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**HOUSE BILL 1735**

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**State of Washington 66th Legislature 2019 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Pollet, Sells, Valdez, and Bergquist

AN ACT Relating to increasing student success; adding new sections to chapter 28B.50 RCW; adding new sections to chapter 28B.40 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 28B.10 RCW; adding new sections to chapter 28B.35 RCW; adding new sections to chapter 28B.20 RCW; creating a new section; and making appropriations.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature recognizes that evidence-based investments in student success are essential for the completion of degrees or certificates by many students. Such investments promote timely graduation, which is a cost benefit to the student who pays less tuition and can enter the workforce faster, and to the state, which has reduced operating costs. College degrees and workforce certification programs are crucial for ending intergenerational poverty. College graduates earn more over their lifetime than high school graduates, are less dependent on social programs, and have more civic engagement.

The legislature also recognizes that student success is often the product of a good support system. The legislature finds that there is very strong evidence that student retention term-to-term and year-to-year significantly increases when students have access to orientation programs, enroll in student success courses, and have access to academic advisors, peer tutors, career counselors, and mental health counselors. Programs and resources like these help students navigate the transition to postsecondary education and introduce students to the resources available to help them succeed throughout their higher education experience. Therefore, the legislature intends to support the public universities' and colleges' budget requests to increase these types of student supports and student success programs, and to make an ongoing commitment to evidence-based student support and success programs.

The legislature also finds that for college promise programs to succeed in enabling students to obtain opportunity creating workforce training certifications and degrees, students need both financial support and evidence-based student supports, such as orientation programs, mentoring, advising, counseling, and behavioral health supports.

The legislature acknowledges that every student attending a community or technical college has a right to the support needed to be successful. The legislature finds that too few community and technical college students complete their degree or certificate. Three years after starting, four in ten students leave a community or technical college with no certificate or degree. However, guided pathways is an integrated, institution-wide approach to student success based on a model that provides clear, structured, educational experiences for students with four elements: Clarify paths to students' end goals, help students choose and enter a pathway, help students stay on path, and ensure that students are learning.

Guided pathways originally began in the fall of 2016 in Washington with six pilot colleges funded with a grant. During the 2017-2019 biennium, the legislature provided three million dollars in funding to support the guided pathways initiative at six additional community and technical colleges. The legislature has previously supported guided pathways and intends to continue to do so, as early results indicate the model is improving student success. Pierce College, which is furthest along in its implementation of guided pathways, has doubled graduation rates. In addition, Pierce College faculty used data showing wide ranges of student success across different sections of the same class to revamp curriculum. As a result, the average student success rate in English 101 increased by nearly ten percent. South Puget Sound Community College found that students who took the enhanced student success class were about fourteen percent more likely to continue their education into the following year than students who did not take the class. South Seattle College saw a one hundred twenty-six percent increase in students receiving support services. This data indicates that guided pathways is having a positive effect on student success, and the legislature intends to support the full implementation of the model at each of the state's community and technical colleges.

The legislature recognizes that The Evergreen State College's fall-to-fall retention rate for first-time, first-year students is lower than the college's overall retention rate. Current student supports offered at The Evergreen State College for first-year, first-time students include an orientation week, advisors, and peer mentors that are assigned to some first-year academic programs. However, The Evergreen State College lacks a comprehensive, holistic approach for first-year, first-time students. Therefore, the legislature intends to support the implementation of The Evergreen State College's first-year experience program. The legislature recognizes that the program's approach to interdisciplinary team-teaching and its integration of best practices in student supports with academic curriculum is an innovate approach consistent with The Evergreen State College's academic structure. In addition, the legislature intends to support The Evergreen State College's expansion of precollege immersion programs. Both student support initiatives complement each other to work towards increasing first-year, first-time student persistence and completion rates, while ensuring equitable outcomes for all students.

The legislature also recognizes that mental health is a challenge that many students confront. A recent national survey that included students from Washington universities and colleges, found that four out of five students reported emotional distress that impacted their academic performance and one in three students have suffered from depression. Five percent of the students surveyed had a plan to end their life. Therefore, the legislature intends to support increased behavioral health services at the institutions of higher education, in addition to increasing awareness of resources available to students experiencing mental health crises by adding resource information to student identification cards.

