

Week 5 Legislative Recap February 9 - 13, 2015

Proposals Requiring a Minimum GPA for State Need Grant Eligibility

Senate SNG Proposal

A Senate Higher Education Committee hearing was held on [SB 5547](#) (Feb. 12). The bill, sponsored by Chair Bailey, would require State Need Grant recipients to maintain a 2.5 GPA to be eligible for renewal of their State Need Grant. At the hearing, Rachelle Sharpe, WSAC Senior Director of Financial Aid and Student Services, outlined State Need Grant academic progress standards:

- There is a term-by-term evaluation of progress focused on credit completion.
- Institutions must have a GPA policy in place and these vary by institution.
- This proposal would impact over 7,000 students who have a GPA between 2.0 and 2.5.

A number of higher education stakeholders testified in opposition to the bill. Paul Francis of the Council of Presidents (COP) stated that the purpose of the State Need Grant is to assist low-income students with completing a degree. Francis noted that students need help at times and said the proposal may have unintended negative consequences such as reducing student enrollment in more challenging courses, including STEM.

Heather Heffelmire, of the Washington Student Association, spoke in opposition, stating that it is not fair to expect students coming from poorly-funded schools to compete with those from well-funded public or private schools when they begin their postsecondary programs. Scott Copeland, Student Services Policy Associate at the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, noted the proposal could increase time to graduation. Copeland echoed the concern that this proposal may incentivize students to take less challenging courses.

Others testifying in opposition included Steffini Hedstrom, WSA; Jordan Martin, WSA, Associated Students of Eastern WA; Paul Bell, Office of Student Legislative Affairs at Bellevue College, State Legislative Liaison. Juliette Schindler Kelly of the College Success Foundation also testified in opposition outlining the impact on College Bound students.

House SNG Proposal

Representative Hargrove's bill, [HB 1767](#), that adds a minimum 2.0 grade point average for continued eligibility for the State Need Grant was heard in the House Higher Education Committee on February 13. Rachelle Sharpe of WSAC, provided informational testimony noting that Washington has stricter academic progress requirements than the federal standards because the state requires credit accumulation to be monitored each term rather than on an annual basis. Sharpe said that institutions are required to have a GPA policy in place to monitor progress, with the exceptions of Evergreen State College, Antioch University and Western Governor's University (these schools do not use grades and have alternative policies in place). Scott Copeland of SBCTC stated that in addition to monitoring by federal and state standards for financial aid purposes, accreditation standards at community and technical colleges require all students to retain a 2.0 GPA.

Paul Francis, COP, testified in opposition to the proposal noting that the SNG is a successful program and the problem is lack of funding, not design. Francis outlined findings from a recent study that found a 25% reduction in the State Need Grant was associated with a 2.2% decrease in re-enrollment for the following fall quarter; and an 8.3 percent reduction in six-year graduation rates at Washington's public baccalaureate institutions.

Francis said that many SNG recipients are first-generation college students and need time to adjust before they can become academically successful. In addition it is necessary to give institutions flexibility to manage the variety of life circumstance that can cause students' grades to drop for a period. Francis stated that setting a uniform state-level requirement fails to recognize the distinct nature of Washington's higher education landscape.

Paul Bell, representing the Community and Technical College Student Association, provided testimony describing his initial difficulty when he first enrolled at Bellevue College in a Worker Retraining program. With continued access to the State Need Grant during this time, Bell stated that he was able to persist, adjusted to the rigors of college, and became a student leader.

Proposals to Dedicate Funding to Education

The House and Senate Higher Education Committees heard companion proposals to provide basic education funding to support basic education for adults at community and technical colleges. [HB 1705](#) is sponsored by Representative Haler and [SB 5619](#) is sponsored by Senator Bailey.

In testimony, John Kerr of the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges noted that Adult Basic Education (ABE) only generates \$25 in tuition and that dedicated funding is needed. Nick Lutes of the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges commented that the proposal would create a caseload associated with the ABE population to provide stable funding for the program. Lutes emphasized the differences between funding ABE, K-12 and other postsecondary education programs. ABE state funding is about \$3,000 per student compared to \$6,000 for K-12 students, and \$6,000 to \$18,000 when combined with tuition for postsecondary students.

