
SENATE BILL 5136

State of Washington

62nd Legislature

2011 Regular Session

By Senators Kastama, Tom, Hobbs, Chase, Rockefeller, Haugen, McAuliffe, Shin, Hargrove, Harper, Hatfield, Zarelli, and Litzow

Read first time 01/14/11. Referred to Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Development.

1 AN ACT Relating to establishing the first Washington nonprofit
2 online university; adding a new section to chapter 28B.76 RCW; and
3 creating a new section.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that the key to
6 Washington's economic prosperity over the past twenty years has been a
7 thriving employment sector for workers who have high levels of
8 education. The legislature finds that by 2018, sixty-seven percent of
9 all jobs in Washington will require some postsecondary education - the
10 fifth highest in the nation - and that between 2011 and 2018, the
11 number of Washington jobs requiring postsecondary education will
12 increase by two hundred fifty-nine thousand. The legislature finds
13 that while Washington enterprises that rely on highly educated workers
14 have been able to fill positions from within the state and by
15 attracting workers from other states or nations, businesses located in
16 states that fail to produce sufficient numbers of degreed workers will
17 be at a competitive disadvantage, since these employers will incur the
18 added expense of recruiting heavily in other states and countries to
19 find their skilled workforce. Citizens of Washington will not have

1 access to the jobs Washington firms are producing unless the state
2 dramatically increases postsecondary educational opportunities for
3 them. The legislature further finds that increasing the numbers of
4 Washington graduates to meet the needs of the state's citizens and
5 businesses demands innovative institutions and educational delivery
6 systems.

7 The legislature intends to partner with a nationally recognized
8 nonprofit and independent university that is regionally and nationally
9 accredited offering online, competency-based degrees, to provide
10 enhanced access to postsecondary education for all Washington students,
11 including dislocated workers and placebound students. The legislature
12 further intends that the institution be recognized as a Washington
13 baccalaureate degree-granting institution that is self-supporting and
14 does not receive state funding. It is the intent of the legislature
15 that the higher education coordinating board, the state board for
16 community and technical colleges, and the other institutions of higher
17 education in Washington include the institution in policies and
18 agreements regarding the efficient transfer of credits and courses
19 between institutions.

20 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.76 RCW
21 to read as follows:

- 22 (1) The board shall:
- 23 (a) Recognize and endorse online, competency-based education as an
24 important component of Washington's higher education system;
- 25 (b) Work to eliminate unnecessary barriers to the delivery of
26 education programs provided by a regionally accredited nonprofit online
27 baccalaureate degree-granting institution of higher education; and
- 28 (c) Work with a regionally accredited nonprofit online
29 baccalaureate degree-granting institution of higher education to
30 integrate its academic programs and services into Washington higher
31 education policy and strategy.

32 (2) The board shall work with a regionally accredited nonprofit
33 online baccalaureate degree-granting institution of higher education to
34 create data-sharing processes to assess the institution's performance
35 and determine the extent to which it helps the state achieve the goals
36 of the current statewide strategic master plan for higher education.

1 (3) The board shall adopt rules and policies that require board
2 consultation and approval before:

3 (a) Modifications of contractual terms or relationships between the
4 state and the institution of higher education;

5 (b) Changes or modifications in the nonprofit status of the
6 institution of higher education; or

7 (c) Internal managerial or administrative restructuring of the
8 institution of higher education.

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