

RCW 28B.76.020 Definitions. The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Council" means the council for higher education.

(2) "Four-year institutions" means the University of Washington, Washington State University, Central Washington University, Eastern Washington University, Western Washington University, and The Evergreen State College.

(3) "Major expansion" means expansion of the higher education system that requires significant new capital investment, including building new institutions, campuses, branches, or centers or conversion of existing campuses, branches, or centers that would result in a mission change.

(4) "Mission change" means a change in the level of degree awarded or institutional type not currently authorized in statute.

(5) "Office" means the office of student financial assistance. [2011 1st sp.s. c 11 s 101; 2010 c 245 s 4; 1985 c 370 s 2. Formerly RCW 28B.80.310.]

Effective date—2011 1st sp.s. c 11 ss 101-103, 106-202, 204-244, and 301: "Sections 101 through 103, 106 through 202, 204 through 244, and 301 of this act take effect July 1, 2012." [2011 1st sp.s. c 11 s 403.]

Intent—2011 1st sp.s. c 11: "The legislature recognizes that the state's higher education system plays a critical role in assuring Washington's continued leadership role in driving economic prosperity, innovation, and opportunity. By educating citizens for living wage jobs, producing world-class research, and helping to create vibrant communities, the state's institutions of higher education form a foundational component in assuring prosperity for our citizens.

The legislature also recognizes the significant contributions made by the *higher education coordinating board in coordinating higher education policy and planning, and administering the state's financial aid programs. The board has also recently finished several significant planning efforts that will provide guidance to the legislature and to the institutions in forming priorities and deploying resources.

However, the legislature also recognizes the importance of prioritizing scarce resources for the core, frontline services that institutions provide—namely instruction, research, and robust financial aid. During times of economic downturn, policymakers must focus on those areas of public service that have the most direct and immediate impact on students. Keeping class sections open, attracting the best professors and instructors, providing comprehensive support services, and offering meaningful financial help to offset the costs of attending school must be the main concerns of policymakers.

It is for these reasons that the legislature intends to create a new office dedicated entirely to the administration of student financial aid programs. By focusing financial and governance resources on direct aid to students, the state can provide the highest level of service in this area. The legislature further intends to eliminate many of the policy and planning functions of the *higher education coordinating board and rededicate those resources to the higher education institutions that provide the core, frontline services associated with instruction and research. Given the unprecedented

budget crises the state is facing, the state must take the opportunity to build on the recommendations of the board and use the dollars where they can make the most direct impact." [2011 1st sp.s. c 11 s 1.]

***Reviser's note:** The higher education coordinating board was abolished by 2011 1st sp.s. c 11 s 301, effective July 1, 2012.

Findings—Expand on demand—System design plan endorsed—2010 c 245: See note following RCW 28B.50.020.