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**HOUSE BILL 1651**

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**State of Washington 65th Legislature 2017 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Pollet, Doglio, Kilduff, Gregerson, Peterson, Frame, Bergquist, Orwall, Goodman, Fey, Haler, and Stanford

AN ACT Relating to supporting students' success by increasing retention and graduation rates with evidence-based programs; adding a new section to chapter 28B.10 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 28B.50 RCW; adding new sections to chapter 28B.77 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 28B.20 RCW; creating a new section; and making an appropriation.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1)(a) The legislature recognizes that student success is often a product of a good support system, and the legislature finds that student supports such as academic and career advising, tutors, cohort-based classes, peer mentor programs, and orientation programs can help students achieve their dream of a postsecondary education. The legislature finds that student retention term-to-term and year-to-year significantly increases when students attend required orientation programs or enroll in student success courses. Orientation programs and student success courses help new and transfer students become familiar with the institution and its resources, and offer students opportunities to develop relationships with their peers and faculty, thereby creating a sense of community. Student success courses also teach students about study skills, the expectations of college, and potential career pathways.

(b) Investment in student success programs promotes timely graduation, which is a cost benefit to the student who pays less tuition and can enter the workforce faster, and to the state, which has reduced operating costs. In addition, college graduates earn more over their lifetime than high school graduates, while federal, state, and local governments enjoy increased tax revenues, less dependence on social programs, and more civic engagement.

(2) The legislature finds that there are effective, evidence-based examples of student success programs here in Washington state. Some examples of those programs include:

(a) Columbia Basin College requires mandatory academic advising and required enrollment in Human Development 101 for all students who test into two or more remedial areas. The class is focused on creating academic success by teaching students about learning strategies, campus tools and resources, and how to develop an academic plan to support their career and educational goals. For both the 2012 and 2013 cohorts, students who took the class had higher rates of retention than students with remedial needs who did not take the class.

(b) Summer Bridge is a program offered by the University of Washington-Tacoma to incoming freshmen who take an intensive, one-month long university course for college credit. The course gives students the tools they need to be successful, including academic and financial aid advising, academic enhancement workshops, and peer mentoring from sophomores, and provides opportunities to engage in community service and receive career development information. Students who participate in bridge programs are more likely to succeed in college compared to students who do not participate.

(c) TRiO is a program for student support services that increases access and success for low-income and first generation students, and students with disabilities, at the community and technical college level. The program helps students complete their associate degree and successfully transfer to a four-year institution. TRiO services include academic advising, counseling, mentoring, academic planning, financial aid guidance, tutoring, library resources and textbook rentals, and tours of four-year institutions.

(d) Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement (MESA) is a nationally recognized program that supports and encourages underrepresented students in an associate's program to pursue four-year degrees in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. MESA provides students with an orientation course, academic workshops, academic advising, a designated study center for students to work together, assistance with transferring to a four-year university, and direct administrative support. Many of the students also have internships with industry partners or speak at conferences about their research. According to Washington MESA, for the first MESA graduating class of 2011-12, one hundred percent of the students who earned bachelor's degrees majored in STEM fields. Seattle Central College MESA students who transfer to a four-year university to pursue a STEM degree graduate at one hundred percent, compared to non-MESA students who graduate at ninety percent.

(e) The state board for community and technical colleges' Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) program is nationally recognized for its team teaching model of providing both remedial education and career education concurrently, thereby accelerating students' progress. An evaluation from the Community College Research Center in December 2012 found three key facts: (i) The highly structured I-BEST programs focus students' decisions and support retention; (ii) I-BEST cohorts have higher rates of performance; and (iii) on average, I-BEST students earned eighteen credits compared to non-I-BEST workforce students who only earned nine credits. A cost-benefit analysis of the program indicates that while the I-BEST program costs more and the state funds the program at a rate of 1.75 times the normal rate for a full-time equivalent student, the return on investment justifies the cost.

