

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SHB 1328

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Higher Education & Workforce Development, March 24, 2009

**Title:** An act relating to allowing public technical colleges to offer associate degrees.

**Brief Description:** Allowing public technical colleges to offer degrees that prepare students to transfer to certain bachelor degree programs.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Carlyle, Morrell, Maxwell, Eddy, Anderson, Green, Van De Wege, Sells, White, Hasegawa, Wallace, Dunshee, Priest, McCoy, Dickerson, Williams, Ormsby, Finn, Lias, Kelley, Probst, Kenney, Hunt, Kessler, Pettigrew, Haigh, Goodman, Ericks, Blake, Jacks, Angel, Driscoll, Schmick, Hudgins, Hunter, Moeller, Chase, Springer, Conway, Sullivan, Rolfes, Simpson, Campbell, Santos and Roberts).

**Brief History:** Passed House: 3/05/09, 97-0.

**Committee Activity:** Higher Education & Workforce Development: 3/24/09 [DP].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Kilmer, Chair; Jarrett, Vice Chair; Becker, Ranking Minority Member; Hewitt, Jacobsen, Kastama, McAuliffe, Pflug, Shin and Stevens.

**Staff:** Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

**Background:** There are 34 community and technical colleges in the state including 29 community colleges and five technical colleges. The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) provides financial, academic, and information technology coordination for all 34 colleges.

The community colleges offer both technical degrees as well as academic degrees that are designed to transfer to baccalaureate institutions. Technical colleges provide programs solely for occupational education, basic skills, and literacy that prepare students for direct entry into the workforce. Students that graduate from a technical college and want to continue their education can transfer their workforce courses into specific Bachelor's of Applied Science (BAS) programs that are specifically designed to match up with the focus in the workforce

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degree. Otherwise, the technical coursework does not generally transfer. Current law does not allow technical colleges to offer academic transfer degrees.

The Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) is responsible for establishing a statewide transfer of credit policy and agreement, in cooperation with the public institutions of higher education and the SBCTC. Together these entities created the Direct Transfer Agreement (DTA). Any student who completes an approved DTA associate degree at a community college is considered to have satisfied the lower division general education requirements at a public four-year institution. These students are generally admitted as juniors when they transfer.

In the late 1990s, analysis of students' credit accumulation and graduation patterns revealed that transfer students in science, math, and other highly structured majors did not graduate as efficiently as nontransfer students. When they arrived at a four-year institution, these students needed to take additional lower division course requirements to qualify for their major. To address this problem, the Council of Presidents, the HECB, and the SBCTC convened a workgroup to develop a statewide Associate of Science Transfer Degree (AS-T), which was adopted in 2000. Under the AS-T, students take more math and science prerequisites while at the community college, with the objective of transferring directly into a major once they reach the four-year institution.

**Summary of Bill:** In addition to offering technical degrees, technical colleges are allowed to offer transfer degrees that prepare students for professional bachelor's degrees. Professional degrees, in this context, are those that prepare students for a specific field or occupation, including engineering, engineering technology, pre-nursing, business, construction management, and teacher preparation for secondary education in science, technology, and math areas.

The SBCTC adopts rules creating consistency between community and technical colleges offering associate degrees that prepare students for these degrees. The SBCTC may address issues related to tuition and fee rates, tuition waivers, enrollment counting including the use of credits instead of clock hours, and degree granting authority.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

[OFM requested ten-year cost projection pursuant to I-960.]

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: We need to eliminate educational silos that do not give students flexibility in pursuing their career goals. Anything we can do to encourage students to attain higher education should be done. Current technical college faculty have the preparation and qualifications to offer these programs. This will remove one more barrier to achievement.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Representative Carlyle, prime sponsor; Jan Yoshiwara, SBCTC; John Walstren, Clover Park Technical College.