

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1586

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to the provision of doctorate programs at the research university branch campuses in Washington.

Brief Description: Regarding the provision of doctorate programs at the research university branch campuses in Washington.

Sponsors: Representatives Seaquist, Haler, Jacks, Dammeier, Moscoso, Carlyle, Zeiger, Moeller, Probst, Kenney, Stanford, Kelley, Dahlquist and Jinkins; by request of Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 2/7/11, 2/9/11 [DP];

Education Appropriations & Oversight: 2/17/11, 2/18/11 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/2/11, 97-0.

Passed Senate: 4/11/11, 47-0.

Passed Legislature.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes the University of Washington and the Washington State University to develop doctoral degree programs at their branch campuses.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Seaquist, Chair; Carlyle, Vice Chair; Haler, Ranking Minority Member; Buys, Crouse, Fagan, Hasegawa, Jacks, Probst, Reykdal and Zeiger.

Staff: Madeleine Thompson (786-7304).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS & OVERSIGHT

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 18 members: Representatives Haigh, Chair; Probst, Vice Chair; Anderson, Ranking Minority Member; Dammeier, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Dahlquist, Fagan, Frockt, Hargrove, Hope, Maxwell, Nealey, Orwall, Rolfes, Santos, Seaquist, Sells, Short and Stanford.

Staff: Trista Zugel (786-7157).

Background:

A joint report conducted by the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB), the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, and the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, compares total supply of workers at three levels of education to the demand for workers educated at those levels. The 2009 report found that to prepare Washington residents to meet employer demand and be competitive in the labor market by 2016, there was a gap of over 5,000 degrees at each level: sub-baccalaureate, baccalaureate, and graduate.

Beginning in early 2009, the HECB embarked on a project to comprehensively examine the current system of higher education and propose a strategic framework that would guide future investments. The HECB found that institutions' planned growth for graduate degrees was insufficient to meet Washington's higher education goals in all but two regions: the southwest region and the central and southeast region. Completed in December 2009, the System Design Plan offers a framework for making decisions about how to reach the goal of increasing educational attainment in Washington.

The Washington State University (WSU) and the University of Washington (UW) are the only two public institutions of higher education authorized to award research doctorate degrees in Washington. Eastern Washington University is authorized to award an applied doctorate in physical therapy. The UW Bothell, the UW Tacoma, the WSU Vancouver, and the WSU Tri-Cities are branch campuses of the two research universities authorized to award baccalaureate and master's level degrees.

The HECB has a comprehensive and ongoing assessment process to determine the need for additional degree programs and locations for degree programs. If the HECB determines that there is a need for a change in level of degree, an examination of the viability of the change is conducted. The HECB's recommendation on whether to proceed is then presented to the Governor and the Legislature.

Summary of Bill:

Subject to HECB approval, the UW and the WSU are authorized to develop doctoral degree programs at their branch campuses. The mission of branch campuses is expanded to include the full range of graduate degrees. The HECB will use their assessment process to determine whether the proposed doctoral level programs are needed and viable. In place of monitoring and evaluating the addition of lower division institutions, the HECB must monitor and evaluate the growth of branch campuses and make recommendations to the Legislature as needed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Higher Education):

(In support) Based on population, Washington ranks well behind other states in production of doctoral degrees. It makes sense to have these degrees where the students can access them and where there is demand. Graduate education is an economic driver. This would allow the state to better meet regional needs and provide applied doctoral degrees to prepare faculty for nursing programs, leaders for community and technical colleges, and principals in our K-12 system.

(Opposed) None.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Education Appropriations & Oversight):

(In support) This bill is the next evolution in education and degree programs and has no fiscal impact to the state budget. The program is fee-based and self sustaining. The ability for students to stay in their communities and get doctoral degrees is very limited and this bill will help solve that problem. Graduate education is an economic driver and can lead to less reliance on social services and unemployment. There is a degree shortage for advanced degrees in Washington. This bill would help mitigate that. The HECB already does the work of reviewing degree programs. The HECB does this week in and week out so that is why there would be no impact. A decision about future funding for other programs is a decision for the Legislature to make at that time. Washington ranks 49 out of 50 in terms of the percentage of the population enrolled in graduate programs. The state Master Plan for higher education calls for greater participation and this is a necessary step to making any progress toward those goals. Going forward, we would be very interested in permissive language that would allow us to provide these degrees on branch campuses.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying (Higher Education): Jan Ignash, Higher Education Coordinating Board; Mike Wark, The University of Washington Tacoma; John Wheeler, Washington Student Association; and Ben Henry, University of Washington Seattle.

Persons Testifying (Education Appropriations & Oversight): Representative Seaquist, prime sponsor; John Wheeler III and Ben Henry, Washington Student Association; Chris Thompson, Higher Education Coordinating Board; Chris Mulik, Washington State University; and Mike Wark, University of Washington-Tacoma.

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

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