

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 6626

As Reported by House Committee On:
Higher Education

Title: An act relating to creating a work group on accelerated baccalaureate degree programs.

Brief Description: Creating a work group on accelerated baccalaureate degree programs.

Sponsors: Senators Bailey, Frockt, Baumgartner, Liias and McAuliffe.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 2/19/16, 2/24/16 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes a work group to develop best practices and make recommendations for promoting students' ability to earn baccalaureate degrees in three years.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Hansen, Chair; Pollet, Vice Chair; Zeiger, Ranking Minority Member; Haler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Frame, Hargrove, Holy, Reykdal, Sells, Stambaugh, Tarleton and Van Werven.

Staff: Trudes Tango (786-7384).

Background:

Some public and private colleges and universities offer students the opportunity to obtain a baccalaureate degree in three years. There are various models for accelerated degree programs. Some models rely on prior learning credits earned during high school through programs such as Advanced Placement and Running Start. Other models require enrollment in summer courses and taking the maximum credits allowed per term.

In 2011 the Legislature authorized state universities, regional universities, and The Evergreen State College to develop accelerated baccalaureate degree programs that will allow students

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.

to obtain baccalaureate degrees in three years without attending summer classes or enrolling in more than a full-time class load during the regular academic year. The state universities, regional universities, and The Evergreen State College must report on their plans for the accelerated degree programs to the Washington Student Achievement Council.

Summary of Bill:

The "Degree in Three" work group is created and includes one representative from each of the regional universities and The Evergreen State College. The representatives must be selected by the institutions they represent. The work group may invite representatives from other public and private institutions of higher education and agencies.

The work group's purpose is to:

- develop best practices to promote students earning baccalaureate degrees within three years;
- identify challenges or obstacles preventing wider adoption of accelerated degree programs;
- evaluate programs in other states; and
- develop recommendations to increase the rate of students achieving baccalaureate degrees within three years.

The work group must report its findings and recommendations to the Legislature by December 31, 2016.

The provision creating the work group expires August 1, 2017.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Dual credit programs are the original accelerated degree programs. Now there are also competency based models. This bill will allow the institutions to collectively examine what challenges exist for accelerated degree programs and what is happening nationally. Students who graduate more quickly get a head start on their careers. The 2011 law excluded programs that require students to take summer courses or more than full time course loads. There is no financial aid for students taking summer courses.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Steve DuPont, Central Washington University; and Joe Timmons, Western Washington University.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.