Senator Baumgartner, Vice Chair for the Senate Higher Education Committee, has sponsored a [PSSB 5286](#). This proposal would dedicate one penny of existing sales tax to higher education. Baumgartner noted that higher education needs a dedicated revenue stream. Baumgartner noted that higher education funding is discretionary and recently the burden of paying for higher education has shifted to students, causing them to take on higher levels of debt. Testifying in favor were Steve DuPont, Central Washington University; Alicia Kinne-Clawson, Eastern Washington University; Trevor Justin, Associated Students of CWU, WA Student Association.

Information for High-Achieving, Low Income Students

[HB 1812](#) is a proposal sponsored by House Higher Education Committee Chair, Representative Hansen. It would create an informational program to increase applications from high-achieving low-income high school students to selective institutions of higher education.

Testifying in favor the proposal, Paul Francis of COP noted that in 2013 a student from the highest income quartile family had a 77 percent chance of obtaining a baccalaureate degree by age 24, while students from the lowest income quartile had a 9.1 percent chance. Not every student needs to earn a bachelor's degree, but all should be given the opportunity, if interested, to earn some postsecondary credential. This bill would be one more tool in the existing toolkit.

Postsecondary Education for Inmates

The House Higher Education committee heard [HB 1704](#), sponsored by Representative Pettigrew. The bill would permit the Department of Corrections to expand postsecondary options for inmates beyond vocational programs to include degree options. The proposal does not include state funding, but third parties could support postsecondary education for this purpose. Those testifying outlined how increasing education has been shown to reduce recidivism through increased employment opportunities.

Aligning with Federal Requirements to Receive Veterans Education Benefits

The Governor-request proposal, [HB 1825](#) is sponsored by Representative Kilduff. It would broaden the definition of resident student to comply with federal requirements established by the federal Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act (Choice Act). Jim Baumgart of the Governor's Office noted that approximately \$62 million worth of veterans benefits provided to our state's colleges and universities are at risk unless we make this correction.

Heather Heffelmire (WSA), a veteran and a third-year college student at Western Washington University, testified in strong support. She said that if the bill is not passed, all her hard work in the Navy and at college will have gone to waste. Maddy Thompson, WSAC Director of Policy and Government Relations, spoke in support of the substitute bill. The substitute adds an emergency clause as the federal requirements will come into effect on July 1. The companion substitute [SB 5355](#) passed out of the Senate Higher Education Committee on February 13 and has been referred to Ways and Means.

Executive Action

The House Higher Education committee passed [SHB 1238](#). The bill requires WSAC to conduct a study of affordability and tuition. WSAC is directed to include proposed parameters for tuition as an appropriate share of median household and family incomes. The report would be due to the Legislature by December 15, 2016.

Cutoff

February 20 is the first cutoff for bills to be passed out of policy committees. All bills that do not pass out will not move ahead this session unless they are deemed "necessary to implement the budget."

Please see our [Week 6 Schedule](#) for upcoming committee meetings and hearings.