(3) The legislature recognizes that the institutions of higher education have an intent to increase student supports as illustrated by the following examples from their budget requests:

(a) Eastern Washington University's request to create advising teams, which includes hiring a student success advisor for each department who would focus on those students in danger of not graduating;

(b) Central Washington University's request to develop four full-service transfer student centers around the state to provide advising, career guidance, tutoring, mentoring, and social support for transfer students at campuses in Ellensburg, Des Moines, Lynnwood, and Joint Base Lewis-McChord;

(c) Western Washington University's request to improve the campus tutoring center by hiring more peer tutors and increasing staff resources, to hire a mathematics liaison to optimize collaboration between the mathematics department and the tutoring center, and to provide tutor-led entry level mathematics student groups in the residence halls;

(d) The Evergreen State College's request to expand peer mentoring to all first-time, first-year students, and to double the First Peoples Scholars program, which brings first-year and transfer students to campus before orientation to focus on building community;

(e) The University of Washington's requests to expand staff and peer tutoring for STEM programs, implement a summer bridge program at the Seattle campus while expanding the summer bridge program at the Tacoma campus, implement a university 101 student success course at the Tacoma campus, and hire an additional staff person to improve college bound scholarship students' success by helping students develop effective learning strategies, study skills, and financial literacy while receiving proactive academic counseling; and

(f) The state board for community and technical colleges' request to expand the I-BEST program by an additional nine hundred students annually for the 2017-2019 biennium, and to expand the current six MESA pilot programs to all thirty-four community and technical colleges across the state.

(4) Recognizing the evidence-based examples of student support programs currently available, and the institutions' intent to provide additional supports, it is the legislature's intent to provide a framework to expand student supports.

(5) The legislature also recognizes that an unintended consequence of reduced state support for the research universities, coupled with increased tuition, has led to fifty-five percent of all graduate and professional degree programs at the University of Washington becoming fee-based, self-sustaining programs. These fee-based, self-sustaining graduate programs do not offer lower in-state tuition to Washington residents and may not be eligible for certain financial aid programs. The increased cost of these fee-based, self-sustaining graduate programs leads to decreased diversity, increased student loan debt, and a decrease in the availability of students willing to enter traditionally low-compensated occupations, such as public service professions in the areas of public health, librarianship, information services, and social work. Therefore, the legislature intends for the public service graduate conditional grant program to provide a long-term reinvestment that will enable Washington residents to obtain graduate degrees necessary for public service careers.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28B.10 RCW to read as follows:

By the beginning of the 2018-19 academic year, the four-year institutions of higher education shall implement a student success program for all students who are receiving need-based federal or state grant aid. The student success program must take the form of a credit-based class, orientation program, or peer mentoring program that is based on research or documented evidence of success at other institutions with comparable student populations. The student success program may include elements of:

(1) Learning about study skills, time management, and college success skills;

(2) Academic advising and career planning;

(3) Basic financial literacy and information and requirements for financial aid, including student loan programs and debt, particularly for students from cultural or economic backgrounds with limited knowledge of student loans and debt;

(4) Acclimating students to the institution's campus, resources, services, and culture, including the expectations and demands of postsecondary education;

(5) Tutoring or peer tutoring;

(6) Cohort-based programs; and

(7) Peer mentorship.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28B.50 RCW to read as follows:

By the beginning of the 2018-19 academic year, the community and technical colleges shall implement the following for all students enrolled in a degree-granting program:

(1) A student success program that is either a credit-based class, orientation program, or peer mentoring program that is based on research or documented evidence of success at other institutions with comparable student populations. The student success program may include elements of:

(a) Learning about study skills, time management, and college success skills;

(b) Academic advising and career planning;

(c) Basic financial literacy and information and requirements for financial aid, including student loan programs and debt, particularly for students from cultural or economic backgrounds with limited knowledge of student loans and debt;

(d) Acclimating students to the institution's campus, resources, services, and culture, including the expectations and demands of postsecondary education;

(e) Tutoring or peer tutoring;

(f) Cohort-based programs; and

(g) Peer mentorship;

(2) An evidence-based remedial program, such as the integrated basic education and skills training program, for those students with remedial mathematics or English education needs. The remedial program may include elements of:

(a) Team teaching;

(b) Mixed basic skills and college-level curriculum;

(c) Accelerated basic skills curriculum; and

(d) Flipped classroom instruction.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28B.77 RCW to read as follows:

