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## Higher Education Committee

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### SSB 5317

**Brief Description:** Clarifying terms for workforce and economic development.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Development (originally sponsored by Senators Shin, Kilmer, Jarrett, Delvin, Kastama and Jacobsen; by request of Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board).

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Brief Summary of Substitute Bill</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clarifies and makes consistent various terms related to "high demand."</li></ul>
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**Hearing Date:** 3/24/09

**Staff:** Andi Smith (786-7304)

**Background:**

The term "high demand" in reference to occupations and programs of study has become popular in recent years, and the term, which appears in statutes, has been interpreted inconsistently. To address this issue, the Governor's office convened a workgroup of agencies to develop common definitions. The workgroup included the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board; the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC); the Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development; the Employment Security Department; the Department of Labor and Industries; the Higher Education Coordinating Board; and the Council of Presidents. The workgroup worked over the 2007 legislative interim to develop common definitions for the terms "high employer demand program of study," "high-demand occupation," and "high student demand program of study."

The workgroup's common definition for "high employer demand program of study" is an undergraduate or graduate certificate, apprenticeship, or degree program in which the number of students prepared for employment per year (from in-state institutions) is substantially less than the number of projected job openings per year in that field – statewide or in a sub-state region.

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The common definition for "high-demand occupation" is an occupation with a substantial number of current or projected employment opportunities. The common definition for "high student demand program of study" is an undergraduate or graduate certificate or degree program, or apprenticeship, in which student demand substantially exceeds program capacity.

**Summary of Bill:**

The common terms and definitions from the workgroup are inserted into several different statutes.

"High demand occupation" replaces "high demand field" in a section that defines work activity for the WorkFirst program. The common definition for "high demand occupation" is inserted into the statute pertaining to the Unemployment Compensation Training Benefits Program.

The common definition for "high employer demand program of study" is added to the definition section of the chapter for the SBCTC, and the term replaces the term "high demand occupations" in a section on identification of job training programs in the chapter for the SBCTC. "High employer demand programs of study" replaces "high demand programs" in the statute pertaining to the pilot program to improve services to customers of vocational rehabilitation under the Department of Labor and Industries.

The changes to the terminology and the added definitions are intended to create clarity and consistency without changing policy.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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