

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6185

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Higher Education, January 24, 1996

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

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

Sponsors: Senator Bauer; by request of Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 1/9/96, 1/24/96 [DPS-WM].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6185 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

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

Staff: Jean Six (786-7423)

Background: The Washington fund for excellence was established in 1991 to encourage cooperative programs designed to address specific problems in the higher education system. The Higher Education Coordinating Board has the authority to administer the program and set guidelines for grant proposals. The program has never received funding.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Washington Fund for Innovation and Quality is established. The program awards incentive grants to institutions of higher education based on guidelines developed by the Higher Education Coordinating Board. The guidelines are consistent with the desired outcomes of increasing access, improving time-to-degree, improving student learning and increasing efficiency and collaboration between higher education institutions and the private sector.

Grants are made for innovative collaborative programs and individual projects. Examples of collaborative programs include developing a three-year degree, or reducing the time-to-degree for current baccalaureate programs, and developing a degree to be offered on the Internet. Examples of individual projects include efforts to improve efficiency by 5 percent each year, and develop competencies and outcomes for general education or university requirements and degree programs.

Minority and diversity initiatives as well as collaborative K-12 teacher preparation models may be emphasized. Individual faculty or small groups of faculty may compete for funds for innovation. Student retention may be a goal when seeking a grant. Technical colleges are to be included when looking at articulation issues. The fund in the custody of the State Treasurer is renamed the fund for innovation and quality.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Improving time-to-degree is one of the desired outcomes of following the guidelines for the 1995-97 biennium. Minority and diversity initiatives as well as collaborative K-12 teacher preparation models, student retention, and technical college articulation may be emphasized. The fund in the custody of the State Treasurer is renamed the fund for innovation and quality.

Appropriation: \$5 million.

Fiscal Note: None requested.

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

Testimony For: The fund for innovation will encourage institutional change, the need for which is recognized in the HECB master plan update. The fund encourages cross-sector, interinstitutional cooperation. The opportunity to compete for funds will encourage faculty to seek innovative ways to provide instruction. Washington State can expect many benefits from this program. The Washington Center For the Improvement of Undergraduate Education has successfully run mini-grant programs. This fund for innovation will promote innovation and encourage change.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Susan Patrick, HECB; (pro); Barbara Smith, Provost, TESC (pro).