

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1909

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Higher Education, March 31, 2003

Title: An act relating to creating a pilot project for competency-based transfer in higher education.

Brief Description: Creating a pilot project for competency-based transfer in higher education.

Sponsors: House Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Jarrett, Kenney, Cox, Fromhold, Chase, Berkey, Pearson, McCoy, Gombosky, Lantz, Clements, Talcott, Buck, Rockefeller, Pflug, Moeller, Priest, Edwards and Santos).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 3/27/03, 3/31/03 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Carlson, Chair; Schmidt, Vice Chair; Horn, Kohl-Welles, Mulliken, B. Sheldon and Shin.

Staff: Dario de la Rosa (786-7484)

Background: The Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) is required by law to establish minimum requirements for admission to Washington's public four-year universities and college. Additionally, the HECB is responsible for establishing transfer policies and maintaining a statewide transfer of credit policy and agreements. Washington law also requires the HECB to cooperate with the state institutions of higher education and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges in maintaining the transfer of credit policy and agreements. Approximately 12,500 community and technical college students transfer to four-year institutions each year.

Summary of Amended Bill: A pilot project to define transfer standards in selected academic disciplines on the basis of student competency is established. The HECB, in consultation with the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges and the Council of Presidents, recruits a four-year institution, at least two community or technical colleges, and at least one private career college to participate. Pilot project participants develop standards, definitions and quality assurance procedures for competency-based student transfers.

The participants submit a work plan and time line to the Legislature by December 1, 2004. Additionally, the participants present a progress report of the pilot project by December 1, 2005. The progress report identifies barriers encountered in developing a competency-based transfer system and makes recommendations for further development of the program.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: The Higher Education Coordinating Board may request assistance in its work from the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education, in addition to the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, and the Council of Presidents.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: The concept presented in the bill is exciting, challenging, and very leading-edge. Some work is already being done, but the major challenge is having the four-year institutions define the desired competencies. The reason to do this as a pilot project is to find the best method to determine what the standards are for student competencies. This bill would require faculty-to-faculty conversations about the skills and abilities needed at the community college level before a student goes on to a four year school. Concerns: The bill requires the participants to structure the work of the project in such a way that the development costs are absorbed within existing budgets. Because a project such as this is staff intensive, this pilot project could prove to be expensive for the participants.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Fred Jarrett, prime sponsor; Loretta Seppanen, State Board for Technical and Community Colleges (pro); Terry Teal, Council of Presidents (pro with concerns).