

HB 1385 - DIGEST

Finds that the system of public higher education in Washington state is at a crossroads. Demographic and economic pressures place competing demands on policymakers and on colleges and universities. Increasing numbers of students are demanding access to workforce training and baccalaureate and advanced degree programs. Businesses are demanding highly qualified workers and technological advancements gained through university research. At the same time, taxpayers expect policymakers to set priorities and maximize use of public resources.

Declares an intent to articulate a strategic direction for public higher education on issues of access, affordability, service delivery, and accountability that will guide coordinated decision making on policies, operating budgets, and capital plans. It is further the legislature's intent to provide the management tools and resources necessary to implement the strategic direction. Additional investment in higher education is needed, but the public deserves assurance that such an investment is based on a clear plan and will be carefully managed with specific expectations and measurable outcomes.