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## College & Workforce Development Committee

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### **E2SSB 5194**

**Brief Description:** Concerning equity and access in higher education.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Liias, Hasegawa, Das, Hunt, Keiser, Nguyen and Wilson, C.).

#### **Brief Summary of Engrossed Second Substitute Bill**

- Requires community and technical colleges (CTCs) to develop diversity, equity, and inclusion strategic plans.
- Requires full implementation of Guided Pathways at all CTCs and requires an evaluation of Guided Pathways by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy.
- Establishes a goal for increasing full-time tenured faculty positions by 200 in the 2021-23 biennium at the CTCs.
- Creates a pilot program to provide grants to CTCs to increase student access to mental health counseling and services.
- Establishes minimum hiring standards for CTC faculty counselors.
- Modifies residency requirements for undocumented students.

**Hearing Date:** 3/22/21

**Staff:** Megan Mulvihill (786-7304).

#### **Background:**

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

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

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) has adopted a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) work plan which includes developing hiring resources, analyzing cultural climate resources, creating professional development opportunities, and identifying opportunities for the SBCTC to act as a leader on DEI activities. There are 20 community and technical colleges (CTCs) that have diversity and equity officers as part of the Diversity and Equity Officers Commission, a newly formed group leading strategic equity efforts across the CTC sector.

#### 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. Guided Pathways is being implemented to some degree at each of the 34 CTCs.

#### Counselors.

Counselors in the CTC system are considered academic employees and faculty appointments for purposes of tenure and collective bargaining. There is no statutory definition of "counselor" for purposes of CTC employees, and there are no statutorily prescribed minimum requirements for a person to be employed as a counselor at a CTC.

#### Community and Technical College Counselors Task Force.

In 2019 Engrossed Substitute House Bill 1355 established the Community and Technical Colleges Counselors Task Force (Task Force). The Task Force was required to address how the CTCs will meet the mental health needs of students and to examine three issues: minimum standards required for counselors, staffing ratios, and best practices. The Task Force's subcommittee on best practices recommended a list of eight strategies to improve student access to mental health services. Those strategies are:

- 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.

#### 1079 Category of Resident Student.

The Legislature passed House Bill 1079 (HB 1079) in 2003, allowing eligible undocumented students to pay in-state tuition at state universities and colleges if they:

- received a high school diploma or the equivalent in Washington;

- lived in the state for at least three calendar years prior to receiving their diploma or equivalent; and
- continuously lived in the state since receiving their high school diploma and until enrolling in a higher education institution.

Eligible students must provide the institution an affidavit indicating they will file an application to become a permanent resident at the earliest opportunity and are willing to engage in other activities necessary to acquire citizenship including, but not limited to, citizenship or civics courses.

### **Summary of Engrossed Second Substitute Bill:**

#### Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan.

Beginning July 30, 2022, all CTCs must submit to the SBCTC strategic plans for achieving diversity, equity, and inclusion on their campuses. The strategic plan development must include stakeholders, such as faculty, staff, students, and community organizations. The plans must be publicly posted online and define key terms, such as "diversity," "equity," "inclusion," and "culturally appropriate." In addition, the CTCs must include opportunities for students from historically marginalized communities to form student-based organizations and establish culturally appropriate outreach programs in their diversity program. The SBCTC must develop a model faculty diversity program to aid in recruitment and retention of faculty from diverse backgrounds.

#### Guided Pathways.

Within existing resources, each CTC must fully implement Guided Pathways. At a minimum, Guided Pathways implementation must include:

- comprehensive mapping of educational pathways;
- dedicated advising and career counseling;
- data analytics to measure student learning and program outcomes; and
- student success support infrastructure that is evidence-based with a focus on closing equity gaps among historically underserved populations.

Each college must define and conspicuously post definitions online for key terms in Guided Pathways program documents and reports.

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy, in consultation with the Workforce Education Investment Accountability and Oversight Board, must complete an evaluation of Guided Pathways. The evaluation must address the effectiveness of Guided Pathways on improving student outcomes. A preliminary report is due December 15, 2023, and a final report is due on December 15, 2029.

#### Tenure-Track Faculty.

In the 2021-23 biennium the Legislature intends to convert 200 part-time faculty positions to full-time faculty positions. The SBCTC must collect data and assess the impact of the additional

full-time tenure-track faculty positions on student outcomes. The SBCTC must report the results of the assessment, along with next-step recommendations, to the Legislature by December 15, 2023. The SBCTC must conspicuously post online and include in the report definitions for key terms including "diversity," "equity," "inclusion," and "culturally competent."

#### Mental Health Counselor Grant Program and Minimum Standards.

The SBCTC must establish a pilot program to increase student access to mental health counseling and services. The SBCTC must provide grants to the CTCs, at least half of which must be located outside the Puget Sound area, to implement one or more strategies to increase access to mental health counseling and services. The CTCs wishing to participate must apply and demonstrate: (1) a commitment to further developing partnerships by engaging with external community providers; (2) opportunities to expand on-campus mental health counseling and services; and (3) plans to implement one or more of the eight strategies identified by the Task Force. A selection committee must assist the SBCTC with the application selection process. The CTCs selected to participate who wish to hire additional mental health counselors with the grant funding must hire counselors with graduate-level training. Colleges selected for the pilot program must conspicuously post, and include in the report to the Legislature, definitions for key terms including diversity, equity, inclusion, and culturally competent. A report on the pilot program is due to the Legislature by November 1, 2023.

#### Minimum Counselor Standards.

Within existing resources, and beginning September 1, 2021, the SBCTC must establish minimum hiring standards for faculty counselors. These must include a requirement for new hires to have a graduate or professional degree in a related field and completion of appropriate graduate coursework, and other standards as established by the SBCTC. The minimum standards do not apply to an individual employed by a CTC as a counselor before September 1, 2021. In addition, counselors who were employed at a CTC before September 1, 2021, that move to employment at another CTC may carry the exemption with them.

#### Modifications to Residency Statute.

The HB 1079 category of resident student, which allows individuals to qualify for residency for the purpose of in-state tuition rates and state financial aid programs, is expanded. To qualify, the individual needs to have a high school diploma or equivalent and have lived in Washington for at least one year before being admitted to an institution of higher education. The Undocumented Student Support Loan Program's residency definition is updated to reflect the change in the residency statute.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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