

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5784

As of February 16, 1999

Title: An act relating to the western interstate commission for higher education western undergraduate exchange program.

Brief Description: Extending the tuition waiver for students in the western interstate commission for higher education western undergraduate exchange program.

Sponsors: Senators Sheahan, Jacobsen, Kohl-Welles and Bauer.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 2/17/99.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Staff: Risa Sandler (786-7708)

Background: Students may enroll in designated institutions in other participating states outside their home state through the Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) program. Students pay 150 percent of the receiving school's resident tuition, which is significantly less than the standard nonresident tuition. For example, at Eastern Washington University (EWU) the annual 1998-99 nonresident tuition rate for undergraduate students is \$9,322, while 150 percent of the resident rate is \$3,944. In 1997-98, approximately 8,300 students in 15 states participated in the WUE program.

In Fall 1998, Washington became a participating state on a limited basis when the 1998 Legislature authorized EWU to be a receiving institution in the WUE program (section 606(6) and section 904(w) of the supplemental budget act). The Legislature also increased the statutory limit on the percentage of operating fee revenue that EWU is allowed to waive from 11 percent to 14 percent. The increased waiver authority is sufficient to provide waivers for approximately 100 WUE participants at EWU. In fall 1998, the first quarter of WUE participation, EWU enrolled 129 students under the program. Legislative authorization provided in the budget act expires on June 30, 1999.

When the state of Washington became a WUE participant in fall 1998, other participating states extended eligibility to Washington residents going to their participating institutions. Data from WICHE indicate that 189 Washington residents participated as WUE students in other states during fall 1998.

Summary: The governing boards of Washington State University (WSU), Central Washington University (CWU), and Eastern Washington University are authorized to waive all or a portion of the difference between the nonresident tuition rate and 150 percent of the resident rate for residents of 15 WUE states, who enroll under the Western Undergraduate Exchange program. The statutory limit on the amount of operating fee revenue that WSU

is allowed to waive is increased from 20 percent to 21 percent, sufficient to provide waivers to approximately 300 WUE participants.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 10, 1999.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.