SENATE, No. 3170

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED NOVEMBER 12, 2020

Sponsored by:
Senator NELLIE POU
District 35 (Bergen and Passaic)

SYNOPSIS

Directs Secretary of Higher Education to study prevalence, cost, and quality of certain on-line courses compared to traditional classroom courses offered by institutions of higher education.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.

AN ACT concerning on-line courses offered by institutions of higher education and supplementing chapter 3B of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. The Secretary of Higher Education shall conduct a study to examine the prevalence, cost, and quality of on-line courses offered for credit by institutions of higher education upon payment of a fee. The study shall only pertain to these types of on-line courses and shall include, but need not be limited to:

a. a list of the specific on-line courses made available by each institution of higher education;

b. the cost of offering an on-line course at the institution compared to the cost of a traditional, classroom-based course at the institution;

c. the overall number and percentage of part-time and full-time students who enroll in at least one on-line course at each institution of higher education;

d. the total amount of savings generated from offering on-line courses compared to classroom-based courses realized by each institution of higher education in an academic year;

e. whether the quantified savings identified pursuant to subsection d. of this section are used by the institution to benefit the students enrolled in the institution and, if so, the manner in which those savings are used to reduce student costs;

f. the average completion rate and average grade for the students enrolled in each on-line course offered by each institution;

g. the overall four-year and six-year graduation rates for students who enroll in at least one on-line course at each institution of higher education compared to the average four-year and six-year graduation rates for students who do not enroll in an on-line course at the institution; and

h. an assessment of the policies and procedures each institution of higher education has in place to ensure that institutional support, technological support, and faculty support are provided to students enrolled in on-line courses to ensure a high quality educational experience.

2. Within 180 days of the effective date of this act, the secretary shall prepare and submit a report of the study's findings to the Senate Higher Education Committee and the Assembly Higher Education Committee, or their successor committees.

3. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This bill directs the Secretary of Higher Education to conduct a study to examine the prevalence, cost, and quality of on-line courses offered for credit by institutions of higher education upon payment of a fee. Under the bill, the study would only pertain to such on-line courses and must include:

- a list of the specific on-line courses made available by each institution;
- the cost of offering an on-line course at the institution compared to the cost of a traditional, classroom-based course at the institution;
- the overall number and percentage of part-time and full-time students who enroll in at least one on-line course at each institution;
- the total amount of savings generated from offering on-line courses compared to classroom-based courses realized by each institution in an academic year;
- whether the quantified savings are used by the institution to benefit the students enrolled in the institution and, if so, the manner in which those savings are used to reduce student costs;
- the average completion rate and average grade for the students enrolled in each on-line course offered by each institution;
- the overall four-year and six-year graduation rates for students who enroll in at least one on-line course at each institution of higher education compared to the average four-year and six-year graduation rates for students who do not enroll in an on-line course at the institution; and
- an assessment of the policies and procedures each institution of higher education has in place to ensure that institutional support, technological support, and faculty support are provided to students enrolled in on-line courses to ensure a high quality educational experience.

The bill requires the secretary to prepare and submit a report of the study's findings to the Senate Higher Education Committee and the Assembly Higher Education Committee within 180 days of its effective date.