

FINAL BILL REPORT

SHB 1047

C 211 L 97

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Changing tuition waivers for employees of institutions of higher education.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Carlson, Radcliff, Dunn and O'Brien).

House Committee on Higher Education
Senate Committee on Higher Education

Background: The governing boards of the public baccalaureate institutions and the community colleges may waive all or a portion of tuition and services and activities fees for some people who enroll in classes on a space-available basis. Until 1996, these space-available waivers were limited to permanent full-time institutional employees, senior citizens, and certain permanent full-time classified state employees. In addition, community colleges could waive tuition for eligible unemployed and underemployed persons. Students receiving these waivers do not count in official enrollment reports, and the institutions do not receive any state funding for them. Institutions were required to charge a fee of \$5 or more to cover the costs associated with enrolling these students.

In the 1996 legislative session, the Legislature enacted two bills that expanded the types of persons eligible to receive space-available waivers.

The first bill from 1996 revised the law that permits institutions to waive tuition and fees for permanent full-time classified state employees to include a number of additional state employees. These additional employees include permanent employees who are employed half-time or more: (1) in classified service under state civil service law; (2) through the Public Employees' Collective Bargaining Act; or (3) in technical colleges as classified employees and exempt paraprofessionals. Nonacademic employees and members of the faculties or instructional staffs employed half-time or more at public colleges and universities were also included. People enrolled under this law must pay a registration fee of \$5 or more.

The second bill amended a different statute. The law that permits baccalaureate institutions and community colleges to waive tuition and fees for the institutions' own permanent full-time employees was amended to include members of the Washington National Guard. People enrolled under this law are required to pay a registration fee that fully covers the costs of enrollment.

During the summer of 1996, the Office of the Attorney General advised the institutions that these two statutes conflict. The office advised the colleges that if they wished to grant space-available waivers to their own employees, the waivers must be limited to permanent full-time employees. If the colleges choose to grant waivers to other eligible state employees, the waivers could be granted to people employed half-time or more.

Summary: Provisions on tuition waivers are consolidated and clarified. Public baccalaureate institutions and community colleges may continue to waive all or a portion of tuition and fees for members of the Washington National Guard and eligible state employees who are enrolled on a space-available basis. Eligible state employees are those employed half-time or more in the employee classifications described in the legislation. Eligible state employees include faculty, counselors, librarians, and exempt professional and administrative employees at public colleges and universities. References to instructional staff are removed.

If an institution of higher education grants any waivers under this program, it must include all eligible state employees and members of the Washington National Guard in the pool of persons eligible to receive waivers. In granting waivers, an institution may not discriminate between full-time and part-time employees, but it may award waivers to eligible institutional employees before considering waivers for other eligible persons.

The separate statute is repealed that permits public baccalaureate institutions and community colleges to waive all or a portion of tuition for the institutions' own employees and members of the Washington National Guard who are enrolled on a space-available basis.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	95	0
Senate	47	0

Effective: July 27, 1997