

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1792

As Reported by House Committee On:

Higher Education
Ways & Means

Title: An act relating to expanding opportunities in higher education in north Puget Sound.

Brief Description: Concerning the University Center of North Puget Sound.

Sponsors: Representatives Sells, Hope, Dunshee, Haler, McCoy, Moscoso and Liias.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 2/10/11, 2/17/11 [DPS];

Ways & Means: 2/23/11, 2/25/11 [DP2S(w/o sub HE)].

Brief Summary of Second Substitute Bill

- Directs Washington State University to complete a strategic plan to establish a University Center Partner at Everett with the collaboration of the University Center at Everett Community College and the baccalaureate institutions that provide programs at the University Center at Everett Community College.
- Requires that the strategic plan address the higher education needs of the north Snohomish, Island, and Skagit counties, particularly in high employer demand programs of study, and report to the Legislature by December 1, 2012.
- Requires that the strategic plan include a multi-biennium budget that addresses the operating and capital expenses required to effectively implement the plan.
- Directs Washington State University to establish at least one high employer demand baccalaureate program at the University Center at Everett Community College by December 1, 2012.
- Requires that the Legislature and the Governor approve the strategic plan before Washington State University begins implementation and that they consult with the Higher Education Coordinating Board in accordance with their statutory role in approving such programs.

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.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Seaquist, Chair; Carlyle, Vice Chair; Haler, Ranking Minority Member; Parker, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Fagan, Hasegawa, Jacks, Probst, Reykdal, Sells, Springer, Warnick and Zeiger.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Buys and Crouse.

Staff: Madeleine Thompson (786-7304).

Background:

Research by the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) and State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) has found that certain regions in the state do not have adequate access to upper division baccalaureate education or graduate degrees. Access to higher education in north King, Snohomish, Island, and Skagit counties has been the subject of many studies since 1988. In 1989 the Legislature established the University of Washington, Bothell (UWB) campus.

In 2005 Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 1794, directed Everett Community College, in collaboration with community and business leaders, other higher education institutions, and the HECB, to develop an educational plan for the region based on the university center model. The group was directed to submit a plan to the Legislature in December 2005, and the HECB was directed to provide a progress report in 2008.

The HECB 2008 report found that the three-county area is large, geographically diverse, and forecast to experience continued significant population growth to 2025 and beyond. The report forecast an unmet need for over 10,700 full-time equivalent students in 2025, without increased higher education service delivery. The HECB found that young adults aged 17 to 24 years make up 74 percent of the need. Based on employer interviews, the report found that there were needs for engineering and engineering technology program offerings in addition to a variety of other high demand programs of study.

In April 2009 the University Center at Everett Community College was established at Gray Wolf Hall. The University Center at Everett Community College offers over 20 bachelor's and master's degrees from six partner universities.

In 2010 Legislation was enacted (House Bill 2694) authorizing the establishment of a bachelor of science in nursing at the University Center at Everett Community College, in partnership with the UWB.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Washington State University must create a strategic plan for establishing a branch campus in Everett and submit it to the Legislature by December 1, 2012. The University Center at Everett Community College and the higher education institutions that offer baccalaureate degrees at the University Center at Everett Community College are to collaborate in the development of the plan. The WSU is to convene a nine-member council to oversee development of the strategic plan. The council must consult with the HECB to ensure that the strategic plan aligns with the System Design Study.

The strategic plan is to address baccalaureate, graduate, and degree demand of students and employers, particularly in engineering and aeronautical programs, as well as collaboration with the University Center at Everett Community College.

The WSU must establish at least one high employer demand degree program by December 1, 2012 at the University Center at Everett Community College, and complete implementation of the strategic plan by July 1, 2014, unless otherwise directed by the Legislature.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill changes the underlying bill by:

- directing the WSU to create a strategic plan for establishing a branch campus in Everett and submit it to the Legislature by December 1, 2012;
- directing the University Center at Everett Community College and the higher education institutions that offer baccalaureate degrees at the University Center at Everett Community College to collaborate in the development of the plan;
- directing the WSU to convene a council to oversee development of the strategic plan;
- replacing the council director with the Director of the University Center at Everett Community College as a member on the council, and adding an additional representative from one of the baccalaureate degree institutions that offers programs at the University Center at Everett Community College;
- directing the council to consult with the HECB to ensure that the strategic plan aligns with the system design study;
- requiring that the plan address baccalaureate, graduate, and degree demand of students and employers particularly in engineering and aeronautical programs, as well as collaboration with the University Center at Everett Community College;
- requiring the WSU to establish at least one high employer demand degree program by December 1, 2012, at the University Center at Everett Community College;
- requiring the WSU to complete implementation of the strategic plan by July 1, 2014; and
- removing all other measures in the underlying bill except the intent section that retains statements related to the need for expanding higher education in the region.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available. New fiscal note requested on February 17, 2011.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The conversation about the need for greater higher education capacity in Everett and the larger region has been going on for a long time. It is time to move it to the next level. Everett is a growing city. There is a need for a stronger, more significant four-year degree presence in Everett. There is a need for more engineers in the region and state. A lot of the engineers in wind engineering are retiring, and there is a need to replace them with qualified individuals. The region has a need for more degrees in science, technology, engineering, and math. Existing employees would like to advance their careers and need more options. There are important economic development opportunities when a university that is a land-grant university is present. The land-grant mission leads to a good understanding of collaboration.

