

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 2694

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**As Passed House:**  
March 16, 2010

**Title:** An act relating to a bachelor of science in nursing program at the University Center.

**Brief Description:** Regarding a bachelor of science in nursing program at the University Center.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Sells, White, McCoy, Kenney, Ericks, O'Brien, Roberts and Chase.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Higher Education: 1/20/10, 1/22/10 [DP];  
Education Appropriations: 2/2/10 [DP].

**Floor Activity:**

Passed House: 2/12/10, 97-0.

**First Special Session**

**Floor Activity:**

Passed House: 3/16/10, 93-0.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Recognizes a shortage of registered nurses in the state and, subject to specific funding for this purpose, directs the University Center at Everett Community College, in partnership with the University of Washington-Bothell, to offer a bachelor of science in nursing program with capacity for at least 50 full-time students.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Wallace, Chair; Sells, Vice Chair; Schmick, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Angel, Carlyle, Driscoll, Haler, Hasegawa and White.

**Staff:** Cece Clynch (786-7195).

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS

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*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.*

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Haigh, Chair; Probst, Vice Chair; Priest, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Carlyle, Haler, Kagi, Maxwell, Nealey, Quall, Rolfes and Wallace.

**Minority Report:** Without recommendation. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Hope, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Hunter.

**Staff:** Serah Stetson (786-7109).

**Background:**

Management and leadership responsibility for the north Snohomish, Island, and Skagit counties' higher education consortium is assigned, in statute, to Everett Community College (ECC). The ECC is charged with collaborating with community and business leaders, other local community colleges, the public four-year institutions, and the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) to develop an educational plan for the region based on the university center model. In April of 2009, Gray Wolf Hall opened as the new home of the University Center of North Puget Sound. The University Center at ECC currently offers over 20 bachelor's and master's degrees from six partner universities.

The ECC offers an associate degree nursing program that graduates approximately 70 to 90 students per year. The University Center at ECC does not offer a bachelor of science in nursing. There is a bachelor of science in nursing program offered by the University of Washington-Bothell at its Bothell campus and at Skagit Community College.

Despite recent growth in nursing education capacity, shortages still persist for registered nurses. According to a June 2007 study by the Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana, and Idaho (WWAMI) Center for Health Workforce Studies, the average age of Washington's registered nurses was 48 years. More than a third were 55 years of age or older. In light of the age demographics, it was predicted that there would be a high rate of registered nurses retiring from nursing practice over the next two decades which will significantly reduce the supply. This reduction comes at the same time as the state's population grows and ages. The registered nurse education capacity in Washington impacts the supply of registered nurses in the state. If the rate of graduation in registered nursing does not increase, projections show that supply in Washington will begin to decline by 2015. In contrast, if graduation rates increased by 400 per year, the supply of registered nurses would meet estimated demand by the year 2021.

The HECB's Employer Demand Joint Report 2009 Update of *A Skilled and Educated Workforce* showed an annual supply of 2,912 registered nurses, with 3,019 additional registered nurses needed to meet the average annual demand for 2004-2014.

**Summary of Bill:**

Subject to specific funding for 50 students, the University Center at ECC, in partnership with the University of Washington-Bothell, shall offer a bachelor of science in nursing program for 50 students.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect on July 1, 2010. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Higher Education):**

(In support) The University Center at ECC was approved some time ago for 250 full-time equivalents at the upper-division and graduate levels. The Center is already at 285, in a variety of programs. There is a great need for more registered nurses in the community. Providence operates a 350 bed hospital and Swedish is coming to the neighborhood. There is also a need at our higher-education institutions for nurses with master's degrees to teach in the nursing programs. The addition of 50 new slots for bachelor of science in nursing degrees will go a long way to helping to meet these needs. Some graduates may choose to go to work in the community while others may choose to go on to get their master's degree and come to work at the higher-education institutions. The University of Washington-Bothell has a program at its Bothell campus as well as at Skagit Community College but these are overenrolled. A new bachelor of science in nursing program at the University Center at ECC would be located in existing buildings and use existing capacity. People that are educated in the area tend to stay in the area and work. Hospital nursing staff is aging and there is a need for more nurses with bachelor's degrees. Over 200 currently employed at Providence in Everett have expressed interest in such a program.

(Opposed) None.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Education Appropriations):**

(In support) This bill speaks to a need that's been identified by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTECB) around health care demands. There is an honest null and void, if the legislature can find the funding, it makes sense to move forward with more Bachelor's of Science degrees in nursing. The program is also being done in partnership with Providence Community College, which is right next door to Everett Community College (EVCC) and works with the EVCC on their nursing programs, so it's a public-private partnership in that sense as well.

The Legislature approved the University Center in 2006 to offer bachelor's and master's degrees from universities in the Everett area (North Snohomish area and Skagit County). The initial award was 250 student full time equivalents (FTE) to develop a long list of programs in partnership with a variety of institutions. The capped FTE amount prohibits further program expansion even though nursing is very high on the list.

The healthcare industry in the Everett area is expanding. Additional student FTEs would help to meet nursing needs, community needs and student demand. There is a shortfall in healthcare, locally, regionally and nationally that is only going to continue to grow as nurses retire. The EVCC graduates 75-80 nursing students every year, 60 percent state that they desire to continue their nursing education but only 20-25 percent continue. Local registered

nurses (RNs) say that they need local access to bachelor's degree programs and are excited about this partnership so that they can pursue their bachelor's degree, continue to work, raise their families and stay in the local area. Additionally, nursing education needs more bachelor's-prepared nurses to continue their education to become master's-prepared nurses to meet the needs of nursing education. Accreditation standards require nursing teachers to have a master's degree to teach specific components of nursing programs. There are few qualified applicants for open positions. There is a need to be able to grow potential faculty to meet the demand.

This would use existing facilities for both office and classroom space. This allows students to use existing technology as well as the other campus resources. It also piggybacks on current advising and outreach activities and expands on already existing institutional and community partnerships. There is a very strong investment return for the state.

Since 1992 over 1400 RN and Bachelor's of Science in Nursing (BSN) nurses have graduated out of University of Washington (UW)-Bothell and are working in the Puget Sound area. The majority come from King, Whatcom, Island and Skagit counties. There are two locations, one in Bothell, one in Mount Vernon at Skagit Valley College. These students are generally working full-time and it takes them four to five quarters to complete the program. The typical student comes one day a week and takes between five to 15 credits depending on what they can balance. The UW-Bothell currently has 177 nurses enrolled in the two locations. Ninety percent are expected to graduate this year, due to a very small attrition rate. This expansion would be a big benefit to the community.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying** (Higher Education): Representative Sells, prime sponsor; Christine Kerlin and Stu Barger, University Center at Everett Community College; Kelly Snyder, University of Washington-Bothell; and Janine Holbrook, Providence-Everett.

**Persons Testifying** (Education Appropriations): Representative Sells, prime sponsor; Christine Kerlin and Kim Dotson, Everett Community College; and Kelly Snyder, University of Washington-Bothell.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying** (Higher Education): None.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying** (Education Appropriations): None.