

Week 3 Legislative Update January 26-30, 2015

Dual Credit

The Senate Early Learning and K-12 Education Committee passed a proposed substitute for [SB5080](#) out of committee. The substitute bill, SSB5080, concerning dual credit options and sponsored by Senator Dammeier, changes the definition of Running Start, among other provisions. Running Start is defined as a dual credit program where course sections and programs must be open for registration to matriculated students at the participating public institution of higher education. Enrollment in these courses/programs will give high school students the opportunity to earn both high school and postsecondary credits. This definition does not apply to a course consisting solely of high school students offered at a high school campus. The substitute specifies that college credit earned in the College in the High School program are applied to general education requirements or degree requirements at institutions of higher education. For a complete summary of the bill, please see the [bill report](#).

Health Care and Higher Education

Health care issues pertaining to higher education came to the fore in the Legislature's week-three work sessions and hearings. On January 26, the Senate Health Care Committee held a hearing on [SB 5010](#), a bill to restore funding to the Health Professional Loan Repayment and Scholarship Program, administered by the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) in collaboration with the Department of Health. House Appropriations heard the companion [HB 1080](#) on January 27. Also on January 27, the House Higher Education Committee held a work session on "Degrees and Credentials that Lead to Good Jobs, Part III: Rural Primary Care Shortage," followed by a review of [HB 1559](#), which would authorize WSU to establish a school of medicine. Representative Ricelli (the prime sponsor) is joined by 62 other members who have signed on in support.

Higher Education Work Sessions and Gubernatorial Appointments

On January 27, the Senate Higher Education Committee held work sessions on campus sexual assaults. On January 29, Northwest Career Colleges joined the Commercial Driver School to discuss private, career schools in the same committee. Finally, the committee held hearings to confirm the following gubernatorial appointments: Harry Carthum, Grays Harbor College; Carol McVicker, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; and Rosalinda Mendoza, Yakima Valley Community College.

Hearings on Postsecondary Education Bills

On January 28, the House Higher Education Committee reviewed [HB 1238](#), concerning affordable tuition. Representative Pollet, the prime sponsor, emphasized the importance of affordable tuition and the bill's direction to the Student Achievement Council to use 10 percent of the family income as the benchmark for affordable tuition when recommending policies and strategies. Marc Webster, WSAC

staff, reviewed the Council's affordability framework. The framework is designed to help policy makers determine affordable levels of aid, tuition, and debt for students pursuing two-year and four-year degrees.

The House Higher Education Committee also heard [HB 1154](#) (sponsored by Representative Berquist), which would replace the State Need Grant and the College Bound Program with an Affordable College for Everyone Grant Contract program. Under the proposal, recipients would make contributions back to the program relative to their employment and proportionate to their ability to pay. Steffani Hedstrom, Washington Student Association and the students at UW Tacoma; Scott Copeland, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; and Tom Fitzsimons, Independent Colleges of Washington expressed concerns that the proposal would take away a grant and replace it with a loan. Paul Francis, WSAC member and Council of Presidents Executive Director, said that the problem with the State Need Grant is not the delivery model nor the design; rather, the program is underfunded (34,000 students who qualify are currently unserved). He noted that the program, which serves many low-income, first-generation, and nontraditional students, could impact our state's attainment goals. Francis also expressed concern about the bill's potential impact on the College Bound program, which is known as a "game changer" in higher education circles for what it has already accomplished. Francis emphasized that the program should remain a caseload-driven, forecasted program that will continue to drive students into higher education. Francis expressed concern that this proposal continues down the path of privatizing the public good that is higher education.

The following higher education bills were also heard in policy committees:

- [HB 1344](#) – Creating the nurse educator pay it forward program.
- [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.
- [HB 1138](#) – Creating a task force on mental health and suicide prevention in higher education.
- [HB 1052](#) – Requiring institutions of higher education to make an early registration process available to spouses and domestic partners of active members of the military.
- [SB 5122](#) – Concerning precollege placement measures.
- [SB 5295](#) – Concerning the display of campus information on the statewide public four-year dashboard.
- [SB 5328](#) – Disseminating financial aid information.
- [SB 5349](#) – Requiring live financial literacy seminars for students at institutions of higher education.

Hearings on K-12 and Early Learning Bills

- [SB 5312](#) – Creating flexibility for the educator retooling conditional scholarship program.
- [SB 5303](#) – Creating the Washington academic, innovation, and mentoring (AIM) program
- [SB 5316](#) – Concerning privacy and security of personally identifiable student information.
- [SB 5392](#) – Eliminating the quality education council.
- [SB 5433](#) – Requiring Washington's tribal history, culture, and government to be taught in the common schools.

Please see our [Week 4 Schedule](#) for upcoming committee meetings and hearings.