
SENATE BILL 6626

State of Washington 64th Legislature 2016 Regular Session

By Senators Bailey, Frockt, Baumgartner, and Lias

Read first time 02/01/16. Referred to Committee on Higher Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to creating a work group on accelerated
2 baccalaureate degree programs; creating new sections; and providing
3 an expiration date.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that university
6 students are increasingly taking on crippling levels of student debt
7 in order to graduate and enter the workforce. This debt hinders their
8 ability to succeed as young adults and seriously threatens their
9 futures and the state's economic potential. Further, the legislature
10 finds that one of the most effective ways of mitigating student debt
11 is to ensure that students graduate on time or earlier. The
12 legislature recognizes that providing students with greater access to
13 accelerated degree programs could greatly contribute to reducing time
14 to degree and ultimate student debt levels. Further, the legislature
15 finds that regional universities and The Evergreen State College are
16 an excellent testing ground for innovations in accelerated programs.

17 (2) Therefore, the legislature intends to create a work group to
18 study the benefits, challenges, and best practices surrounding
19 accelerated degree programs as a way of promoting their availability
20 and adoption.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The degree in three work group is
2 established.

3 (a) The work group shall include one representative from each of
4 Washington's regional universities as defined in RCW 28B.10.016 and
5 The Evergreen State College. Each representative shall be selected by
6 the institution he or she represents.

7 (b) The work group may invite, at its discretion, representatives
8 from other public and private Washington institutions of higher
9 education and agencies to provide advice and expertise.

10 (2) The purpose of the work group is to:

11 (a) Develop a set of institutional best practices to promote
12 students' ability to successfully graduate with a baccalaureate
13 degree within three years of entering a regional university or The
14 Evergreen State College;

15 (b) Identify challenges or obstacles that prevent wider adoption
16 of accelerated degree program options and university students from
17 participating in three-year or other accelerated programs;

18 (c) Evaluate how public and private institutions of higher
19 education in other states have engaged in accelerated baccalaureate
20 degree programs; and

21 (d) Develop recommendations that would effectively increase the
22 overall rate of students achieving their baccalaureate degree within
23 three years.

24 (3) The work group shall report to the legislature and the
25 institutions of higher education on its findings and recommendations
26 by December 31, 2016.

27 (4) This section expires August 1, 2017.

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