
College & Workforce Development Committee

HB 1840

Brief Description: Improving diversity, equity, and mental health at the community and technical colleges.

Sponsors: Representatives Ortiz-Self, Callan, Macri, Santos, Orwall, Simmons, Chopp, Slatter, Bergquist, Ryu, Valdez, Pollet, Riccelli, Davis, Harris-Talley, Taylor and Frame.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes the Task Force on Improving Equity and Diversity at the Community and Technical Colleges.
- Expands the Mental Health Counseling and Services Pilot Program to an additional four colleges and extends the expiration date by one additional year.

Hearing Date: 1/19/22

Staff: Megan Mulvihill (786-7304).

Background:

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plans.

In 2020 the Legislature passed Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill (E2SSB) 5194 that required the community and technical colleges (CTCs) to submit on a biennial basis, beginning July 30, 2022, strategic plans for achieving diversity, equity, and inclusion of all races to the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC). The strategic plans are to be developed using an inclusive stakeholder process, and the CTCs are encouraged to use campus climate surveys. The CTCs were also tasked with establishing culturally appropriate outreach

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programs to assist students from communities of color, with disabilities, from neurodiverse communities, and low-income communities. The SBCTC was also tasked with developing a model faculty diversity program designed to provide for the retention and recruitment of faculty from all racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.

Mental Health Counseling and Services Pilot Program.

E2SSB 5194 also established the Mental Health Counseling and Services Pilot Program (pilot program) to increase student access to mental health counseling and services at the CTCs. The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) was tasked with establishing a selection committee to select CTCs to participate in the pilot program. The selection committee established a scoring rubric by which to rank applications. The SBCTC received 25 applications and ultimately selected four CTCs to participate: Grays Harbor College, Lake Washington Institute of Technology, North Seattle College, and Wenatchee Valley College. Each CTC received approximately \$125,000 per year of the biennium to participate and implement strategies to increase access to mental health services. The CTCs must implement one or more of the following strategies to increase access to mental health services:

- improve equity, diversity, and inclusion in counseling services;
- meet mental health needs of students through an all-campus effort;
- engage students to help increase mental health awareness;
- increase visibility of counseling services on campus;
- increase or expand external partnerships with community service providers;
- adopt the use of telebehavioral health;
- develop an assessment of counseling services to inform improvements and ensure counseling services are meeting student needs; and
- implement counseling approaches, grounded in theory, that have evidence of being effective.

The CTCs selected to participate must submit a joint report to the Legislature by November 1, 2023. The pilot program expires July 1, 2025.

Summary of Bill:

Task Force on Improving Equity and Diversity at the Community and Technical Colleges.

The Task Force on Improving Equity and Diversity at the Community and Technical Colleges (task force) is established. The task force includes 11 members as follows:

- one Senator from each of the two largest caucuses of the Senate, appointed by the President of the Senate;
- one member from each of the two largest caucuses of the House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;
- two CTC students from colleges where the student population is at least 40 percent students from historically underrepresented populations, appointed by the Governor;
- a president of a CTC, appointed by the Governor;
- a faculty member of a CTC faculty collective bargaining unit, appointed by the Governor;
- a member of a local or regional workforce development council, appointed by the

Governor;

- the executive director or designee of the SBCTC; and
- the executive director or designee of the Student Achievement Council.

The SBCTC must staff the task force and convene the initial meeting. The task force members are to choose a chair from among the membership. Reimbursement for travel is provided for legislative members and nonlegislative members not participating on behalf of an employer. The task force must examine and make recommendations on how equity and diversity can be improved at the CTCs, especially regarding: faculty compensation and benefits; faculty recruitment and retention; student persistence and completion; financial aid programs and student supports; and how diversity and equity are addressed by higher education agencies, institutions, and statutorily created boards.

The task force must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature with a preliminary report due November 1, 2022, and a final report due November 1, 2023. The task force expires July 1, 2024.

Mental Health Counseling and Services Pilot Program.

The pilot program is expanded to an additional four community or technical colleges, and the expiration date for the program is extended by one year to July 1, 2026.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 11, 2022.

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