

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1723

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Higher Education*

Title: An act relating to the Washington fund for excellence in higher education program.

Brief Description: Creating the Washington fund for excellence in higher education program.

Sponsor(s): Representatives Ogden, Jacobsen, Wood, Spanel, Zellinsky, R. King, Roland, H. Myers and Fraser; by request of Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Higher Education, February 20, 1991, DPA.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
HIGHER EDUCATION**

Majority Report: *Do pass as amended.* Signed by 13 members: Representatives Jacobsen, Chair; Ogden, Vice Chair; Wood, Ranking Minority Member; May, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Basich; Dellwo; Fraser; Ludwig; Miller; Prince; Sheldon; Spanel; and Van Luven.

Staff: Susan Hosch (786-7120).

Background: The Higher Education Coordinating Board has recommended the creation of a program that encourages institutions to work cooperatively to solve longstanding problems plaguing the state's system of higher education. The program would be similar to a federal program that provides funding on a competitive basis to institutions that are experimenting with ways to improve the educational process in colleges and universities.

Summary of Amended Bill: The Washington Fund for Excellence in Higher Education Program is established. The program is designed to encourage colleges and universities to work together to address specific system problems. The program will be administered by the Higher Education Coordinating Board. Through the program, the board may award grants on a competitive basis either to individual state colleges and universities, or to consortia of institutions. In awarding grants, a strong priority will be

given to proposals that involve more than one educational sector, and to proposals that show substantial institutional commitment. Each grant will be limited to a maximum of two years.

Participating institutions must provide some financial support to the program. Institutions may provide this support in one of two ways. Participating institutions may either cover part of the program costs during the grant period, or may provide continued support of the funded program at the end of the grant period.

The board's program responsibilities are described. These duties include establishing specific biennial guidelines, and convening review committees to assist the board in evaluating grant proposals.

During the 1991-93 biennium, the board's guidelines will be consistent with three priorities. Initiatives that encourage the participation of minority students, at a rate consistent with their proportion of the state's population will receive a priority. Minority students would include students with disabilities. Teacher preparation programs that encourage collaborative efforts between K-12 and institutions of higher education will also receive a priority. Finally, initiatives that facilitate the transfer of students from K-12 to higher education, and from community colleges to four-year institutions will receive a priority.

Priorities for subsequent biennia will be established by the board. Before adopting these priorities, the board will consult with the governor, the Legislature, institutions of higher education, educational associations, business, community groups, and state agencies concerned with the common schools, community colleges, and vocational education.

The Fund for Excellence is established in the office of the state treasurer. Moneys received for the program will be deposited in the fund. Moneys in the fund are subject to the allotment procedure, but no appropriation is required for disbursements.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: For the 1991-93 biennium, students with disabilities will be included with other minority students in the diversity and minority issues that will receive a priority under the program.

Fiscal Note: Requested February 11, 1991.

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

Testimony For: The current budgeting process for state colleges and universities does little to encourage institutions to meet specific state priorities, especially when those priorities transcend the needs of any one institution. Using incentives, such as the incentives provided in this bill, system-wide problems can more easily be addressed. The proposed program will foster collaboration among institutions and educational sectors. It is student centered, targets important education issues, and embodies the concept of reforming the higher education process. The program will provide a vehicle to address critical issues, solve problems, and build a network of people committed to improving higher education.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Ann Daley, Higher Education Coordinating Board; David Habura, State Board for Community College Education; Terry Teale, Council of Presidents; Eric Christensen, Washington Student Lobby; and Scott LaFramboise, Washington Student Lobby (all in favor).