

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SHB 1472

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As of March 16, 2021

**Title:** An act relating to membership of the student achievement council.

**Brief Description:** Adding a graduate student to the student achievement council.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on College & Workforce Development (originally sponsored by Representatives Slatter, Ortiz-Self, Sutherland, Goodman, Ormsby, Valdez, Eslick, Harris-Talley, Lekanoff, Pollet and Chopp).

**Brief History:** Passed House: 3/6/21, 77-21.

**Committee Activity:** Higher Education & Workforce Development: 3/16/21.

### Brief Summary of Bill

- Adds a graduate student to the membership of the Washington Student Achievement Council.
- Increases the term of the undergraduate and graduate student members to two years and requires that their terms be staggered.

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## SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

**Staff:** Alicia Kinne-Clawson (786-7407)

**Background:** The Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) was created as a state agency in 2012. WSAC was charged to assume some of the remaining functions of its predecessor, the Higher Education Coordinating Board, and to propose higher education goals and strategic action planning. The executive director of WSAC is appointed by the Governor, who chooses from a list of names provided by WSAC.

WSAC is comprised of the following nine voting members:

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- five citizen members appointed by the Governor with the consent of the Senate, one of which must be a student.
  1. Citizen members must represent the diversity of the state and state's geography. Four citizen members serve four-year terms, and the student serves a one-year term;
- a representative of the public baccalaureate institutions selected by the presidents of public baccalaureate institutions;
- a representative of the community and technical college system, selected by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges;
- a representative of the K-12 system selected by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, in consultation with the Department of Early Learning and the State Board of Education.
  1. This member must excuse themselves from voting on matters pertaining primarily to institutions of higher education; and
- a representative of an independent, nonprofit higher education institution selected by an association of independent nonprofit baccalaureate degree-granting institutions.
  1. This member must excuse themselves from matters pertaining primarily to public institutions.

**Summary of Bill:** Membership of WSAC is increased from nine members to ten members by increasing the number of citizen members to six. At least one of the citizen members must be an undergraduate student, and at least one of the citizen members must be a graduate student. The terms of the undergraduate and graduate student members are modified from one year to two years. The terms of the undergraduate and graduate student members must be staggered.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: This measure adds a graduate student to WSAC. Typically one student represents all students on the council and it is typically an undergraduate student. The council plays a big role in administering the states financial aid programs and setting education goals. Graduate students play a major role in our institutions including as teachers, researchers, running laboratories. If they did not exist much of the research in our higher education institutions would come to a halt. We are also looking at a current and future workforce shortage among jobs that require a graduate education. If we are going to address workforce shortages and create meaningful lifelong learning opportunities we need their voices at the table. This is a workforce bill, and equity bill, and even a behavioral healthcare bill. At UW alone graduate students are more than

one-third of the total student populations but graduate students lack representation on any statewide higher education board. We rank thirty-seventh nationally for advanced degree production. It is not happening because there is a lack of interest but instead because the cost of graduate education is too great of a burden for many students. Inequities will continue into the future until we address this. Despite the many important roles that graduate students fill on campuses they do not hold any important roles in planning boards. Adding a graduate student seat is an important step forward to the representation that graduate students need to ensure that graduate students are served. The primary goal that WSAC has is blind to what level of education a student reaches. We need to be looking at equity in all levels of education including advanced degrees. As a mostly undergraduate student association we recognize the benefit of having both undergraduate and graduate students represented and would ultimately benefit all students.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Representative Vandana Slatter, Prime Sponsor; Hannah Sieben, Graduate and Professional Student Senate-UW; Abbie Shew, Graduate and Professional Student Senate-UW; Payton Swinford, Graduate and Professional Student Senate-UW; Phoebe Walker, ASUW Seattle.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.