

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2037

As of March 23, 2017

Title: An act relating to student services for students with disabilities.

Brief Description: Reauthorizing the work group concerned with removing obstacles for higher education students with disabilities.

Sponsors: House Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Frame, Haler, Ryu, Pollet, Stambaugh, Kagi, Kilduff, Tarleton, Fitzgibbon, Jinkins, Bergquist and McDonald).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/07/17, 97-0.

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 3/23/17.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Extends the expiration date of the Disabilities Services Transfer workgroup and requires the workgroup to continue working on a plan to remove obstacles for students with disabilities.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Staff: Evan Klein (786-7483)

Background: Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities must be provided as appropriate for all aspects of college and university life.

In 2016, the Legislature directed the Council of Presidents (COP) to convene a workgroup to develop a plan for removing obstacles for students with disabilities. The workgroup included the following:

- representatives from the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges, four-year institutions, Washington Student Achievement Council, and statewide student associations; and
- at least two students with disabilities selected by student associations.

The workgroup's plan focused on standardizing medical documentation requirements, standardizing intake and review procedures, and developing best practices for institutions to

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provide outreach to students. The workgroup met six times during the interim, conducted a student survey, and, among other things, developed best practices that focus on different stages of the transfer process. The COP provided the Legislature with a report in December 2016, outlining the workgroup process, student survey, disability services transfer best practices and recommendations for future work.

The workgroup is set to expire on August 1, 2017.

Summary of Bill: The expiration date of the workgroup is extended to August 1, 2018. The workgroup must continue developing a plan that focuses on removing obstacles for students with disabilities. The workgroup's plan must also focus on addressing changing methods of delivering course content, availability of course materials in an accessible manner, and the supplemental course material provided by third parties.

The COP must provide the plan to the Higher Education committees of the Legislature by December 31, 2017.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The Legislature passed a bill last year after students flagged an issue that their colleagues with disabilities were hitting red tape in the higher education system. For many students, there are issues with getting disability accommodations at the beginning of a school year following transfer between institutions. There are also costs associated with getting new doctor's notes and forms when a student transfers schools. The workgroup made a lot of progress over the past year, but ran out of time and was unable to complete its work. The student disability services process is difficult for students to get started. The process for accommodations when transferring currently takes multiple weeks, and often leaves students without services at the beginning of the quarter. The hope is that continuing the workgroup will allow for the completion of a common release form.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Noel Frame, Prime Sponsor; Noah Seidel, Self Advocates in Leadership; Cody Eccles, Council of Presidents; Anna Nepomuceno, Associated Students University of WA Tacoma; Elissa Goss, WA Student Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.