

SENATE BILL REPORT

2SHB 1946

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Higher Education & Workforce Development, March 24, 2009

Title: An act relating to higher education online technology.

Brief Description: Regarding higher education online technology.

Sponsors: House Committee on Education Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Carlyle, Anderson, Wallace, Angel, White, Schmick, Hasegawa, Goodman, Sullivan, Haigh, Hudgins, Kenney and Maxwell).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/06/09, 95-0.

Committee Activity: Higher Education & Workforce Development: 3/24/09 [DP-WM].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Kilmer, Chair; Jarrett, Vice Chair; Becker, Ranking Minority Member; Hewitt, Jacobsen, Kastama, McAuliffe, Pflug, Shin and Stevens.

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

Background: The Technology Transformation Taskforce (Taskforce) of the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) conducted an 18-month analysis to identify ways to improve education through the effective use of technology. It also analyzed the community and technical college system's successes and mistakes in the deployment of information technology during the past 25 years. The Taskforce issued a report in 2008 that dealt with three major areas of technology deployment: student learning, student services, and administration. In all three areas, the Taskforce found a need for greater uniformity across the 34 community and technical colleges in the system and within the broader P-20 education system. This plan also recommended a shift from locally-developed software and hosting services.

Summary of Bill: All institutions of higher education are encouraged to use common online learning technologies, including those currently managed by the SBCTC. For those institutions that opt in, the SBCTC will adjust current licenses to accommodate the additional schools and convene a workgroup to determine a shared fee structure.

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.

The Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) convenes a workgroup to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and quality of education relative to the use of technology. The group includes representatives from each of the public baccalaureate institutions, and six community or technical colleges: two faculty members from four-year institutions; two faculty members from community and technical colleges; and one representative each from the HECB, the SBCTC, the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, the Department of Information Services, and the Council of Presidents.

The group must (1) investigate efforts in other states regarding online learning technologies, personalized online student services, integrated administrative tools, shared library resources, methods for sharing digital content, methods for pooling and sharing enrollments in online classes, and methods for ensuring quality of online programs and classes; (2) develop a process and timeline for implementing the recommendations; (3) focus on statewide capability and standards; (4) identify evaluation measures; (5) conduct a comprehensive independent audit of existing Information Technology resources currently being used; (6) recommend strategies to reduce duplication, increase quality, and increase student access; and (7) recommend governance and funding models. A preliminary report is due to the Legislature by December 1, 2009, and a final report by December 1, 2010.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Students want more distance-learning opportunities. Online learning provides flexibility and an enhanced quality of life at an economical price. We have not been strategic about how we spend our technology dollars. There is a great deal of value in developing common systems. Our system needs to adapt to the changing world. This effort aligns with the HECB strategic master plan and the SBCTC strategic technology plan. The faculty now support this effort because faculty involvement is provided to add balance.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Carlyle, prime sponsor; Bob Billings, HECB; Cable Green, SBCTC; Wendy Rader-Konofalski, WEA.