

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1986

As Reported by House Committee On:
Higher Education

Title: An act relating to peer mentoring.

Brief Description: Authorizing a peer mentoring pilot program at Western Washington University and a community or technical college.

Sponsors: Representatives Hasegawa, Anderson, Wallace, White and Sells.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 2/17/09 [DPA].

**Brief Summary of Amended Bill
(As Amended by House)**

- Establishes a pilot mentoring project at Western Washington University (WWU).
- Requires WWU and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges to identify a community or technical college to participate in the pilot project.
- Requires the Higher Education Coordinating Board to award grants to participating institutions from the State Work Study Program.
- Requires that the participating institutions submit a preliminary report to the Legislature by December 1, 2010, and a final report on December 1, 2011.
- Requires the pilot projects to be implemented within existing resources.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Wallace, Chair; Sells, Vice Chair; Anderson, Ranking Minority Member; Angel, Carlyle, Driscoll, Haler, Hasegawa and White.

Staff: Andi Smith (786-7304)

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Background:

Definition.

Mentoring is defined as a sustained relationship between a youth and an adult or an older youth. Through continued involvement, the adult or older student offers support, guidance, and assistance as the younger person goes through a difficult period, faces new challenges, faces academic challenges, or works through family and other social problems. In particular, where parents are either unavailable or unable to provide responsible guidance for their children, mentors can play a critical role.

Growth in Mentoring Programs.

The number of mentoring programs has grown dramatically in recent years. This popularity results in part from compelling testimonials by people - youth and adults alike - who have themselves benefited from the positive influence of an older person who helped them endure social, academic, family, or personal crises.

How does a Mentoring Program Work?

Mentoring programs are established to match a suitable adult or older youth - the mentor - with a younger person. Potential mentors are recruited from various sources including high schools, colleges and universities, professional, and religious communities, as well as neighborhood citizens. Nominations for mentors are sought formally through a structured program and recruiting process and informally through flyers, posters, mailings, and word-of-mouth. Appropriately matching mentors with younger students is a key component of most programs. Matching can be done formally and informally through interviews, personal profiles, comparative interest inventories, and get-acquainted sessions. In some cases, mentoring occurs in a group setting in which groups of younger students are matched with a small group of older students or adults.

Research.

While research on the effects of mentoring is scarce, some studies and program evaluations do support positive claims. In general terms, findings indicate that mentored students have much higher career goals, suggesting that the mentoring process may have triggered a greater concern for the future among the mentored students. Results have also shown that mentored students were doing better academically, on average, than students without mentors.

Summary of Amended Bill:

Western Washington University must establish a mentoring pilot project in partnership with a community or technical college identified by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. The goals of the mentoring program include: (1) encourage elementary students to complete high school and pursue college; (2) provide positive role models; and (3) develop a model that is scalable. The pilot project must be implemented within existing resources.

In establishing the pilot project, institutions must:

- recruit college students to serve as mentors and identify an elementary school or schools;
- develop a curriculum to train mentors;
- solicit grants, awards, and gifts;
- develop appropriate outcome measures;
- provide community outreach and publicity of the program; and
- submit two reports to the Legislature; the first preliminary report is due by December 1, 2010, and the final report is due December 1, 2011.

The Higher Education Coordinating Board must make grants to participating institutions from the State Work Study Program.

Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The Higher Education Coordinating Board, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, and Western Washington University must implement the pilot project within existing resources.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) There is a lot of talk about "filling the pipeline" into higher education and decreasing the number of students who are leaking out. Elementary age students whose parents didn't go to college, whose friends are pressuring them to go in a different direction, and who lack positive role models need someone to "push back" against these forces. The project aims to encourage that type of public service and put role models in the communities and classrooms to serve as an example. State Work Study dollars are used as a tool to facilitate the placement. The community and technical colleges are glad to be included. Staff have already had conversations with local colleges and all have indicated an interest. Whatcom Community College has already started a mentoring program, so this may serve as a basic foundation for continued growth. The students of WWU also support the bill. The students are happy to participate in the local community and want to encourage more students to go to college and it can also benefit them personally. The HECB also supports the bill. A similar idea came out of the strategic master plan. The HECB would manage the program in a similar manner to the community service projects and act as the fiscal agent. The wife of WWU's president, Cyndie Shephard, has volunteered to lead this up, as she did in leading a very similar program in Wisconsin for roughly five years before coming to Washington. She will do private fundraising for program supplies and will donate her time. Thus, WWU does not anticipate any general fund state costs.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Hasegawa, prime sponsor; Cynthia Torres-Jimenez, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; Morgan Holmgren, Associated Students of Western Washington University; Rochelle Sharpe, Higher Education Coordinating Board; and Sherry Burkey, Western Washington University.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.