Bill	Short Description	Bill Status	Hearing	Sponsor	Agency Position
Affordability, Tuition, & Higher Ed Planning					
HB 1238	Concerning affordable tuition planning.	H Exec Action		Pollet	Support w/ amend
HB 1303	Creating the degree production incentive program.	H Hi Ed		Haler	Support
HB 1482	Requiring an analysis of regional higher education capacity to meet educational attainment goals.	H Exec Action		Pollet	Support
HB 1696	Modifying provisions related to tuition setting authority at public institutions of higher education.	H Hi Ed	2/13 ES	Haler	No position
HB 1988	Freezing resident undergraduate tuition at the four-year institutions of higher education.	H Hi Ed	2/18 PH	Goodman	Track
SB 5484	Modifying provisions related to tuition setting authority at public institutions of higher education.	S Ways & Means		Bailey	No position
SB 5954	Reducing tuition.	S Higher Ed	2/17 PH	Braun	
Education Funding					
HB 1001	Funding education first.	H Approps		MacEwen	No position
HB 1146	Concerning higher education fiscal matters.	H Approps		Haler	No position
HB 1385	Prioritizing state revenue growth for education.	H Approps		Magendanz	No position
HB 1484	Enacting an excise tax on capital gains to improve the fairness of Washington's tax system and provide funding for the education legacy trust account.	H Finance		Jenkins	
HB 1705	Concerning basic education for adults at community and technical colleges.	H Hi Ed		Haler	No position
HB 1810	Making ample provisions to support higher education.	H Approps		Holy	Track
SSB 5063	Prioritizing state revenue growth for education.	S Rules 2		Hill	No position
SB 5286	Making ample provisions to support higher education.	S Higher Ed		Baumgartner	Track
SB 5619	Concerning basic education for adults at community and technical colleges.	S Higher Ed	2/12 PH	Bailey	No position

Bill	Short Description	Bill Status	Hearing	Sponsor	Agency Position
Budget					
SHB 1105	Making 2015 supplemental operating appropriations.	H Passed FP		Hunter	No position
HB 1106	Making 2015-2017 operating appropriations.	H Approps		Hunter	Support (Gov's budget)
SB 5076	Making 2015 supplemental operating appropriations.	S Ways & Means		Hill	No position
SB 5077	Making 2015-2017 operating appropriations.	S Ways & Means		Hill	Support (Gov's budget)
Consumer Protection					
HB 1949	Regulating the institutions of higher education, including for-profit institutions and private vocational schools, to protect students from unfair business practices.	H Hi Ed		Pollet	No position
Dual Credit					
SHB 1031	Expanding participation in college in the high school programs.	H 2nd Reading		Johnson	Support
HB 1081	Expanding participation in the college in the high school programs.	H Education		Sullivan	Support
HB 1546	Concerning dual credit opportunities provided by Washington state's public institutions of higher education.	H Education	2/17 ES	Reykdal	Support w/ amend
SSB 5080	Concerning dual credit options.	S Ways & Means		Dammeier	Support
SB 5086	Concerning dual credit opportunities provided by Washington state's public institutions of higher education.	S EL/K-12		Litzow	Support w/ amend
GET/College Savings					
HB 1556	Strengthening the Washington advanced college tuition payment program by setting new requirements on the purchase and use of tuition units.	H Hi Ed		Hargrove	Neutral w/ concerns
Higher Ed Costs & Efficiencies					
HB 1500	Concerning a study of higher education cost drivers.	H Hi Ed	2/13 ES	Zeiger	No position
HB 1961	Decodifying, expiring, and making nonsubstantive changes to community and technical college provisions.	H Hi Ed	2/17 PH	Zeiger	No position
SB 5133	Concerning a study of higher education cost drivers.	S Higher Ed	2/12 PH	Bailey	No position

Bill	Short Description	Bill Status	Hearing	Sponsor	Agency Position
Inmate Postsecondary Ed					
HB 1704	Enhancing public safety and reducing recidivism through postsecondary education.	H Hi Ed	2/13 ES	Pettigrew	Support
SB 5354	Addressing the implementation of inmate postsecondary education degree programs to reduce recidivism.	S Law & Justice		Hargrove	Support
Online Education Delivery Models					
HB 1439	Establishing an online alternative credit model at Central Washington University.	H HEDP		Sawyer	Support
HB 1973	Creating an open education pilot program at Eastern Washington University.	H Hi Ed	2/17 PH	Stambaugh	Support w/ concerns
Medical School Issue					
SHB 1485	Concerning family medicine residencies in health professional shortage areas.	H Approps		Haler	No position
SHB 1559	Concerning higher education programs at WSU and UW.	H Approps		Riccelli	No position
SSB 5487	Concerning higher education programs at WSU and UW.	S Ways & Means	2/18 PH	Baumgartner	No position
STEM					
HB 1445	Using computer sciences to satisfy world language college admission requirements.	H Hi Ed		Reykdal	No position
HB 1813	Expanding computer science education.	H Education	2/17 ES	Hansen	Support
SB 5478	Financing facilities to support education reform.	S Ways & Means		Dammeier	No position
Students with Disabilities					
HB 1367	Requiring the student achievement council to develop a grant program to encourage training for students studying in the medical field to work with individuals with disabilities.	H Approps		Johnson	No position
SB 5642	Requiring the student achievement council to develop a grant program to encourage training for students studying in the medical field to work with individuals with disabilities.	S Higher Ed		Chase	No position
SB 5905	Concerning special education services and programs.	S EL/K-12	2/16 PH	McAuliffe	Support

