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HOUSE BILL 1303

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State of Washington                      64th Legislature                      2015 Regular Session

By Representatives Halpern, Pollet, Zeiger, and Bergquist

Read first time 01/16/15. Referred to Committee on Higher Education.

1            AN ACT Relating to a state four-year degree production incentive  
2 program; adding a new section to chapter 44.28 RCW; and adding a new  
3 chapter to Title 28B RCW.

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

5            NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 1.** It is the intent of the legislature to  
6 incentivize the production of certain higher education degrees by  
7 paying the regional universities and The Evergreen State College for  
8 producing these degrees. The legislature is particularly interested  
9 in incentivizing the production of degrees awarded to resident  
10 students who are low income, first generation, or who earn a degree  
11 in science, engineering, math, technology (STEM), or other high  
12 employer demand fields.

13            The legislature intends to distribute thirty million dollars of  
14 general fund—state moneys per year to the state four-year  
15 institutions of higher education based on certain degree production  
16 and completion metrics.

17            NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 2.** The degree production incentive program is  
18 created. The purpose of the program is to incentivize the regional  
19 universities and The Evergreen State College to increase the  
20 production of degrees awarded to resident undergraduate students who

1 are low income, first generation, or who earn a degree in science,  
2 engineering, math, technology (STEM), or other high employer demand  
3 fields.

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** The definitions in this section apply  
5 throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires  
6 otherwise.

7 (1) "First generation" means students whose parents did not  
8 achieve more than a high school diploma.

9 (2) "Low income" means students who are from low-income families  
10 as defined by the education data center in RCW 43.41.400.

11 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** (1) The degree production incentive account  
12 is created in the custody of the state treasurer to be used solely  
13 and exclusively for the degree production incentive program in this  
14 chapter.

15 (2) All receipts from funds appropriated by the legislature for  
16 the degree production incentive program must be deposited into the  
17 account.

18 (3) Expenditures from the account must be used only for degree  
19 production incentive purposes as identified in section 5 of this act  
20 and distributed based on a formula described in section 5 of this  
21 act.

22 (4) Only the executive director of the student achievement  
23 council or the executive director's designee may authorize  
24 expenditures from the account.

25 (5) The account is subject to allotment procedures under chapter  
26 43.88 RCW, but an appropriation is not required for expenditures.

27 (6) Any moneys remaining in the account at the end of the  
28 biennium must be accumulated and do not revert to the general fund.

29 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** Expenditures from the degree production  
30 incentive account must be used for the purpose of providing  
31 incentives to the regional universities and The Evergreen State  
32 College to meet degree production goals to increase:

33 (1) Undergraduate degrees awarded;

34 (2) Undergraduate degrees awarded in science, technology,  
35 engineering, and math (STEM), and high employer demand fields;

36 (3) Degrees awarded to low-income undergraduate students;

- 1 (4) Degrees awarded to first-generation undergraduate students;  
2 and  
3 (5) The acceptance rate of in-state students.

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** (1) The student achievement council must  
5 disburse annually degree production incentive moneys to each of the  
6 regional universities and The Evergreen State College, according to  
7 the total number of points earned by the institution in subsection  
8 (3) of this section. The moneys disbursed to an institution in one  
9 biennium under this section must be added to the base appropriation  
10 of that institution in each subsequent biennium.

- 11 (2) An institution of higher education earns one point:  
12 (a) For each undergraduate degree awarded;  
13 (b) For each undergraduate degree awarded in science, technology,  
14 engineering, and math (STEM), and high employer demand fields;  
15 (c) For each undergraduate degree awarded to a low-income  
16 student;  
17 (d) For each undergraduate degree awarded to a first-generation  
18 student.

19 (3) The total number of points earned by an institution of higher  
20 education must equal the sum of points earned by the institution  
21 under subsection (2) of this section multiplied by the acceptance  
22 rate of in-state students.

23 (4) The student achievement council shall use the data collected  
24 by education data center under RCW 43.41.400 for the higher education  
25 data dashboard under RCW 28B.77.090 to determine the total number of  
26 points earned by an institution for degree production incentive  
27 purposes under section 5 of this act.

28 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** A new section is added to chapter 44.28  
29 RCW to read as follows:

30 (1) The joint committee shall conduct an evaluation of the  
31 effectiveness of the degree production incentive program created in  
32 section 2 of this act in meeting its stated goals.

33 (2) The joint committee shall report to the appropriate  
34 committees of the legislature the results of its findings and any  
35 recommendations for changes to the program by December 1, 2016, and  
36 by December 1st each even year thereafter.

1        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 8.**    Sections 1 through 6 of this act  
2    constitute a new chapter in Title 28B RCW.

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