

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1792

As Reported by House Committee On:
Higher Education

Title: An act relating to expanding opportunities in higher education in north Puget Sound.

Brief Description: Concerning the University Center of North Puget Sound.

Sponsors: Representatives Sells, Hope, Dunshee, Haler, McCoy, Moscoso and Liias.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 2/10/11, 2/17/11 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Directs Washington State University to complete a strategic plan to establish a branch campus at Everett with the collaboration of the University Center at Everett Community College and the baccalaureate institutions that provide programs at the University Center at Everett Community College.
- Requires that the strategic plan address the higher education needs of the north Snohomish, Island, and Skagit counties, particularly in high employer demand programs of study and report to the Legislature by December 1, 2012.
- Directs Washington State University to establish at least one high employer demand baccalaureate program at the University Center at Everett Community College by December 1, 2012.
- Directs Washington State University to implement the plan by July 1, 2014 unless the Legislature directs otherwise.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Seaquist, Chair; Carlyle, Vice Chair; Haler, Ranking Minority Member; Parker, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Fagan, Hasegawa, Jacks, Probst, Reykdal, Sells, Springer, Warnick and Zeiger.

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.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Buys and Crouse.

Staff: Madeleine Thompson (786-7304).

Background:

Research by the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) and State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) has found that certain regions in the state do not have adequate access to upper division baccalaureate education or graduate degrees. Access to higher education in north King, Snohomish, Island, and Skagit counties has been the subject of many studies since 1988. In 1989 the Legislature established the University of Washington, Bothell (UWB) campus.

In 2005 Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 1794, directed Everett Community College, in collaboration with community and business leaders, other higher education institutions, and the HECB, to develop an educational plan for the region based on the university center model. The group was directed to submit a plan to the Legislature in December 2005, and the HECB was directed to provide a progress report in 2008.

The HECB 2008 report found that the three-county area is large, geographically diverse, and forecast to experience continued significant population growth to 2025 and beyond. The report forecast an unmet need for over 10,700 full-time equivalent students in 2025, without increased higher education service delivery. The HECB found that young adults aged 17 to 24 years make up 74 percent of the need. Based on employer interviews, the report found that there were needs for engineering and engineering technology program offerings in addition to a variety of other high demand programs of study.

In April 2009 the University Center at Everett Community College was established at Gray Wolf Hall. The University Center at Everett Community College offers over 20 bachelor's and master's degrees from six partner universities.

In 2010 Legislation was enacted (House Bill 2694) authorizing the establishment of a bachelor of science in nursing at the University Center at Everett Community College, in partnership with the UWB.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Washington State University must create a strategic plan for establishing a branch campus in Everett and submit it to the Legislature by December 1, 2012. The University Center at Everett Community College and the higher education institutions that offer baccalaureate degrees at the University Center at Everett Community College are to collaborate in the development of the plan. The WSU is to convene a nine-member council to oversee development of the strategic plan. The council must consult with the HECB to ensure that the strategic plan aligns with the System Design Study.

The strategic plan is to address baccalaureate, graduate, and degree demand of students and employers, particularly in engineering and aeronautical programs, as well as collaboration with the University Center at Everett Community College.

The WSU must establish at least one high employer demand degree program by December 1, 2012 at the University Center at Everett Community College, and complete implementation of the strategic plan by July 1, 2014, unless otherwise directed by the Legislature.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill changes the underlying bill by:

- directing the WSU to create a strategic plan for establishing a branch campus in Everett and submit it to the Legislature by December 1, 2012;
- directing the University Center at Everett Community College and the higher education institutions that offer baccalaureate degrees at the University Center at Everett Community College to collaborate in the development of the plan;
- directing the WSU to convene a council to oversee development of the strategic plan;
- replacing the council director with the Director of the University Center at Everett Community College as a member on the council, and adding an additional representative from one of the baccalaureate degree institutions that offers programs at the University Center at Everett Community College;
- directing the council to consult with the HECB to ensure that the strategic plan aligns with the system design study;
- requiring that the plan address baccalaureate, graduate, and degree demand of students and employers particularly in engineering and aeronautical programs, as well as collaboration with the University Center at Everett Community College;
- requiring the WSU to establish at least one high employer demand degree program by December 1, 2012, at the University Center at Everett Community College;
- requiring the WSU to complete implementation of the strategic plan by July 1, 2014; and
- removing all other measures in the underlying bill except the intent section that retains statements related to the need for expanding higher education in the region.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available. New fiscal note requested on February 17, 2011.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The conversation about the need for greater higher education capacity in Everett and the larger region has been going on for a long time. It is time to move it to the next level. Everett is a growing city. There is a need for a stronger, more significant four-year degree presence in Everett. There is a need for more engineers in the region and state. A lot of the

engineers in wind engineering are retiring, and there is a need to replace them with qualified individuals. The region has a need for more degrees in science, technology, engineering, and math. Existing employees would like to advance their careers and need more options. There are important economic development opportunities when a university that is a land-grant university is present. The land-grant mission leads to a good understanding of collaboration.

(Opposed) This is just a management switch. The University Center at Everett Community College already offers engineering programs that were just launched. The process for offering this proposal was not inclusive. The University Center at Everett Community College is currently addressing a wide variety of needs. This proposal does not foster partnerships and has the potential for fracturing the partnerships that are already in existence. There is no study to support this and no review of the plan by the Legislature. The leadership of the University Center at Everett Community College was already established by the Legislature a few years ago. The University Center at Everett Community College is run on an extremely efficient basis. There are concerns about the mortgage. Relationships with current university partners are excellent.

(Commented) It is important to think about the region in 10 years and what will be needed. The proposal sets in place a cooperative model, and the structure is based on a successful model.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Sells, prime sponsor; Mayor Ray Stephanson, City of Everett; Connie Niva, Washington State University Regent; Steve Klein, Snohomish County Public Utilities District; Crystal Donner, Everett Chamber of Commerce; Gary Meisner; and Elson Floyd, Brian Pitcher, and Larry James, Washington State University.

(Opposed) David Beyer, Gene Chase, and Christine Kerlin, Everett Community College; and Jim Bricker and Charlie Earl, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

(Commented) Representative Dunshee.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.