Bill	Short Description	Bill Status	Hearing	Sponsor	Agency Position
Veterans					
SHB 1052	Requiring institutions of higher education to make an early registration process available to spouses and domestic partners of active members of the military.	H Rules R		Hayes	Track
HB 1644	Concerning veteran survivor tuition waiver eligibility.	H Hi Ed	2/13 ES	Gregory	Support
HB 1825	Modifying the definition of resident student to comply with federal requirements established by the veterans access, choice, and accountability act of 2014.	H Hi Ed	2/13 ES	Kilduff	Support
SB 5355	Modifying the definition of resident student to comply with federal requirements established by the veterans access, choice, and accountability act of 2014.	S Higher Ed	2/12 ES	Bailey	Support
SB 5561	Concerning veteran survivor tuition waiver eligibility.	S Ways & Means		Bailey	Support
Student Support					
HB 1982	Enhancing student completion through advising, mentoring, recapture initiatives, remedial programs, and accelerated precollege instruction and creating the innovations for student completion program.	H Hi Ed	2/17 PH	Pollet	Support w/ amend
HB 1999	Coordinating services and programs for foster youth in order to improve educational outcomes.	H Erly Lrn/H Svc	2/17 PH	Carlyle	Support
SSB 5328	Disseminating financial aid information.	S Rules 2		Kohl-Welles	No position
SB 5349	Requiring live financial literacy seminars for students at institutions of higher education.	S Ways & Means		Bailey	No position
SB 5637	Creating a peer mentoring program.	S Higher Ed	2/12 PH	Hasegawa	Support
SB 5856	Creating a competitive grant program for high-quality, evidence-based outreach programs that improve high school graduation rates for college bound scholarship students.	S EL/K-12	2/16 PH	Frockett	Support

Bill	Short Description	Bill Status	Hearing	Sponsor	Agency Position
State Need Grant & College Bound					
HB 1154	Creating the affordable college for everyone grant contract program.	H Hi Ed		Bergquist	No position
SHB 1236	Eliminating the parent or guardian approval requirement for the college bound scholarship pledge.	H Rules R		Ortiz-Self	No position
HB 1767	Adding a minimum grade point average to the state need grant renewal requirement.	H Hi Ed	2/13 PH	Hargrove	No position
HB 1955	Defining satisfactory academic progress for purposes of higher education.	H Hi Ed	2/18 PH	Van Werven	No position
HB 2039	Encouraging eligible students to use their state need grant and college bound scholarship awards to complete two years of education at community or technical colleges.	H Hi Ed		Hargrove	
HB 2041	Creating a pilot project on performance-based scholarships in the state need grant program.	H Hi Ed	2/18 PH	Hansen	Support
SB 5547	Requiring a minimum grade point average or equivalent to renew a state need grant.	S Higher Ed	2/12 PH	Bailey	No position
SB 5638	Changing state need grant eligibility provisions.	S Higher Ed	2/19 PH	Hasegawa	Support
SB 5851	Concerning recommendations of the college bound scholarship program work group.	S Higher Ed	2/19 PH	Frocket	Support
Other Financial Aid					
SHB 1030	Creating the Washington advance higher education loan program.	H Approps		Johnson	No position
HB 1080	Restoring funding to the health professional loan repayment and scholarship program fund.	H Approps		Harris	No position
HB 1344	Creating the nurse educator pay it forward program.	H Exec Action		Pollet	No position
HB 1570	Creating flexibility for the educator retooling conditional scholarship program.	H Education	2/19 ES	Gregory	Support
HB 1783	Expanding dual language and bilingual instruction for early learners through secondary students.	H Education	2/17 ES	Ortiz-Self	No position

