. For the community and technical colleges, if the evaluation indicates that certain student success and remedial programs outperform others, then the SBCTC must coordinate with the community and technical colleges to change less effective programs to more effective programs. The public four-year institutions of higher education must indicate how they will make adjustments to their programs based on the Council's recommendations.

The report on the evaluations, recommendations, and institution's responses is due to the Legislature by October 1, 2021, and every October 1 four years thereafter.

Mental Health Counseling and Services Evaluation.

The Council is required to contract with the WICHE to conduct an evaluation on mental health counseling and services provided to students at public institutions of higher education. A report on the evaluation is due to the Legislature by September 1, 2018, and must address:

- how services are provided;
- how services are funded and at what capacity;
- how many students, and what types of students, are being served;
- whether students have immediate access to services or what the average wait time for services is; and
- any additional information deemed necessary.

University of Washington Public Service Graduate Degree Conditional Grant Program.

The Public Service Graduate Degree Conditional Grant Program (Conditional Grant Program) is established at the University of Washington (UW). As the administrator, the UW has various responsibilities, such as collecting and managing repayments from participants, publicizing the program, and selecting students to receiving conditional grants. The UW's selection criteria for participants must emphasize whether the student has financial need, is a first-generation college student, is from a traditionally under-represented population, and the student's commitment to public service.

To receive a conditional grant, a student must be accepted into a public service fee-based, self-sustaining graduate program, be a resident student, maintain enrollment, and make satisfactory progress toward completion of his or her graduate degree. The conditional grant amount 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 UW.

A participant who receives a conditional grant incurs an obligation to repay the conditional grant as a loan with interest and an equalization fee, unless:

1. he or she is employed in a public service field in Washington for five years following graduation; or
2. he or she receives the conditional grant in the form of a research assistantship or teaching assistantship with an applicable department at the UW in a similar field as their graduate degree.

The UW must develop repayment requirements for a conditional grant converted into a loan based on the Federal Direct Subsidized Loan Program, and on the following repayment schedule, each with interest and an equalization fee added:

- for less than one year of service, the loan obligation is 85 percent of the conditional grant received;
- for less than two years of service, the loan obligation is 70 percent of the conditional grant received;
- for less than three years of service, the loan obligation is 55 percent of the conditional grant received;
- for less than four years of service, the loan obligation is 40 percent of the conditional grant received; and
- for less than five years of service, the loan obligation is 25 percent of the conditional grant received.

The UW is responsible for collecting repayments, maintaining records, and for forgiving all or parts of repayments under the Conditional Grant Program. The Conditional Grant Program Account is created.

Appropriation: The sum of \$2 million, or as much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated from the general fund to the UW.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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