(Opposed) This is just a management switch. The University Center at Everett Community College already offers engineering programs that were just launched. The process for offering this proposal was not inclusive. The University Center at Everett Community College is currently addressing a wide variety of needs. This proposal does not foster partnerships and has the potential for fracturing the partnerships that are already in existence. There is no study to support this and no review of the plan by the Legislature. The leadership of the University Center at Everett Community College was already established by the Legislature a few years ago. The University Center at Everett Community College is run on an extremely efficient basis. There are concerns about the mortgage. Relationships with current university partners are excellent.

(Commented) It is important to think about the region in 10 years and what will be needed. The proposal sets in place a cooperative model, and the structure is based on a successful model.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Sells, prime sponsor; Mayor Ray Stephanson, City of Everett; Connie Niva, Washington State University Regent; Steve Klein, Snohomish County Public Utilities District; Crystal Donner, Everett Chamber of Commerce; Gary Meisner; and Elson Floyd, Brian Pitcher, and Larry James, Washington State University.

(Opposed) David Beyer, Gene Chase, and Christine Kerlin, Everett Community College; and Jim Bricker and Charlie Earl, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

(Commented) Representative Dunshee.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: The second substitute bill be substituted therefor and the second substitute bill do pass and do not pass the substitute bill by Committee on Higher Education. Signed by 21 members: Representatives Hunter, Chair; Darneille, Vice Chair; Hasegawa,

Vice Chair; Bailey, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Carlyle, Cody, Dickerson, Haigh, Haler, Hudgins, Hunt, Kagi, Kenney, Ormsby, Parker, Pettigrew, Schmick, Seaquist, Springer, Sullivan and Wilcox.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Alexander, Ranking Minority Member; Dammeier, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Orcutt, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Hinkle and Ross.

Staff: Trista Zugel (786-7157).

Summary of Recommendation of Committee On Ways & Means Compared to Recommendation of Committee On Higher Education:

The second substitute bill changes the substitute bill by:

- directing Washington State University (WSU) to complete a strategic plan to establish a University Center (UC) Partner and not a branch campus;
- requiring approval from the Legislature and the Governor before WSU begins implementation of the plan;
- clarifying that the consultation with the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) be in accordance with statutes that refer to the HECB's role in approving changes to higher educational institutions missions and plans for expansion; and
- requiring that the strategic plan include a multi-biennium budget that addresses the operating and capital expenses required to effectively implement the plan.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Preliminary fiscal note available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This is about helping Everett meet the needs of their economy in the future. We seek a research university partner particularly in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics baccalaureate degrees. Our discussions have been about finding a way to meet the needs of employers in the region. Many engineers needed in the region will retire soon. We need to meet that growing need. This plan has to be approved by the Legislature. The parties at the table now were invited there. Washington State University has a physical presence in many cities. We seek to align with Everett in the same way we have around the state, and we welcome opportunity to craft an academic plan for the region. It is the Legislature's prerogative to create branch campuses. A certain degree of planning is certainly appropriate. We appreciate the members in the policy committee responding to our concerns about the underlying bill. Those involved are willing to be active partners in developing the strategic plan. The bill is congruent with current systems designs processes. The inclusion of the UC leadership brings together leadership important to structuring a process to assess and create this plan.

The current UC leadership would be pleased to move forward with a high demand program. It is important for the UC operations to remain undisturbed by this process. We are looking forward to the continuation of existing programs. We hope that the current process will be amended to assure the results of the plan come back to the Legislature for approval. We want to assure continuity and growth, as well as the creation of options for as many students as possible. We appreciate having been heard in the policy committee, and the bill now addresses our concerns.

(In support with concerns) The current system is nimble and allows us to build on all the strengths of the constituent programs. We want to make sure it is not disturbed by this process. The development of a new branch campus is a very expensive plan, and we want to make sure that the Legislature has the ability to approve the strategic plan. We ask that the committee consider also the development of a budget so we can see the cost impact of this plan.

(Opposed) We need to consider the costs of this plan from a faculty perspective. This means considering that the cost in money, minds, and energy in this planning effort is enormous given that we need to focus our energy on dealing with the current financial situation. We have a collaborative effort in Everett already.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Sells, prime sponsor; Ray Stephanson, City of Everett; Chris Mulick, Washington State University; David Beyer, Everett Community College; Christine Kerlin, Everett Community College-University Center; Charlie Earl, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; and Sherry Burkey, Western Washington University.

(In support with concerns) Margaret Shepherd, University of Washington.

(Opposed) Marsha Riddle Buly, Western Washington University Faculty.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.