Bill	Short Description	Bill Status	Hearing	Sponsor	Agency Position
Other Financial Aid					
HB 1880	Including Everett Community College as an aerospace training or educational program.	H Hi Ed	2/13 PH	Springer	No position
HB 2065	Concerning health care access and medical and dental education.	H Hi Ed		Cody	
SSB 5010	Restoring funding to the health professional loan repayment and scholarship program fund.	S Ways & Means		Frockt	No position
SB 5312	Creating flexibility for the educator retooling conditional scholarship program.	S 2nd Reading		Litzow	Support
SB 5318	Creating the wildlife college student loan program.	S Higher Ed	2/12 ES	Parlette	Support
SB 5335	Creating the nurse educator pay it forward program.	S Higher Ed		Keiser	No position
SB 5675	Expanding dual language and bilingual instruction for early learners through secondary students.	S EL/K-12		Roach	No position
SB 5680	Concerning family medicine residency programs in shortage areas.	S Health Care		Frockt	No position
SB 5746	Including Everett Community College as an aerospace training or educational program.	S Higher Ed	2/12 PH	Bailey	No position
SB 5909	Concerning health care access and medical and dental education.	S Health Care		Frockt	
Others of Interest					
HB 1147	Requiring a study of the transition to a three-track or four-track admission system for public institutions of higher education.	H Exec Action		Haler	Track
HB 1293	Concerning paraeducators.	H Education		Bergquist	Track
HB 1363	Eliminating the requirement to obtain a certificate of academic achievement or certificate of individual achievement to graduate from high school.	H Education	2/17 ES	Hunt, S.	Track
HB 1538	Restoring cost-of-living increases for educational employees.	H Approps		Sells	No position

Bill	Short Description	Bill Status	Hearing	Sponsor	Agency Position
Others of Interest					
HB 1541	Implementing strategies to close the educational opportunity gap, based on the recommendations of the educational opportunity gap oversight and accountability committee.	H Education	2/17 ES	Santos	No position
HB 1591	Concerning high school and beyond plans.	H Education		Ortiz-Self	Support
HB 1812	Creating an informational program to increase applications from high-achieving low-income high school students to selective institutions of higher education.	H Hi Ed	2/13 ES	Hansen	Support
HB 1820	Requiring the department of social and health services to request all necessary exemptions and waivers from the federal government to allow students to use electronic benefit transfer cards at institutions of higher education.	H Erly Lrn/H Svc	2/13 ES	Reykdal	Support
HB 1864	Supporting evidence-based strategies to promote high school graduation.	H Education	2/17 ES	Kilduff	Support
SB 5122	Concerning precollege placement measures.	S Rules 2		Kohl-Welles	No position
SSB 5179	Concerning paraeducators.	S EDUDPS		Hill	Track
SSB 5202	Regarding the financial education public-private partnership.	S Rules 2		Mullet	Track
SB 5327	Eliminating the requirement to obtain a certificate of academic achievement or certificate of individual achievement to graduate from high school.	S EL/K-12		McCoy	Track
SB 5351	Relating to education.	S EL/K-12		Litzow	Placeholder bill
SB 5352	Relating to education.	S EL/K-12		Litzow	Placeholder bill
SB 5391	Concerning applied baccalaureate degree programs at community and technical colleges leading to teacher certification.	S EL/K-12		Litzow	No position
SB 5469	Restoring cost-of-living increases for educational employees.	S Ways & Means		Hasegawa	No position
SB 5719	Creating a task force on campus sexual violence prevention.	S Higher Ed	2/12 ES	Bailey	No position