Subject to availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the council shall administer a competitive grant program to award grants to the institutions of higher education and nonprofit organizations that partner with the institutions of higher education to provide precollege or ongoing peer mentoring by the 2018-19 academic year. The council shall prioritize grant proposals that assist underrepresented, low-income, or first-generation college students. The peer mentoring programs must focus on increasing retention and graduation rates. The council shall develop requirements for the grant program, including an application process, criteria for awards, and a review process. Each institution of higher education that receives a grant under this section may provide space free of charge to the partner nonprofit organization providing mentoring services on campus. The institutions of higher education that receive a grant under this section may use state work-study funds for training and supporting student mentors as a part of the partnership created under this section, provided that students meet eligibility requirements in RCW 28B.12.060.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28B.77 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The council shall contract with the western interstate commission for higher education to conduct an evaluation of the following:

(a) The student success programs and remedial programs implemented at the institutions of higher education as required under sections 2 and 3 of this act. The evaluation must review the effectiveness of the programs based on the following measures of success:

(i) Improves student retention;

(ii) Improves graduation rates;

(iii) Reduces time to degree;

(iv) Reduces barriers to degree completion;

(v) Targets student populations with the most need;

(vi) Is cost-effective; and

(vii) Specifically for the remedial programs, reduces time spent in remedial classes and improves students' basic skills to create pathways to high-demand degree fields; and

(b) The competitive grant program for peer mentoring created under section 4 of this act, including:

(i) A description of the grant programs funded and who is being served;

(ii) Anecdotal and empirical data, including the following measures of success:

(A) Improves student retention;

(B) Improves graduation rates;

(C) Reduces time to degree;

(D) Reduces barriers to degree completion;

(E) Targets student populations with the most need; and

(F) Is cost-effective; and

(iii) Which grant programs show greatest improvement in the measures of success.

(2) After the evaluation, the council and the state board for community and technical colleges, in consultation with the western interstate commission for higher education, shall include recommendations on how the student success, remedial, and grant programs may be improved. For the community and technical colleges, if the evaluation indicates that certain student success and remedial programs outperform others based on the measures of success, the state board for community and technical colleges shall coordinate with the community and technical colleges affected to change less effective programs to those found to be more effective.

(3) In response to the council's recommendations, the four-year institutions of higher education shall coordinate with the council to indicate how the institutions will make adjustments to their student success programs to improve the measures of success.

(4) A report on the evaluation, recommendations, and institutions' responses is due to the legislature by October 1, 2021, and October 1st every four years thereafter, to the appropriate higher education committees of the legislature and in accordance with the reporting requirements in RCW 43.01.036.

(5) The council shall take into account the results of the evaluation when funding grant programs in the future.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28B.77 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The council shall contract with the western interstate commission for higher education to conduct an evaluation on mental health counseling and services provided for students at the institutions of higher education as defined in RCW 28B.10.016. This evaluation must include a description of:

(a) How these services are provided;

(b) How the services are funded and at what capacity the services are funded;

(c) How many students are being served and the types of students being served;

(d) Whether students have immediate access to services and, if not, the average wait time for services; and

(e) Any additional information that provides a picture of the current needs and demands for mental health services at the institutions of higher education.

(2) A report on the evaluation of mental health counseling and services is due to the appropriate committees of the legislature by September 1, 2018, and in accordance with the reporting requirements in RCW 43.01.036.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28B.20 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The definitions in this subsection apply throughout this section.

(a) "Conditional grant" means a loan that is forgiven in whole or in part in exchange for service in a public service career in Washington.

(b) "Eligible student" means a student who is accepted into a public service fee-based, self-sustaining graduate program, is a resident student as defined in RCW 28B.15.012 and 28B.15.013, and has a declared intention to complete an approved public service-oriented fee-based, self-sustaining graduate program.

(c) "Equalization fee" means the additional amount added to the conditional grant under this section to equate the debt to that which the student would have incurred if he or she would have received a loan through the federal direct loan program.

(d) "Forgiven" or "to forgive" or "forgiveness" means to render service in a public service career in the state of Washington in lieu of monetary repayment.