The legislature also recognizes that an unintended consequence of reduced state support for the research universities, coupled with increased tuition, has led to fifty-five percent of all graduate and professional degree programs at the University of Washington becoming fee-based, self-sustaining programs. These fee-based, self-sustaining graduate programs do not offer lower in-state tuition to Washington residents and may not be eligible for certain financial aid programs. The increased cost of these fee-based, self-sustaining graduate programs leads to decreased diversity, increased student loan debt, and a decrease in the availability of students willing to enter traditionally low-compensated occupations, such as public service professions in the areas of public health, librarianship, information services, and social work, or physician assistants in the University of Washington MEDEX program. Therefore, the legislature intends for the public service graduate conditional grant program to provide a long-term reinvestment that will enable Washington residents to obtain graduate degrees necessary for public service careers.

**PART I**

**STATE BOARD FOR COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGES**

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28B.50 RCW to read as follows:

(1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the college board shall fully implement the guided pathways model at each community and technical college in the state. As a part of the guided pathways model, each college shall have a mandatory, one-quarter student success course for all first-time students to be taken during the student's first quarter at the college. The student success course must be based on evidence and experience at other postsecondary institutions that have successfully increased retention and completion for student populations similar to the populations served at each community and technical college. The college board, in consultation with the Washington student achievement council and based on research from the Washington state institute for public policy, the western interstate commission for higher education, or other appropriate experts, shall approve each community and technical college's student success course.

(2) Three years after the first cohorts of students complete the student success courses developed under this section, the college board shall conduct an evaluation of the efficacy of the courses. The college board shall contract with independent experts familiar with similar student success programs, such as the Washington institute for public policy or the Western interstate commission for higher education, to conduct the evaluation.

**PART II**

**THE EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE**

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28B.40 RCW to read as follows:

Beginning with the 2019-20 academic year, The Evergreen State College shall implement the Evergreen first-year experience program for all first-time, first-year students. The Evergreen first-year experience program must include a comprehensive, engaging approach to faculty and staff interdisciplinary teaching that uses best practices in student supports in an effort to improve student persistence and completion.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28B.40 RCW to read as follows:

(1) Beginning with the 2019-20 academic year, The Evergreen State College shall implement precollege immersion programs for first-year, first-time students that introduce students to The Evergreen State College pedagogy and experience, while familiarizing students with advisors, academic support services, and cocurricular activities.

(2) To support the implementation of the precollege immersion programs, The Evergreen State College shall invest in an integrated planning and intensive advising technology platform that enables faculty and staff to identify and intervene with students at risk of attrition.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28B.40 RCW to read as follows:

The Washington state institute for public policy shall conduct an evaluation of the Evergreen first-year experience program with a preliminary two-year report due to the legislature and the Washington student achievement council by December 1, 2021, and a final four-year report due to the legislature and the Washington student achievement council by December 1, 2023. The evaluation must address whether the program is improving fall-to-fall retention for first-year, first-time students and is improving overall persistence and completion, broken out by demographics. In addition, the evaluation must include any lessons learned about how the program could be expanded to other institutions of higher education.

**PART III**

**BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES**

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28B.50 RCW to read as follows:

(1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, but not to exceed three hundred thousand dollars, the college board shall contract with an entity with expertise in higher education and behavioral health to develop a plan for all of the community and technical colleges as defined in RCW 28B.50.030 to offer behavioral health services. The plan must include a description of:

(a) Current behavioral health resources available to students at community and technical colleges, including both on-campus and off-campus resources;

(b) The capacity of current behavioral health resources and areas where services should be expanded, added, or modified;

(c) Recommendations on how to best provide behavioral health counseling to students at each community and technical college; and

(d) A plan detailing how the community and technical colleges can implement the recommendations for expanding behavioral health resources to students.

(2) The college board shall submit the plan under subsection (1) of this section to the appropriate committees of the legislature by December 1, 2020, and in accordance with the reporting requirements under RCW 43.01.036.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28B.10 RCW to read as follows:

To the extent practical, the institutions of higher education shall add the following information to the back of newly issued student identification cards beginning with the fall quarter or semester of the 2019-20 academic year:

(1) National, state, or local suicide hotlines;

(2) Emergency contact numbers; and

(3) Information about behavioral health counseling services that are available.

