

SENATE BILL REPORT

EHCR 4422

As of February 16, 1996

Brief Description: Approving recommendations of the 1996 higher education master plan.

Sponsors: Representatives Carlson, Jacobsen, Mulliken, Scheuerman and Mason.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 2/19/96.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Staff Person: Jean Six (786-7423)

Background: The Higher Education Coordinating Board was created to provide planning, coordination, monitoring, and policy analysis for higher education in the state of Washington. The board was directed to consult institutions and other segments of postsecondary education as it carried out these responsibilities. The board was also directed to represent the broad public interest above the interests of the individual colleges and universities.

By statute, the board must prepare a comprehensive master plan, updated every four years. The plan and updates must be submitted to the Governor and appropriate legislative policy committees. Following public hearings, the Legislature must, by concurrent resolution, approve or recommend changes to the initial plan and subsequent updates. The plan will then become state higher education policy unless legislation is enacted to alter the policies in the plan.

The initial master plan was submitted to the Legislature in December 1987. During the 1988 session, ESSCR 8429 was adopted by the Legislature in response to the plan. The master plan was formally updated in 1992. During the 1993 session, SHCR 4408 was adopted in response to the update. In addition to the resolution, legislation was adopted to implement several recommendations in the updated plan.

The board updated the plan again in 1995. The resulting document, entitled *The Challenge for Higher Education*, challenged the state to provide educational opportunities for 84,100 new full-time equivalent (FTE) students by the year 2010. The board recommended a phased enrollment plan to accommodate the growth. In the year 2010, the community and technical college sector would enroll 24,400 additional FTE students, the public baccalaureate institutions would accommodate 24,600 additional FTE students, and the independent sector would educate an additional 7,700 students. These targets would leave 27,400 students unserved. The board proposed some possible solutions to serving the remaining students and improving the education of all students. In its description of possible solutions, the board raised a series of questions posed by each possibility.

Summary: The Legislature commends the Higher Education Coordinating Board for its dedication and commitment to the state. The Legislature thanks the board for describing many of the challenges facing the state in its attempts to provide the postsecondary education and training needed by the state's citizens.

The Legislature approves the following recommendations in the updated plan:

- (1) by the year 2010, the state will need to provide additional higher education opportunities for 84,100 FTE students; and
- (2) solutions to the enrollment challenge may, in part, be found through technology, shifting the educational focus from teaching to learning, expanding partnerships, providing financial aid to needy students, and using existing facilities in more effective ways.

The Legislature asks the board to refine the plan over the next year and to report to the 1997 Legislature with its refinements. As it works on the refinements, the Legislature suggests that the board consult a diverse group of people and use innovative approaches to develop further the solutions described in the updated plan. In addition, the Legislature requests that the board focus its attention on the following areas:

- (1) recommendations on appropriate state and institutional roles for providing remedial and developmental education;
- (2) provision of an initial list of duplicative and low-productivity programs, and description of a process for examining ways to reconfigure, consolidate, or eliminate the programs;
- (3) recommendations on ways to restructure further the way the state delivers and supports higher education;
- (4) recommendations on a governance structure and framework for the integration of technology into the educational enterprise;
- (5) recommendations for streamlining the program approval process; and
- (6) recommendations on ways institutions can increase access and reduce costs through resource sharing, enhanced use of existing facilities, and enhanced collaborative efforts among educational sectors.

The Legislature asks the 1997 Legislature to respond, by concurrent resolution, to the refinements submitted by the board.

In addition, the board was asked to provide a statutorily required annual report on the status of higher education expenditures, performance measures, and accomplishments. The Legislature would like to have the report by December 15, 1996.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.