(e) "Participant" means an eligible student who has received a conditional grant under this section.

(f) "Public service" includes employment with a public agency, public entity, or a nonprofit organization, and careers in the fields of librarianship, information services, public health, social work, and research and teaching in public service programs.

(g) "Satisfied" means paid-in-full.

(2) The public service graduate degree conditional grant program is created at the University of Washington. The University of Washington shall administer the program and has the following responsibilities:

(a) To adopt necessary rules and develop guidelines to administer the program;

(b) To collect and manage repayments from participants who do not meet their service obligations;

(c) To accept grants and donations from public and private sources for the program;

(d) To publicize the program; and

(e) To select eligible students to receive conditional grants based on an application process and selection criteria established by the University of Washington. The selection criteria must emphasize whether the eligible student has financial need, is a first-generation college student, is from a traditionally underrepresented population, and the student's commitment to public service, including a commitment to working in underserved communities for which recruitment of credentialed professionals is difficult.

(3) To receive a conditional grant, the recipient must maintain enrollment and make satisfactory progress toward completion of his or her graduate degree.

(4) The University of Washington may award conditional grants to eligible students from the funds appropriated to the university for this purpose, from any private donations, or any other funds given to the university for this program. The amount of the conditional grant awarded to a participant may not exceed the difference between the fees charged for the participant's public service fee-based, self-sustaining graduate degree program and a similar graduate degree program's in-state tuition and fees at the University of Washington. If there is no similar tuition-based program at the University of Washington, a similar program at a peer public institution of higher education should be used.

(5) A participant in the conditional grant program incurs an obligation to repay the conditional grant, as a loan with interest and an equalization fee, unless:

(a) He or she is employed in a public service field in Washington for five years following graduation, under rules adopted by the University of Washington; or

(b) He or she receives the conditional grant in the form of a research assistantship or teaching assistantship with an applicable department at the University of Washington in a similar field as their graduate degree. A research assistantship or teaching assistantship funded under this program is subject to any collective bargaining agreements between graduate students and the University of Washington.

(6) In developing the repayment requirements for a conditional grant that is converted into a loan, the terms and conditions of the loan must follow the interest rate and repayment terms of the federal direct subsidized loan program. In addition, the University of Washington must consider the following repayment schedule:

(a) For less than one year of service in a public service career, the loan obligation is eighty-five percent of the conditional grant the student received, plus interest and an equalization fee;

(b) For less than two years of service in a public service career, the loan obligation is seventy percent of the conditional grant the student received, plus interest and an equalization fee;

(c) For less than three years of service in a public service career, the loan obligation is fifty-five percent of the conditional grant the student received, plus interest and an equalization fee;

(d) For less than four years of service in a public service career, the loan obligation is forty percent of the conditional grant the student received, plus interest and an equalization fee;

(e) For less than five years of service in a public service career, the loan obligation is twenty-five percent of the conditional grant the student received, plus interest and an equalization fee.

(7) The University of Washington is responsible for collection of repayments made under this section and shall exercise due diligence in such collection, maintaining all necessary records to ensure that maximum repayments are made. Collection and servicing of repayments under this section shall be pursued using the full extent of the law, including wage garnishment if necessary. The University of Washington is responsible for forgiving all or parts of such repayments under the criteria established in this section and shall maintain all necessary records of forgiven payments.

(8) The public service graduate degree conditional grant account is created in the custody of the state treasurer. An appropriation is not required for expenditures of funds from the account. The account is not subject to allotment procedures under chapter 43.88 RCW except for moneys used for program administration. The University of Washington shall deposit in the account all moneys received for the public service graduate degree conditional grant program. The account shall be self-sustaining and consist of funds appropriated by the legislature for the public service graduate degree conditional grant program, private contributions to the program, and receipts from participant repayments from the public service graduate degree conditional grant program. Expenditures from the account may be used solely for conditional grants to participants in the public service graduate degree conditional grant program established by this section and costs associated with program administration by the University of Washington. Disbursements from the account may be made only on the authorization of the University of Washington.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The sum of two million dollars, or as much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019, from the general fund to the University of Washington for the purposes of section 7 of this act.

**--- END ---**