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## Higher Education Committee

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### SSB 5043

**Brief Description:** Convening a work group to develop a single, coordinated student access portal for college information.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Development (originally sponsored by Senators Kilmer, Kauffman, Shin, Rockefeller, Kastama, Kohl-Welles, Jarrett, Tom and McAuliffe).

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Brief Summary of Substitute Bill</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Requires the Higher Education Coordinating Board to convene a work group to develop a plan to create a one-stop, web-based college information access portal.</li></ul>
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**Hearing Date:** 3/6/09

**Staff:** Andi Smith (786-7304)

**Background:**

A "portal" or "web portal" is defined as a website serving as a guide or point of entry to the World Wide Web and usually including a search engine or a collection of links to other sites arranged by topic. The portal typically offers a broad array of resources and services, such as forums, email, news, and other services. In the private sector, examples of portals include Yahoo.com or MSN.com.

At the end of the 1990s, many governments began to develop portal sites for their citizens. For government entities, the purpose of a portal is to provide a wide array of comprehensive information on government resources, services, and forms for citizens. The federal government has developed a portal at USA.gov and Washington State has created "Access Washington" at access.wa.gov.

Some types of portals can offer user-specific, customized views. For example, at many colleges and universities, web portals have been developed to offer customized, specific content available

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based on an individual's role (e.g. faculty, student, staff, administrator). Roles help the portal determine privileges for reading, searching, updating, and personalizing content.

Many of the state's colleges, universities, and education agencies currently maintain separate portals that contain information specific to their schools or programs. For instance, the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) maintains a website where students and parents can obtain information about financing a college education. The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) maintains the "Check Out College" website that includes various types of information enabling students to explore options within the community and technical college system. The HECB and the SBCTC are also currently working on an academic guidance and planning system (Academic GPS) that uses web-based technology to provide an online, statewide system for degree planning and advising. Several states have compiled services like these into a single website. The most sophisticated of these websites serve as one-stop portals to all public post-secondary institutions in the state.

**Summary of Bill:**

The HECB must convene a work group to develop a plan to create a one-stop, web-based portal for college information. The portal will contain comprehensive information regarding financial, academic, and career planning, admissions, scholarships, and financial aid. The portal will also contain on-line applications for these services.

In developing the plan, the work group must investigate similar efforts in other states with a focus on building a portal that is student-friendly. The work group must investigate the types of services typically offered, governance, marketing, and the portal's impact on increasing postsecondary participation. The plan must include recommendations on the process and timelines for creating the portal, resources necessary to build and maintain it, metrics for gauging success, and enabling legislation. The plan must also identify roadblocks to implementation as well as potential cost savings to students, families, and the state. The work group will complete the plan and submit it to the Legislature by December 1, 2009.

The HECB must complete this work within existing resources.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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