

RCW 28B.77.240 Western Governors University - Washington—

Recognition and endorsement—Rules. (1) The council may:

(a) Recognize and endorse online, competency-based education as an important component of Washington's higher education system;

(b) Work to eliminate unnecessary barriers to the delivery of online competency-based education by Western Governors University - Washington; and

(c) Work with Western Governors University - Washington, as appropriate, to integrate its academic programs and services into Washington higher education policy and strategy.

(2) The council shall work with Western Governors University - Washington to create data-sharing processes to assess the institution's performance and determine the extent to which it helps the state achieve the goals of the current ten-year plan for higher education.

(3) The council shall adopt rules and policies to implement this section and that require council consultation and approval before:

(a) Modifications of contractual terms or relationships between the state and the institution of higher education; or

(b) Changes or modifications in the nonprofit status of the institution of higher education. [2012 c 229 § 118; 2011 c 146 § 2. Formerly RCW 28B.76.695.]

Findings—Intent—2011 c 146: "The legislature finds that the key to Washington's economic prosperity over the past twenty years has been a thriving employment sector for workers who have high levels of education. The legislature finds that by 2018, sixty-seven percent of all jobs in Washington will require some postsecondary education - the fifth highest in the nation - and that between 2011 and 2018, the number of Washington jobs requiring postsecondary education will increase by two hundred fifty-nine thousand. The legislature finds that while Washington enterprises that rely on highly educated workers have been able to fill positions from within the state and by attracting workers from other states or nations, businesses located in states that fail to produce sufficient numbers of degreed workers will be at a competitive disadvantage, since these employers will incur the added expense of recruiting heavily in other states and countries to find their skilled workforce. Citizens of Washington will not have access to the jobs Washington firms are producing unless the state dramatically increases postsecondary educational opportunities for them. The legislature further finds that increasing the numbers of Washington graduates to meet the needs of the state's citizens and businesses demands innovative institutions and educational delivery systems.

The legislature intends to partner with Western Governors University, a regionally and nationally accredited nonprofit and independent university, to establish Western Governors University - Washington. Western Governors University would offer online, competency-based degrees and provide enhanced access to postsecondary education for all Washington students, including dislocated workers and placebound students. The legislature further intends that the institution be recognized as a Washington baccalaureate degree-granting institution that is self-supporting and does not receive state funding. It is the intent of the legislature that the higher education coordinating board, the state board for community and technical colleges, and the other institutions of higher education in

Washington include the institution in policies and agreements regarding the efficient transfer of credits and courses between institutions." [2011 c 146 § 1.]