**PART IV**

**CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY**

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28B.35 RCW to read as follows:

(1) For the 2019-20 academic year, Central Washington University shall hire additional mental health counselors, case managers, a psychiatrist, a faculty lecturer, and create additional graduate assistantships to improve the capacity and efficiency of mental health services provided to students. The graduate assistantships and faculty lecturer shall be used to expand the capacity of Central Washington University's community counseling and psychological assessment center, which provides services for individuals and families while training mental health professionals.

(2) Central Washington University shall work with county public health agencies to develop a public information campaign to help members of the public understand what behavioral and mental health services are available and describes the challenges and symptoms students and the public may experience. Central Washington University shall produce explicit and easy to follow guides that explain how to better access needed behavioral and mental health services and what steps are involved to access these services.

**PART V**

**EASTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY**

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28B.35 RCW to read as follows:

Eastern Washington University shall train students who were successful in math and science classes to be peer mentors and provide supplemental instruction. The peer mentors must attend classes and hold office hours for students enrolled in the classes.

**PART VI**

**WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY**

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28B.35 RCW to read as follows:

Western Washington University shall implement an enhanced career services model with embedded, integrated, and specialized services to increase student success and completion. The enhanced career services model shall include detailed employment outcomes and workforce data that highlights potential career paths to prospective and new students, additional academic and career counselors to be connected with students at orientation, embedded career counseling throughout a student's academic program, dedicated career specialists to work with students to identify appropriate coursework and internship opportunities to meet students' career goals, and ongoing career support after graduation.

**PART VII**

**UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON PUBLIC SERVICE GRADUATE DEGREE CONDITIONAL GRANT PROGRAM**

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28B.20 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The public service graduate degree conditional grant program is created at the University of Washington. The University of Washington shall administer the program and has the following responsibilities:

(a) To adopt necessary rules and develop guidelines to administer the program;

(b) To collect and manage repayments from participants who do not meet their service obligations;

(c) To solicit and accept grants and donations from public and private sources for the program;

(d) To publicize the program; and

(e) To select eligible students to receive conditional grants based on an application process and selection criteria established by the University of Washington. The selection criteria must emphasize the following:

(i) Whether the student:

(A) Has financial need;

(B) Is a first generation college student; and

(C) Is from a traditionally underrepresented population;

(ii) The student's commitment to public service, whether in a public service field in Washington, for a federal agency serving underserved populations abroad in lesser developed nations, or for a not-for-profit organization based in Washington serving underserved communities in lesser developed nations; and

(iii) The student's commitment to working in underserved communities for which recruitment of credentialed professionals is difficult.

(2) To receive a conditional grant, the recipient must maintain enrollment and make satisfactory progress toward completion of his or her graduate degree.

(3) The University of Washington may award conditional grants to eligible students from any appropriated funds, private donations, or any other funds given to the University of Washington for the program. The amount of the conditional grant awarded to a participant may not exceed the difference between the fees charged for the participant's public service fee-based, self-sustaining graduate degree program and a similar graduate degree program's in-state tuition and fees at the University of Washington. If there is no similar tuition-based program at the University of Washington, a similar program at a peer public institution of higher education should be used.

(4) A participant incurs an obligation to repay the conditional grant, as a loan with interest and an equalization fee, unless the participant is employed:

(a) In a public service field in Washington;

(b) With a federal agency serving underserved populations abroad in lesser developed nations;

(c) With a not-for-profit organization based in Washington serving populations in lesser developed nations; or

(d) In a research assistantship or teaching assistantship with an applicable department at the University of Washington in a similar field as the participant's graduate degree while receiving the conditional scholarship. A research assistantship or teaching assistantship funded under the program is subject to any collective bargaining agreements between graduate students and the University of Washington.

(5) In developing the repayment requirements for a conditional grant that is converted into a loan, the terms and conditions of the loan must follow the interest rate and repayment terms of the federal direct subsidized loan program. In addition, the University of Washington must consider the following repayment schedule:

(a) For less than one year of service in a public service career, the loan obligation is eighty-five percent of the conditional grant the student received, plus interest and an equalization fee;

(b) For less than two years of service in a public service career, the loan obligation is seventy percent of the conditional grant the student received, plus interest and an equalization fee;

(c) For less than three years of service in a public service career, the loan obligation is fifty-five percent of the conditional grant the student received, plus interest and an equalization fee;

(d) For less than four years of service in a public service career, the loan obligation is forty percent of the conditional grant the student received, plus interest and an equalization fee;

(e) For less than five years of service in a public service career, the loan obligation is twenty-five percent of the conditional grant the student received, plus interest and an equalization fee.

