

FINAL BILL REPORT

SCR 8428

As Passed Legislature

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

Sponsors: Senators Bauer, Wood, Kohl, Hale, Sheldon, Prince, Drew, McAuliffe and Rasmussen.

Senate Committee on Higher Education

House Committee on Higher Education

Background: According to statute, the purpose of the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) is to "provide planning, coordination, monitoring, and policy analysis for higher education in the state of Washington. ..." The Legislature intends that the board represent the broad public interest above the interests of the individual colleges and universities.

The board must prepare a comprehensive master plan, updated every four years. The plan 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 then becomes state higher education policy unless legislation is enacted to alter the policies in the plan.

During the most recent process to update the master plan, the HECB, through a public opinion survey and public meetings, learned the public has high expectations for the postsecondary system. The board reports that the state's higher education system will need to provide opportunities for an additional 84,100 students in the year 2010.

Summary: With access to postsecondary education that will provide Washington's residents with the education and training necessary to keep pace with the demands of an ever changing world identified as a most significant challenge to the higher education system, the board recognizes that the system cannot continue to conduct "business as usual." 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 and meritorious 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 a governance structure and framework for the integration of technology into the educational enterprise. The technology issues that the Legislature expects the board to address are described;
- (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 institutions can increase access while maintaining quality and reducing costs. The recommendations may, in part, be based on draft restructuring plans created by colleges and universities;
- (4) recommendations on appropriate state and institutional roles for providing remedial and developmental education;
- (5) the development of a student information system; and
- (6) a study of physical capacity in public and private colleges in the state.

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

The Legislature also requests that, by December 15, 1996, the board provide to the citizens and the Legislature a statutorily required annual report on the status of higher education expenditures, performance measures, and accomplishments.

Institutions of higher education are expected to submit draft restructuring plans within timelines specified by the HECB. The types of technology recommendations the HECB must present to the Legislature are described. These include a location plan for each site on the higher education telecommunications network; a governance structure for the network; a technology plan developed in cooperation with all higher education sectors, K-12, the State Library, and the Department of Information Services; and methods for integrating instructional technologies into the education enterprise.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	49	0	
House	94	0	(House amended)
Senate	41	0	(Senate concurred)