

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2648

As Reported by House Committee On:
Higher Education

Title: An act relating to campus safety and security.

Brief Description: Enhancing campus safety and security.

Sponsors: Representatives Wallace, Morrell, Kelley, Nelson, Loomis, Green, Barlow, Conway, Simpson, Hurst, Darneille and Lantz; by request of Governor Gregoire.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 1/23/08, 1/31/08 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires institutions of higher education to:
 - (1) create emergency management and response plans;
 - (2) develop agreements with local jurisdictions which delineate responsibilities and include the shared use of equipment and technology;
 - (3) establish task forces to review safety planning processes; and
 - (4) submit to the Higher Education Coordinating Board and State Board for Community and Technical Colleges respectively concerning:
 - (a) a study assessing each institutions' ability to ensure the safety of students, faculty, and staff; and
 - (b) a plan to maximize program effectiveness based on the findings of the self study. This plan must be updated every two years.
- Requires reports biennially on the efforts of each institution regarding campus safety.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Wallace, Chair; Sells, Vice Chair; Hankins, Hasegawa, Jarrett, McIntire, Roberts, Schmick and Sommers.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Anderson, Ranking Minority Member.

Staff: Andi Smith (786-7304).

Background:

Campus safety planning can be broken down into five major components:

- Mental health services: availability of mental health counselors, psychiatrists, and mental health outreach programs;
- Communications: public address systems, sirens, instant warning systems, intercoms;
- Police: commissioned and non-commissioned officers and other first responders, including training;
- Campus planning and awareness: violence prevention programs, campus safety assessments and review, campus safety advocates, emergency management coordinators; and
- Building mapping and access: including key card systems, campus mapping, security cameras.

The Council of Presidents conducted a survey of the public baccalaureate institutions to compile basic background information on the policies and procedures that are in place to respond to campus security issues. The baccalaureates agreed that responding to emergencies is "highly episodic and circumstantial" and that institutions require flexibility to evaluate, assess, and respond according to the best judgment on hand at the moment.

Responses from the baccalaureate institutions indicate that each has established procedures to make the university community and public aware of emergency preparedness policies; has some means of alerting students, faculty, and staff to emergency situations; and has "mapped" campus buildings to include floor plans, utility diagrams, and the location of hazardous materials. The survey also indicates that public baccalaureate institutions have entered into mutual aid agreements with emergency management agencies, law enforcement agencies, and other partners in addition to the commissioned police forces they employ.

There is not as much consistency in baseline policy and practice within the community and technical college system. While the colleges have each developed emergency preparedness plans and have identified mechanisms for public alert, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) estimates that only 10 percent of colleges have extensive "mapping" of campus buildings. Because community and technical colleges do not typically have commissioned police forces, they are also more reliant on local law enforcement and emergency management organizations to provide emergency response.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Institutions of higher education will create emergency management and response plans and provide the plan to students, faculty, and staff. The plan will include several components: (1) policies, procedures, and programs for preventing and responding to violence, sexual harassment, domestic violence, stalking, and sexual assault that includes contact information for campus and community victim advocates; and (2) descriptions of the duties of campus security personnel, security and mutual assistance arrangements with local police, mental health counseling services, emergency management and communications plans.

Institutions of higher education must enter into a memoranda of understanding with local police and emergency response jurisdictions that set forth responsibilities for each party involved. Institutions must also develop mutual aid agreements with local jurisdictions regarding the shared use of equipment and technology.

Each institution must establish a task force to review the safety plan and make suggestions for improvement. In addition, the president of each institution must designate a specific person responsible for monitoring and coordinating the institution's compliance with the plan. Each two-year and four-year institution must submit two reports to the SBCTC and the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) respectively: (1) a self-study assessing the institution's ability to ensure the safety of students, faculty, and staff by September 30, 2008; and (2) a plan to maximize program effectiveness for the next four years by November 30, 2008. Each institution is additionally responsible for updating its plan by October 30 each even-numbered year starting in 2010.

The HECB and the SBCTC must report biennially to the Governor and higher education committees of the Legislature beginning December 31, 2010, on efforts of each institution regarding campus safety and security.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The original bill referred to "campus safety" plans and the substitute refers to "emergency management and response" plans as well as clarifies that institutional task forces can report more frequently than once per year.

The substitute bill removes the requirement that institutions publish the plans, rather it specifies that the plans may *be made available* to students, faculty, staff, and other interested parties.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Stakeholders appreciate the intent of the bill and believe that this type of planning process can heighten awareness of campus safety issues. The substitute bill goes a long way in addressing some institutional concerns regarding the original bill.

(With concerns) Institutions may have trouble complying with the planning and reporting requirements without operating and capital investments from the state. Given that reporting timelines are short, consultants may need to be hired to do this level of assessment. There are also concerns that the language in the bill might create the expectation that campus safety is guaranteed. Since the campuses are "open" it would be virtually impossible to ensure people's safety, which may lead to liability concerns for the state down the road.

Persons Testifying: (In Support) Dr. Michele Johnson, Chancellor for Pierce Community College District; Deb Merle, Office of the Governor; Ann Anderson, Central Washington University; and Sarah Ishmael, Washington Student Lobby.

(With concerns) John Hurley and Julie Suchanek, The Evergreen State College; Randy Hodgins, University of Washington; and Tom Henderson, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.