(6) The University of Washington is responsible for collection of repayments made under this section and shall exercise due diligence in such collection, maintaining all necessary records to ensure that maximum repayments are made. Collection and servicing of repayments under this section shall be pursued using the full extent of the law, including wage garnishment if necessary. The University of Washington is responsible for forgiving all or parts of such repayments under the criteria established in this section and shall maintain all necessary records of forgiven payments.

(7) The definitions in this subsection apply throughout this section unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(a) "Conditional grant" means a loan that is forgiven in whole or in part in exchange for service in a public service career in Washington.

(b) "Eligible student" means a student who is accepted into a public service fee-based, self-sustaining graduate program, is a resident student as defined in RCW 28B.15.012 and 28B.15.013, and has a declared intention to complete an approved public service fee-based, self-sustaining graduate program.

(c) "Equalization fee" means the additional amount added to the conditional grant under this section to equate the debt to that which the student would have incurred if he or she would have received a loan through the federal direct loan program.

(d) "Forgiven," "to forgive," or "forgiveness" means to render service in a public service career in the state of Washington in lieu of monetary repayment.

(e) "Participant" means an eligible student who has received a conditional grant under this section.

(f) "Public service" includes employment with a public agency, public entity, or a nonprofit organization, and careers in the fields of librarianship, information services, public health, social work, and research and teaching in public service programs.

(g) "Satisfied" means paid in full.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28B.20 RCW to read as follows:

(1) Any funds appropriated by the legislature for the public service graduate degree conditional grant program, or any other public or private funds intended for conditional grants under this program, must be placed in the account created by this section.

(2) The public service graduate degree conditional grant account is created in the custody of the state treasurer. All receipts from the public service graduate degree conditional grant program must be deposited in the account. Expenditures from the account may be used only for the public service graduate degree conditional grant program. Only the University of Washington may authorize expenditures from the account. The account is subject to the allotment procedures under chapter 43.88 RCW, but an appropriation is not required for expenditures.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1)(a) The sum of thirty-seven million dollars, or as much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020, from the general fund to the state board for community and technical colleges for the purposes of section 2 of this act.

(b) The sum of thirty seven-million dollars, or as much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021, from the general fund to the state board for community and technical colleges for the purposes of section 2 of this act.

(2)(a) The sum of three hundred forty-five thousand five hundred dollars, or as much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020, from the general fund to The Evergreen State College for the purposes of section 3 of this act.

(b) The sum of three hundred forty-five thousand five hundred dollars, or as much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021, from the general fund to The Evergreen State College for the purposes of section 3 of this act.

(3)(a) The sum of three hundred seventy-five thousand dollars, or as much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020, from the general fund to The Evergreen State College for the purposes of section 4 of this act.

(b) The sum of three hundred seventy-five thousand dollars, or as much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021, from the general fund to The Evergreen State College for the purposes of section 4 of this act.

(4)(a) The sum of one million three hundred thousand dollars, or as much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020, from the general fund to Central Washington University for the purposes of section 8 of this act.

(b) The sum of one million two hundred forty-five thousand dollars, or as much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021, from the general fund to Central Washington University for the purposes of section 8 of this act.

(5)(a) The sum of one hundred sixty-five thousand dollars, or as much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020, from the general fund to Eastern Washington University for the purposes of section 9 of this act.

(b) The sum of one hundred seventy-one thousand dollars, or as much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021, from the general fund to Eastern Washington University for the purposes of section 9 of this act.

(6)(a) The sum of one million one hundred forty-three thousand dollars, or as much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020, from the general fund to Western Washington University for the purposes of section 10 of this act.

(b) The sum of one million one hundred two thousand dollars, or as much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021, from the general fund to Western Washington University for the purposes of section 10 of this act.

(7)(a) The sum of two hundred fifty thousand dollars, or as much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020, from the general fund to the University of Washington for the purposes of making initial public service graduate degree conditional grants under sections 11 and 12 of this act.

(b) The sum of five hundred fifty thousand dollars, or as much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021, from the general fund to the University of Washington for the purposes of making public service graduate degree conditional grants under sections 11 and 12 of this act.

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