

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SSB 5442

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**As Passed House:**  
April 6, 2011

**Title:** An act relating to an accelerated baccalaureate degree program.

**Brief Description:** Requiring the development of three-year baccalaureate programs.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Development (originally sponsored by Senators Shin, Tom, Kilmer, White and Chase).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Higher Education: 3/17/11 [DP].

**Floor Activity:**

Passed House: 4/6/11, 91-3.

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Permits state and regional universities and The Evergreen State College (TESC) to develop accelerated baccalaureate degree programs that allow qualified students to obtain a baccalaureate degree in three years.
- Requires that qualified students in such programs must be allowed to begin course work within their academic field during their first term or semester of enrollment.
- Requires the universities and TESC to report to the Higher Education Coordinating Board for approval on plans for accelerated programs.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Seaquist, Chair; Haler, Ranking Minority Member; Parker, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Buys, Fagan, Hasegawa, Jacks, Probst, Reykdal, Sells, Springer, Warnick and Zeiger.

**Staff:** Madeleine Thompson (786-7304).

**Background:**

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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.*

Some public and private colleges and universities offer students the opportunity to obtain a baccalaureate degree in three years. The requirements of these accelerated baccalaureate programs vary. Frequently, these accelerated degree programs require summer school attendance, prior college credits earned during high school through such programs as Advanced Placement and Running Start, or enrollment for the maximum credits allowed per quarter.

In the Fall of 2009, the University of Washington (UW) announced a new program, called The Husky Advantage, to make it easier for students entering the UW with a high number of Advanced Placement or Running Start credits to complete a bachelor's degree in three years. According to the UW, about 500 freshmen enter each year with 45 college credits obtained while they were in high school. Through careful planning and advising, these students can complete general education requirements and fulfill the requirements of certain majors, mostly in the College of Arts and Sciences.

The Evergreen State College (TESC) reports that 9 percent of those entering as first year students graduate in three years.

**Summary of Bill:**

The state and regional universities and TESC may develop accelerated baccalaureate degree programs that will allow academically qualified students to obtain a baccalaureate degree in three years without attending summer classes or enrolling in more than a full-time class load during the regular academic year. Qualified students in such programs must be allowed to begin course work within their academic field during their first term or semester of enrollment.

The universities and TESC must report on their plans for these accelerated programs to the Higher Education Coordinating Board for approval.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) It is possible to get a baccalaureate degree in three years and it is advantageous for students in terms of cost. A four-year baccalaureate degree and the notion of spending at least four years of time to qualify for a baccalaureate degree is a traditional concept that is now outdated. This approach makes sense for students that are prepared. It helps students get into the workforce in a shorter time and this is very important for some students. This bill encourages institutions to consider the credits that students obtain while still in high school. The language ensures that the quality and integrity of programs are maintained. This is a way of offering students more choice. This bill urges institutions to explore alternative ways to offer students degrees.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Senator Shin, prime sponsor; Mike Reilly, Council of Presidents; and Tony Flinn and Alex Clardy, Eastern Washington University.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.