

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: Fiscal statement issued

Action: Do Pass and Be Referred to the Committee on Ways and Means by Prior Reference

Vote: 4 - 0 - 1

Yeas: Beyer, Knopp, Roblan, Hass

Nays: 0

Exc.: Kruse

Prepared By: Richard Donovan, Administrator

Meeting Dates: 4/9, 4/11

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Revises fee structure for schools requiring approval of Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to confer or offer to confer academic degree or provide services leading to degree. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Current constraints on Office of Degree Authorization (ODA), including insufficient staffing levels due to recent budget cuts
- Model for ODA approval as fee-based, on a per-program basis, with Doctorate-level programs being most expensive and Associates- and certificate-level programs being least expensive
- Recent dramatic increase in requests for approval of programs, mainly in lowest-fee areas
- Recent dramatic increase in requests for approval of online programs, which are effectively impossible to review given current fee structure and level of staffing at ODA
- Long wait for program approval, sometimes as long as 24 months or more
- Reputation for high-quality of work that ODA has earned, both locally and nationally

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: No amendment.

BACKGROUND: Senate Bill 102 relates to the ODA, which has been operating under the authority of the HECC since July 1, 2012. The measure attempts to ensure that ODA has the funding to fulfill its responsibilities under law.