

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1651

As Reported by House Committee On: Higher Education

Title: An act relating to supporting students' success by increasing retention and graduation rates with evidence-based programs.

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 History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 2/7/17, 1/23/18, 1/31/18 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires the community and technical colleges to implement student success programs for all students receiving need-based aid, an evidence-based remedial program for students with remedial needs, and Guided Pathways.
- Requires the four-year institutions of higher education to report on whether students receiving need-based aid are provided with student success courses.
- 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 mental health counseling services available at the community and technical colleges.
- Establishes the Public Service Graduate Degree Conditional Grant Program at the University of Washington.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Hansen, Chair; Pollet, Vice Chair; Orwall, Sells, Stambaugh and Tarleton.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Holy, Ranking Minority Member; Van Werven, Assistant Ranking Minority Member.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Haler.

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 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.

Guided Pathways.

The Guided Pathways program is a research-based approach that simplifies higher education choices for students. Courses are grouped together to form clear paths within chosen fields to get students through college and into careers. Guided Pathways provides students with targeted advising to help them stay on their chosen path and evaluates learning outcomes as students progress down a path. The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges is implementing Guided Pathways at the community and technical colleges on a pilot basis. Six original colleges were chosen for the pilot, and five additional colleges will be selected this year.

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. The 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 Substitute Bill:

Student Success and Remedial Programs.

For the 2019-20 academic year, the community and technical colleges must implement student success programs for all students receiving need-based federal or state grant aid. The student success programs must be evidenced-based forms of either a credit-based class, orientation programs, or peer mentoring programs. 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. The community and technical colleges must also implement the Guided Pathways program if an appropriation is provided to do so.

Within existing resources, the four-year public institutions of higher education must report to the Legislature by December 1, 2018, on whether all students receiving need-based aid are provided with a student success program, and if not, recommendations for providing one.

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.

Mental Health Counseling and Services Evaluation.

Subject to an appropriation not to exceed \$300,000, the Council is required to contract with the WICHE to conduct an evaluation on mental health counseling and services provided to students at community and technical colleges. A report on the evaluation is due to the Legislature by September 1, 2019, 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;
- on-campus and off-campus behavioral health counseling services available; 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). The Conditional Grant Program must be funded exclusively with private funding for the purpose of providing conditional grants, but state funding may be used for administration. As the administrator, the UW has various responsibilities, such as collecting and managing repayments from participants, publicizing the program, soliciting donations, and selecting students to receive 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 towards the 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.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill removed the requirement for the four-year higher education institutions to implement student success programs for all students receiving need-based aid and instead requires a report on whether these students are provided with student success programs. Instead of the community and technical colleges having to provide student success programs for all students, it was changed to students receiving need-based financial aid. In addition, the community and technical colleges need to implement Guided Pathways if an appropriation is provided to do so.

The evaluation by the Council and the WICHE on student success and remedial programs was removed, and the mental and behavioral health evaluation was limited to the community and technical colleges and subject to an appropriation not to exceed \$300,000.

The UW Conditional Grant Program appropriation was removed and the program is to be funded exclusively with private funds for the purpose of awarding conditional grants. State funds may be used for administration of the Conditional Grant Program. It was also added that the UW must solicit funds for the program.

The intent section was also revised. Language about the four-year institutions' 2017-19 biennial budget requests related to student supports was removed and language about Guided Pathways was added.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The bill tries to put in place many of the evidence-based programs the committee has heard about, including student advising, peer mentoring programs, and counseling. The committee has heard about successful programs, such as the City University of New York program, which has high graduation rates for low-income, first generation, and nontraditional students. This is because of the program's intensive wrap-around support services. The bill offers those services to all students receiving need-based aid at the community and technical colleges. It also seeks to expand the Guided Pathways program to all community and technical colleges.

There is another piece to this legislation that is rather different which is the conditional loan program for graduate students in fee-based programs. Fee-based programs are very expensive compared to traditional in-state tuition programs. This would be the first time the state has done anything in years for graduate students. Students are more likely to pursue graduate degrees in public service with additional support.

While progress has been made, the state will have trouble meeting the educational attainment goals. There is more work to be done, and the additional supports for students is appreciated.

The WICHE mission is to increase access to high quality higher education, and the WICHE engages in many activities to increase this. The WICHE does a lot of policy analysis and data collection to support higher education decision making. In addition, the WICHE has a mental health unit that provides education, training, and workforce development. The WICHE has a long history of working in higher education and behavioral health, plus WICHE understands Washington's higher education structure.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) The community and technical college's open door policy is a false promise if the state does not offer the necessary services to help students finish their degree program. Individual programs are great, but the state needs to take a broad look at the whole picture and needs to scale across the state. Guided Pathways is a framework with four key sections: (1) have pathways so students know where to go; (2) help students get on a pathway with orientation and advising services; (3) keep students on the path with tutoring and financial aid; and (4) ensure students are learning and are prepared for the workplace. In order to continue implementing these programs, financial support is essential.

The data driven thinking behind the bill is appreciated, but perhaps the private sector colleges should be included as well since they have State Need Grant students.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Pollet, prime sponsor; Maddy Thompson, Washington Student Achievement Council; and Jillian Kilby and Matt Munoz, University of Washington.

(Other) Michele Johnson, Pierce College District; Jan Yoshiwara, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; Demi Michalau, Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education; and Charles Duba, Digipen Technology.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.