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State of Minnesota

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-SECOND SESSION

H. F. No. 1536

02/25/2021 Authored by Wolgamott and Bernardy
The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Higher Education Finance and Policy

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to higher education; modifying the Z-Degree program; appropriating
1.3 money; amending Minnesota Statutes 2020, section 136F.305.

1.4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.5 Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2020, section 136F.305, is amended to read:

1.6 136F.305 Z-DEGREES.

1.7 Subdivision 1. Definitions. (a) For purposes of this section, the following terms have
1.8 the meanings given.

1.9 (b) "Custom textbook" means course materials that are compiled by a publisher at the
1.10 direction of a faculty member or, if applicable, the other adopting entity in charge of selecting
1.11 course materials for courses taught at a state college or university. Custom textbooks may
1.12 include items such as selections from original instructor materials, previously copyrighted
1.13 publisher materials, copyrighted third-party works, or elements unique to a specific state
1.14 college or university.

1.15 (b) "Course" means a single unit of teaching in one subject area led by one or more
1.16 instructors with a definite start and end date and a fixed roster of students.

1.17 (c) "Course materials" means a hard-copy or digital book, printed pages of instructional
1.18 material, including consumable workbooks, lab manuals, subscriptions, online homework
1.19 and quizzing platforms, and other required physical and digital content.

1.20 (d) "Course section" means an instance of a course.

2.1 ~~(e)~~ (e) "Incentive" means anything provided to faculty to identify, review, adapt, author,  
2.2 or adopt open ~~textbooks~~ educational resources.

2.3 ~~(d)~~ (f) "Open educational resources" means ~~high-quality~~ teaching, learning, and research  
2.4 ~~resources~~ materials that ~~reside~~ are in the public domain or have been released under an  
2.5 intellectual property license that permits their free use and repurposing by others, ~~and may~~  
2.6 ~~include other resources that are legally available and free of cost to students~~. Open  
2.7 educational resources include ~~course materials, modules, custom and open textbooks, articles,~~  
2.8 ~~faculty-created content, streaming videos, tests, software, and any other tools, materials, or~~  
2.9 ~~techniques used to support access to knowledge~~ textbooks and curricula, syllabi, lecture  
2.10 notes, assignments, tests, projects, audio, video, and animation.

2.11 ~~(e)~~ (g) "Open textbook" means ~~a textbook that is distributed using an open copyright a~~  
2.12 type of open educational resource released under an intellectual property license that at a  
2.13 minimum allows a student to obtain, retain, reuse, and redistribute the material at no cost.

2.14 (h) "Library-curated materials" means diverse resources purchases by the library at no  
2.15 additional cost to the student for the supplementation or replacement of course materials.

2.16 ~~(f)~~ (i) "System office" means the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system  
2.17 office.

2.18 ~~(g)~~ (j) "Z-Degree" means a ~~zero-textbook-cost~~ complete associate's or bachelor's degree  
2.19 program that exclusively uses course materials that are no cost to students such as open  
2.20 educational resources, open textbooks, and library-curated materials. Students may still  
2.21 incur costs for printing digital materials or for the following: art supplies, calculators,  
2.22 equipment, fees in statute or policy mandated to be charged by all colleges and universities,  
2.23 campus discretionary fees established by the board and adopted by the college, personal  
2.24 property, and service charges or course activities having value outside of the classroom.

2.25 Subd. 2. **Requirement.** (a) Three additional colleges must offer the opportunity to earn  
2.26 a Z-Degree by academic year 2020-2021. ~~A college's~~ Two additional colleges or universities  
2.27 must offer the opportunity to earn a Z-Degree by academic year 2023-2024. Course offerings  
2.28 for its in a Z-Degree program must include at least two distinct courses in each transfer  
2.29 curriculum goal area and at least enough credits in each transfer curriculum goal area to  
2.30 complete the transfer curriculum package.

2.31 (b) The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities shall support a continuous process  
2.32 for colleges and universities to implement Z-Degrees, expand Z-Degree courses and sections,  
2.33 and sustain existing Z-Degrees.

3.1 Subd. 3. **Open educational resource development.** (a) ~~The Minnesota State Colleges~~  
3.2 ~~and Universities must develop a program to offer a Z-degree at three additional colleges by~~  
3.3 ~~expanding the use of open educational resources, including custom and open textbooks.~~  
3.4 The system office must provide opportunities for faculty to identify, review, adapt, ~~author,~~  
3.5 create, share, and adopt open educational resources. The system office must develop  
3.6 incentives to academic departments to identify, review, adapt, author, or adopt open  
3.7 educational resources within their academic programs.

3.8 (b) The programs and incentives developed under this subdivision must be implemented  
3.9 pursuant to faculty collective bargaining agreements.

3.10 Subd. 4. **Report.** Annually by January 15, the board must submit reports ~~by January 13,~~  
3.11 ~~2021, and January 12, 2022,~~ to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative  
3.12 committees with jurisdiction over higher education. Each report must include (1) the number  
3.13 of courses and course sections transitioned ~~to using an open textbook resulting from the~~  
3.14 ~~programs in this section~~ into a new Z-Degree, and (2) the total amount of student textbook  
3.15 savings resulting from the transitions.

3.16 Sec. 2. **APPROPRIATION.**

3.17 \$..... in fiscal year 2022 is appropriated from the general fund to the Board of Trustees  
3.18 of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities to implement the Z-Degree program under  
3.19 Minnesota Statutes, section 136F.305.