

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## 2SHB 2292

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Higher Education, February 22, 1996

**Title:** An act relating to incentive grants for innovation and quality.

**Brief Description:** Establishing the innovation and quality in higher education program.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Carlson, Jacobsen and Murray; by request of Higher Education Coordinating Board).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Higher Education: 2/20/96, 2/22/96 [DP].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Bauer, Chair; Drew, Hale, McAuliffe, Prince, Rasmussen, Sheldon, West and Wood.

**Staff:** Jean Six (786-7423)

**Background:** In 1991, the Washington Fund for Excellence in Higher Education program was established in law. The purpose of the program is to encourage institutions of higher education to develop innovative and collaborative solutions to critical, statewide educational challenges facing the state. The Higher Education Coordinating Board is responsible for program administration. When funding is available, the board will provide grants on a competitive basis to public colleges or consortia of colleges. The grants cannot last more than two years.

The program has never received funding.

**Summary of Bill:** The Washington Fund for Excellence in Higher Education program is renamed. In its place, the Washington Fund for Innovation and Quality program is established. Through the program, incentive grants are awarded on a competitive basis to institutions of higher education and their faculties. Guidelines for the program are developed by the Higher Education Coordinating Board. The guidelines are consistent with certain outcomes described in the bill. These include increasing access, improving time to degree, improving student learning, and increasing efficiency and collaboration between higher education institutions and the private sector.

Grants may be available for innovative collaborative programs and individual projects proposed by institutions or faculty. Examples of collaborative programs include developing a three-year degree, reducing the time needed to complete a baccalaureate program, and developing a degree to be offered on the Internet. Examples of individual projects include efforts to improve efficiency by 5 percent each year, improve student retention, and develop

competencies and outcomes for general education or university requirements and degree programs. Grants may also be available for initiatives that encourage minority participation and enhance a collaborative approach to training new teachers.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 12, 1996.

**Effective Date of Substitute Bill:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void if not funded in the budget.

**Testimony For:** Encouraging collaboration and innovation results in excellent programs of benefit to the students. The program could provide grants to individual faculty members or small groups of faculty. It is at that level that the innovation can lead to significant change.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Representative Don Carlson, prime sponsor; Susan Patrick, HECB.