STATE OF NEW YORK

9385

IN ASSEMBLY

February 23, 2022

Introduced by M. of A. ENGLEBRIGHT, J. RIVERA, GUNTHER -- Multi-Sponsored by -- M. of A. CYMBROWITZ, GALEF, PERRY -- read once and referred to the Committee on Higher Education

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to enacting the "higher education community service act"

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Legislative findings. The legislature hereby finds and declares that the American tradition of volunteer community service is essential to the common good and is vital to the success of not-for-profit agencies, institutions and organizations dealing with a vast array of critical social problems. It recognizes growing support for the idea that postsecondary students should receive recognition for substantial commitment to volunteer service, and should be given greater encouragement to participate in volunteer community service activities. Volunteers and volunteer programs should be praised for their efforts in helping and serving others, which result in changes in the way the community views young people and in the way young people view their responsibilities to the community.

The legislature further declares its desire to promote further integration of community service at institutions of higher education by encouraging student-initiated and student-designated community service projects.

§ 2. The education law is amended by adding a new section 319 to read as follows:

§ 319. Higher education community service act. 1. Short title. This section shall be known and may be cited as the "higher education community service act".

2. Establishment of higher education community service act. There is hereby established a higher education community service act for the purpose of promoting and recognizing volunteer service involvement by students in higher education. Activities conducted under the higher education community service act shall include:

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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a. a campus based screening process to identify and nominate successful and promising community service projects and initiatives for recognition;

b. identification of existing quality community service programs, projects and initiatives involving postsecondary students that produce a sense of social responsibility and commitment to the community;

c. incentives for institutions of higher education, students and other members of the college community to participate in long term community service programs;

d. encouragement of institutions to formulate a systematic process to disseminate information concerning prospective volunteer projects to the participants of general volunteer programs on or off campus;

e. establishment of a foundation to receive private funds to be used to promote a wide variety of service related projects. Private funds shall include, but not be limited to donations, grants and fundraisers; and

f. establishment of a three-year program of implementation, including pilot programs and ongoing review and evaluation.

3. Establishment of volunteer connections. The commissioner, in consultation with the chancellor of the state university, the chancellor of the city university of New York and the president of the commission on independent colleges and universities shall develop a program to establish effective volunteer connections between institutions of higher education and their respective communities.

4. Council for higher education community service. a. A council for higher education community service shall be established within the department for the purpose of conducting activities pursuant to this section. The council shall be composed of eleven members, one of whom shall be the commissioner, ex officio, and ten of whom shall be appointed by the governor: two on the recommendation of the temporary president of the senate, two on the recommendation of the speaker of the assembly, one on the recommendation of the minority leader of the senate, and one on the recommendation of the minority leader of the assembly. Such members shall include representatives of the state university, city university of New York, the independent colleges and universities of New York and the New York campus compact. Two of the council members shall be students, selected by the governor. The council shall select from among its appointed members a chair and vice chair who shall serve in office for terms of one year and who shall be eligible for reelection for successive terms.

b. The council shall oversee the creation of a statewide postsecondary community service center to disseminate information regarding existing volunteer activities, make volunteer connections between students and the communities, integrate public and community service into the curriculum, provide guidance and coordination, monitor and evaluate volunteer programs and activities and promote the continuation of public and community service.

c. The council shall meet at least four times each year. Members of the council shall receive no compensation for their services but shall be reimbursed by the higher education community service foundation for reasonable expenses actually and necessarily incurred by them in the performance of their duties pursuant to this section.

d. The council shall report by September first each year to the governor, the temporary president of the senate and the speaker of the assembly on the progress of implementation of this section, with recommendations for future activities.

5. Petitioning by council. The council shall, within ninety days of its appointment, petition the regents to incorporate as a private, not-for-profit education corporation under this chapter, the New York foundation for higher education community service, to receive funds to be used as requested by the council to support and administer activities authorized in this section, and other projects that encourage and assist community service activities.

§ 3. This act shall take effect on the first of September next succeeding the date on which it shall have become a law.