

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6334

As of March 1, 2012

Title: An act relating to student involvement in higher education governance.

Brief Description: Regarding student involvement in higher education governance.

Sponsors: Senators Frockt, Carrell, Kilmer, Delvin, Chase, Hill, Pridemore, Shin, Kline, Zarelli, Rolfes, Regala, Kohl-Welles, Harper, Kastama, Conway and McAuliffe.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education & Workforce Development: 1/25/12.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Staff: Kimberly Cushing (786-7421)

Background: Students and student government associations at institutions of higher education may be involved in the governance of institutions in several ways. The state universities each have one student member on their boards of regents. The regional universities and The Evergreen State College (TESC) each have one student member on their boards of trustees. The community college districts are each governed by a board of trustees. The boards do not include a student member.

Prior to reducing or increasing tuition for each academic year, the governing boards of the state universities, the regional universities, TESC, and the State Board for Community and Technical College (SBCTC) must consult with existing student associations or organizations with student undergraduate and graduate representatives regarding the impacts of potential tuition increases. Governing boards for the four-year institutions and SBCTC must provide certain data.

The governing boards of institutions of higher education collect services and activities fees to fund student services and programs. The services and activities fee committee at each institution of higher education must evaluate programs and submit budget recommendations to the governing board and administration. A majority of committee members must be students. The administration reviews the budget recommendations and the governing board has final authority for adopting the budget. The board must give priority consideration to

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

student desires in budget areas that do not impact preexisting contractual obligations, bond covenants, or stability for programs affecting students.

The governing boards of the state universities, the regional universities, and TESC, with the written agreement of student government associations, may establish a student technology fee. The associations must approve changes to the amount of the fee, as well as an annual expenditure plan for the fee revenue.

Summary of Bill: Students at each institution of higher education must be active participants in the immediate governance of and policy development of their respective institutions. Student participation occurs through the undergraduate and graduate student governments at each institution. Any governance responsibility and authority, and any policy development, is subject to the authority of the respective governing bodies of the institutions.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: We have been asking a lot of students in recent years and want to make sure student governments are vessels through which students are participating actively. This is a small bill, but operationally will do a lot in the long run. Proposed amendments include language that before boards vote, institutions must make public proposals for tuition increases 30 days ahead and allow student associations to collect and present student opinion to boards. Students must be involved in tuition-setting planning in the early stages. Students feel that they have to react and would rather help craft policy ideas. The University of Washington (UW) has made great strides in bringing students to the table, but committees should be driven by the Legislature. The opportunities should be open to all Washington-state students at publicly-funded institutions. Faculty supports the idea of bill. Student liaisons are fireballs that know how to take initiative. If students have real voices on campus, it increases the sense that they leave campus not to just be worker bees but to be engaged problem-solvers.

OTHER: We take exception that all student appointees to work groups are made by student governments. It is important that students outside of student government can be considered. Evergreen's process has much more opportunity for appointment.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Frockt, prime sponsor; Evan Smith, Conor McLean, Andrew Lewis, Associated Students of UW; Charles L. Plummer, Graduate and Professional Student Senate, UW; Shelby Pelon, Associated Students of Eastern WA University (EWU); Anthony Flinn, EWU Council of Faculty.

OTHER: Jane Wall, The Evergreen State College.