

FINAL BILL REPORT

E2SSB 5227

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Concerning diversity, equity, inclusion, and antiracism training and assessments at institutions of higher education.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Randall, Nobles, Das, Lovelett, Wilson, C., Hasegawa, Hunt, Keiser, Kuderer, Lias, Nguyen and Stanford).

Senate Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Development
Senate Committee on Ways & Means
House Committee on College & Workforce Development
House Committee on Appropriations

Background: Washington State Public Institutions of Higher Education. There are six public baccalaureate institutions and 34 community and technical colleges (CTCs) that make up the public institutions of higher education (IHEs) in Washington State.

Summary: Professional Development for Faculty and Staff on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and Antiracism. A professional development program on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), and antiracism for faculty and staff is established at each public IHE.

Beginning with the 2022-23 academic year, each public IHE campus must provide a professional development program for faculty and staff with the purpose of eliminating structural racism against all races and promoting DEI. The program must also work to improve academic, social, and health and wellness outcomes for students from historically marginalized communities. The program must be developed in partnership with administration, faculty, staff, and student leadership. Efforts should be made to ensure the program is developed and delivered by individuals with innate and acquired experience in the field of DEI. The content framework of the professional development program must be posted on each institution's website.

The IHEs must create an evaluation for professional development participants. The evaluation must, at minimum, capture the participant's satisfaction, the degree learning

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

objectives were achieved, and how they will apply knowledge gained to their work.

All new faculty and staff must participate in the professional development program and submit an evaluation. Other faculty and staff may participate in the program as needed or required by their institution. Though only new employees are required to participate, each institution must develop a goal of at least 80 percent of all faculty and staff completing the professional development program every two years. Progress in attaining that goal must be included in a report to the Legislature. Part-time faculty and staff employed at more than one IHE may provide proof of completion of the professional development program from another IHE employer.

Beginning July 1, 2023, IHEs must share completed participant evaluations with either the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) or the Council of Presidents (COP). The SBCTC and COP will receive completed evaluations and pertinent information on the program. The SBCTC and COP must post a list of model standards and promising practices for professional development on each of their public websites.

Beginning in the 2024-25 academic year, 35 percent of tenured faculty and administrators at each public IHE must complete the professional development program every two years.

Campus Climate Assessments on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Each public IHE must conduct a campus climate assessment to understand the current state of DEI in the learning, working, and living environments on campus for students, faculty, and staff. The campus climate assessment must be conducted, at minimum, every five years. The assessment may include questions evaluating the prevalence of discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment, and retaliation on and off campus as well as evaluating students' knowledge of campus policies and procedures regarding sex discrimination. The SBCTC may develop a model assessment for use by the CTCs.

Every public IHE must conduct annual listening and feedback sessions on DEI for the entire campus community during periods between climate assessments and must, to the extent possible, compensate students for their participation in those sessions. The design of each assessment must involve diversity officers, faculty, staff, and students. The results of the campus climate assessment shall be used to inform the professional development and subsequent student DEI and antiracism programs.

Campus climate assessment and listening and feedback session findings must be reported to the SBCTC and COP annually beginning July 1, 2022. Public IHEs must publish the results of either the campus climate assessment or the listening and feedback sessions annually.

Student Training Program on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and Antiracism. Beginning in the 2024-25 academic year, the public IHEs must provide a program on DEI and antiracism for all students using data and promising practices from the faculty professional development program and campus climate assessments. The purpose of the program is to

eliminate structural racism against all races and promote DEI while improving outcomes for students from historically marginalized communities. Beginning with the 2025-26 academic year, program participation is only required for new students or those who have transferred to an IHE and have not yet participated in a required DEI and anti-racism program. Students may opt out of the student DEI and antiracism program if they can self-attest to participating in a similar program at an IHE within the previous five years. Only degree-seeking students are required to participate in the program. The content framework of the student program must be posted on each IHE website.

The SBCTC and COP must evaluate the student DEI and antiracism programs beginning in 2024 and post a list of model standards and promising practices for the student program on their public website.

Reporting. By December 31, 2024, and biennially thereafter, SBCTC and COP will each develop and submit a report on the professional development programs and campus climate assessments and annual listening and feedback sessions. The report must be submitted to the higher education committees of the Legislature. Beginning in 2026, the SBCTC and COP must include findings on the student DEI and antiracism programs in their biennial report.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	35	14	
House	67	31	(House amended)
Senate	32	17	(Senate concurred)

Effective: July 25, 2021