

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2952

As Reported By House Committee On:
Higher Education

Title: An act relating to a study of distance education.

Brief Description: Requiring a study of distance education.

Sponsors: Representatives Edmonds, Kenney, Gombosky, Esser, Lantz, Pflug, Veloria, Edwards and Santos.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 2/4/00 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires that the Higher Education Coordinating Board, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, Office of Financial Management, and the state institutions of higher education work collaboratively to conduct a study of distance education.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Carlson, Republican Co-Chair; Kenney, Democratic Co-Chair; Lantz, Democratic Vice Chair; Dunn; Edmonds; Esser and Gombosky.

Staff: Erika Prager (786-7120).

Background:

According to the Higher Education Coordinating Board's 2000 Master Plan, Washington's system of higher education needs to provide opportunities for approximately 70,000 additional full-time enrollments by 2010. One strategy to meet this significant growth is to expand distance education opportunities. Distance education can provide new ways to learn and may conserve space in the long run. However, faculty

and staff need training in using these new technologies; and infrastructure and equipment must be installed and maintained.

Summary of Bill:

The Higher Education Coordinating Board, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, Office of Financial Management, and the state institutions of higher education, working collaboratively, must conduct a study regarding distance education and report back to the Legislature no later than January 2001. The study must address the following elements related to distance education:

- definitions for the different modes of distance education;
 - the impacts on capital needs and facility utilization;
 - the impacts on instructional, student, technological, and administrative support services;
 - the obstacles in providing instruction via distance delivery;
 - the cost factors associated with different distance delivery modes;
 - the role of the K-20 network;
 - strategies to create efficiencies through partnerships and collaborations; and
 - the implications on access to higher education.
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Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: A general frustration exists with the disconnect between fiscal and policy committees. There is a fragmented view of distance education. Members only hear what certain institutions are doing with regards to distance education, rather than the "big picture" between capital, funding, and policy issues. Distance education is constantly changing. A study would help provide a holistic view of distance education and allow members to "connect the dots." Distance delivery is an experiment. Educators are figuring it out as they go. Faculty members should be involved in this study; not just one, but at least 50 percent of the committee. They have a lot of concerns about faculty development and compensation issues related to distance education. The K-12 system would also like to be included in the study.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Suanne Carlson, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; Wendy Rader-Konfalski, Washington Federation of Teachers; Joan Stover, Karen Strickland, and

Nancy Cordell, SCCFT-WFT; Karin Hilgerson, Washington Education Association; and Ken Kanikenberg, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.