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**SENATE BILL 5557**

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**State of Washington**                      **54th Legislature**                      **1995 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Sutherland, Bauer, Wood, Palmer and Kohl

Read first time 01/26/95. Referred to Committee on Higher Education.

1            AN ACT Relating to assessment of prior experiential learning  
2 programs in higher education; adding a new chapter to Title 28B RCW;  
3 and declaring an emergency.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5            NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds and declares that:  
6            Providing greater flexibility and access to undergraduate degree  
7 programs for the working adult population is of vital importance to the  
8 expansion of economic opportunities for individuals and families.

9            Existing degree programs are not providing the needed flexibility  
10 for many working adults. In order to provide greater access to a  
11 larger portion of the working adult population, more creative  
12 alternatives to the traditional time and place-bound educational  
13 delivery system must be developed.

14            As demonstrated in other states, the opportunity for working adult  
15 students to earn college credit for clearly demonstrating important  
16 knowledge that they have attained in the workplace is a key element for  
17 providing greater access to undergraduate degree programs. These  
18 credit-for-prior-learning-experience opportunities have also been shown

1 to be most effective when they are offered as a component of distance  
2 learning programs.

3 Although many institutions of higher education in Washington  
4 provide opportunities to earn credit for prior learning experience,  
5 these programs are extremely dissimilar in their standards,  
6 requirements, and credit allocations. In addition, they are not  
7 adequately included as a component of distance learning programs. It  
8 is, therefore, necessary that state-wide standards, requirements, and  
9 guidelines be developed to bring more uniformity and academic  
10 cooperation to the delivery of these important educational  
11 opportunities.

12 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The Washington assessment of prior  
13 experiential learning program is established. The program shall be  
14 developed by the higher education coordinating board with the  
15 assistance and support of the state board for community and technical  
16 colleges, the work force training and education coordinating board, the  
17 state's institutions of higher education, and representatives of  
18 private enterprise. The board shall also seek the advice of  
19 institutions of higher education in other states that have developed  
20 prior experiential learning programs.

21 The board shall develop and adopt rules concerning program  
22 standards, requirements, and general guidelines. Rules shall address,  
23 but are not limited to:

- 24 (a) Minimum and maximum numbers of credits that can be earned;
- 25 (b) Types of academic degree programs to which credits can be  
26 applied;
- 27 (c) Minimum student requirements for demonstrating prior  
28 experiential learning;
- 29 (d) Guidelines for adequate faculty evaluation of student  
30 demonstration of prior experiential learning;
- 31 (e) Guidelines for determining what types of learning experiences  
32 qualify for the program;
- 33 (f) Tuition rates; and
- 34 (g) A uniform format for reporting prior experiential learning  
35 credits on academic transcripts.

36 (2) The Washington assessment of prior experiential learning  
37 program shall be administered independently by public institutions of

1 higher education in accordance with the rules and guidelines adopted by  
2 the board.

3 (3) The program shall be made available to students who are  
4 enrolled in distance learning programs.

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** Beginning in the fall term of 1995,  
6 Washington State University shall make the Washington assessment of  
7 prior experiential learning program available to all students,  
8 including those enrolled in distance learning programs at its branch  
9 campus in Clark county.

10 In order to best meet the needs of the citizens of southwest  
11 Washington, Washington State University shall seek the advice of, and  
12 work together with, the administrations of Lower Columbia College and  
13 Clark College, and the local business community, in developing the  
14 program.

15 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** Beginning in the fall term of 1995, all  
16 public institutions of higher education are encouraged to begin  
17 offering a program of prior experiential learning to their students.

18 Beginning in the fall term of 1996, all public institutions of  
19 higher education that are presently offering credit for prior learning  
20 experience shall implement the Washington assessment of prior  
21 experiential learning program in order to continue providing this  
22 opportunity to their students.

23 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** Sections 1 through 4 of this act shall  
24 constitute a new chapter in Title 28B RCW.

25 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** This act is necessary for the immediate  
26 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the  
27 state government and its existing public institutions, and shall take  
28 effect immediately.

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