
Higher Education Committee

ESSB 5133

Brief Description: Concerning a review of higher education costs.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Senators Bailey, Baumgartner, Kohl-Welles and Frockt).

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill

- Requires the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) to conduct a review of higher education costs at the state universities, regional universities, and The Evergreen State College.
- Requires the JLARC to report its findings to the Legislature by January 2016.

Hearing Date: 3/17/15

Staff: Megan Mulvihill (786-7304).

Background:

Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee.

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) is a committee comprised of an equal number of House of Representatives and Senate members supported by non-partisan staff that conduct performance audits, program evaluations, sunset reviews, and analyses of government programs and operations. The Legislature can mandate reviews, and the JLARC uses Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards to conduct reviews.

Education Research and Data Center.

The Education Research and Data Center (ERDC) was established by the Legislature within the Office of Financial Management (OFM) to conduct analyses of early learning, K-12, and higher education programs. The ERDC works in collaboration with partner agencies and the Legislative Evaluation and Accountability Program. The ERDC maintains the dashboard, which contains various data and statistics on the state's public, four-year institutions.

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.

Global Challenge States.

The Legislature uses the Global Challenge (GC) States to compare Washington to. The list of GC States is determined by the new economy index published by the Progressive Policy Institute, which ranks states based on indicators of their potential to compete in the new economy. The list is reviewed every five years by the OFM to determine if it is still appropriate. The Legislature uses the sixtieth percentile of resident undergraduate tuition at similar institutions of higher education in the GC States as a limit for Washington resident undergraduate tuition levels. The Legislature also uses the sixtieth percentile of total per-student funding for comparable institutions of higher education in the GC States as a goal for state funding.

Summary of Bill:

The JLARC must conduct a review of higher education costs at the state universities, the regional universities, and The Evergreen State College. The review must describe the available cost data for each institution and for students over the most recent 20-year period, including the costs of the following:

- research;
- faculty and staff salaries;
- administration;
- health care and benefits;
- capital;
- student services;
- textbooks; and
- student housing.

The review must use information already available, report where there are gaps in the information, and compare whether the data is available for institutions and students in the GC States. The institutions of higher education and the ERDC must provide data and staff support for the review.

The JLARC must issue a report to the Legislature by January 2016. The Act expires July 1, 2016.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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