H-2065.1

SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1946

State of Washington 61st Legislature 2009 Regular Session

By House Higher Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Carlyle, Anderson, Wallace, Angel, White, Schmick, Hasegawa, Goodman, Sullivan, Haigh, Hudgins, Kenney, and Maxwell)

READ FIRST TIME 02/20/09.

AN ACT Relating to higher education online technology; adding a new section to chapter 28B.10 RCW; and creating new sections.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature recognizes that the state must educate more people to higher levels to adapt to the economic and social needs of the future. While our public colleges and universities have realized great success in helping students achieve their dreams, the legislature also recognizes that much more must be done to prepare current and future students for a twenty-first century economy. To raise the levels of skills and knowledge needed to sustain the state's economic prosperity and competitive position in a global environment, the public higher education system must reach out to every prospective student and citizen in unprecedented ways, with unprecedented focus.

To reach out to these citizens, the state must dismantle the barriers of geographic isolation, cost, and competing demands of work and family life. The state must create a more nimble system of learning that is student-centric, more welcoming of nontraditional and underserved students, easier to access and use, and more tailored to today's student needs and expectations.

Technology can play a key role in helping achieve this systemic goal. While only a decade ago access to personal computers was widely viewed a luxury, today computers, digital media, electronic information, and content have changed the nature of how students learn and instructors teach. This presents a vast, borderless opportunity to extend the reach and impact of the state's public educational institutions and educate more people to higher levels.

Each higher education institution and workforce program serves a unique group of students and as such, has customized its own technology solutions to meet its emerging needs. While local solutions may have served institutions of higher education in the past, paying for and operating multiple technology solutions, platforms, systems, models, agreements, and operational functionality for common applications and support services no longer serves students or the state.

Today's students access education differently. Rather than enrolling in one institution of higher education, staying two to four years and graduating, today's learners prefer a cafeteria approach; they often enroll in and move among multiple institutions - sometimes simultaneously. Rather than sitting in lecture halls taking notes, they may listen to podcasts of a lecture while grocery shopping or hold a virtual study group with classmates on a video chat room. They may prefer hybrid courses where part of their time is spent in the classroom and part is spent online. They prefer online access for commodity administrative services such as financial aid, admissions, transcript services, and more.

Institutions of higher education not only must rethink teaching and learning in a digital-networked world, but also must tailor their administrative and student services technologies to serve the mobile student who requires dynamic, customized information online and in real time. Because these relationships are changing so fast and so fundamentally, it is incumbent on the higher education system to transform its practices just as profoundly.

Therefore, the legislature intends to both study and implement its findings regarding how the state's public institutions of higher education can share core resources in instructional, including library, resources, student services, and administrative information technology resources, user help desk services, faculty professional development, and more. The study will examine how public institutions of higher

education can pursue a strategy of implementing single, shared, statewide commonly needed standards-based software, web hosting and support service solutions that are cost-effective, easily integrated, user-friendly, flexible, and constantly improving. The full range of applications that serve students, faculty, and administration shall be included. Expensive, proprietary, nonstandards-based customized applications, databases and services, and other resources that do not allow for the transparent sharing of information across institutions, agencies, and educational levels, including K-12, are inconsistent with the state's objective of educating more people to higher levels.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.10 RCW to read as follows:

All institutions of higher education are encouraged to use common online learning technologies including, but not limited to, existing learning management and web conferencing systems currently managed and governed by the state board for community and technical colleges; and share professional development materials and activities related to effective use of these tools. The state board for community and technical colleges may adjust existing vendor licenses to accommodate and provide enterprise services for any interested institutions of higher education. The common learning management system shall be designed in a way that allows for easy sharing of courses, learning objects, and other digital content among the institutions of higher education. Institutions of higher education may begin migration to these common systems immediately. The state board for community and technical colleges shall convene representatives from each four-year institution of higher education to develop a shared fee structure.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) The higher education coordinating board shall convene a higher education technology transformation task force to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and quality of education relative to the strategic and operational use of technology in public education.

(2) The task force shall be composed of one member from each public four-year institution of higher education, six members from the community and technical colleges, one faculty member from a four-year institution of higher education, one faculty member from a community or

technical college, and one member each from the state board for community and technical colleges, the higher education coordinating board, the workforce training and education coordinating board, the department of information services, and the council of presidents. The task force shall select a chair from its membership.

(3) The task force shall prepare a report that includes a plan to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and quality of public higher education relative to the strategic and operational use of technology in higher education.

(4) In developing the plan, the institutions of higher education and their partners, identified in this section, shall take the following actions:

(a) Investigate similar efforts, strategies, programs, and options in other states, of private providers of higher education in the state, and global consortia related to:

(i) Online learning technologies including but not limited to: Learning management, ePortfolio, web conferencing systems, and other education applications;

(ii) Personalized online student services including but not limited to: Recruitment, admissions, retention, advising, academic planning, course catalogs, transfer, and financial aid management;

(iii) Integrated online administrative tools including but not limited to: Student information management; financial management; payroll; human resources; and data collection, reporting, and analysis;

(iv) Sharing library resources including but not limited to: Copyrighted physical and e-books, and consolidated electronic journals and research database licensing and other models;

(v) Methods and open licensing options for effectively sharing digital content including but not limited to: Open courseware, open textbooks, open journals, and open learning objects;

(vi) Methods for pooling, coordinating, and otherwise more efficiently managing enrollments so colleges with extra enrollment space in online courses can easily and efficiently make those spaces available to students at other colleges, or to high school students through existing dual-credit programs, without economic, governance, or institutional penalty or disincentive from the provider or recipient institution;

(vii) Methods for ensuring online courses meet agreed upon instructional guidelines, policies, and quality, and methods for sharing these best practices to improve traditional courses' quality;

(b) Develop a process and timeline for the implementation of a statewide approach based on the investigation in (a) of this subsection;

(c) Focus on statewide capability and standards that enable the efficient use of common applications, web hosting services, user support, staff training, and consolidated software licenses and open educational resources;

(d) Identify the metrics that can be used to gauge success;

(e) Conduct a comprehensive audit of existing resources used by public institutions of higher education or agencies including but not limited to technology-related: Employees; infrastructure; application licenses and costs; web hosting facilities and services; digital content licenses; student, faculty, and administrative applications and services; and the amounts and uses of technology fees charged to students. The failure of the individual public institution of higher education or agency to fully, accurately, and thoroughly account for these resources and fees in detail shall expressly be stated in the task force report;

(f) Recommend strategies and specific tactics to: (i) Reduce duplication of applications, web hosting, and support services; (ii) effectively and efficiently use technology to share costs, data, and faculty professional development; (iii) improve the quality of instruction; and (iv) increase student access, transfer capability, and the quality of student, faculty, and administration services; and

(g) Recommend governance models, funding models, and accountability measures to achieve these and related objectives.

(5) Subject to funds for this specific purpose, the higher education coordinating board shall engage an independent expert to conduct an independent technical analysis of the findings of the comprehensive technology audits outlined in subsection (4)(e) of this section.

(6) The public institutions of higher education and their partners shall jointly report their findings and recommendations to the appropriate committees of the legislature by December 1, 2010. A

preliminary report shall be delivered to appropriate committees of the legislature by December 1, 2009.

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