

FINAL BILL REPORT

SHB 3113

C 179 L 06

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Expanding access to higher education using the university center model.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Sells, Kenney, Strow, McCoy, Haler, Dunshee, B. Sullivan, Lovick, Roberts and Hasegawa).

House Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Education

House Committee on Appropriations

Senate Committee on Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education

Senate Committee on Ways & Means

Background:

The North Snohomish, Island and Skagit (NSIS) Counties Higher Education Consortium was established to provide students in the NSIS region with access to a variety of higher education institutions offering classes through one location, the Everett Station. Legislation enacted in 2005, stated that the NSIS Consortium did not meet the needs of the region and that the university center model of service delivery, centered on a community college campus with a single point of accountability, is more effective.

The legislation assigned management and leadership responsibility for the NSIS Consortium to Everett Community College and requested a plan for the region to include preliminary recommendations, due to the Legislature December 1, 2005.

Everett Community College submitted a report titled "Higher Education Opportunity in the NSIS region (Preliminary Report)" to the Legislature on December 1, 2005. This report describes the vision for a new "University Center of North Puget Sound," to sponsor bachelor's and graduate degree programs offered by a variety of different universities. The University Center of North Puget Sound would be located at Everett Station through 2008, and then relocate to Everett Community College in January 2009, with the opening of a new undergraduate education center on the college campus. Depending on enrollment growth, the report states that additional space may be required beyond 2011.

The preliminary report submitted by Everett Community College describes projections of the population to the year 2025. In the Snohomish area, the total population is projected to expand by 39 percent, in the Island region by 35 percent, and in the Skagit region by 46 percent. Low baccalaureate participation rates and low transfer rates are attributed to the lack of a baccalaureate institution in the region. Student interest in baccalaureate opportunities in the NSIS region was documented through a survey conducted by the University of Washington. Of the students surveyed, 83 percent of community college students said they

wanted to continue beyond an associate degree. A follow-up survey conducted by Everett Community College found that half of all people surveyed said they would complete a bachelor's degree if the program of their choice was available in the Everett area. Employer needs in the area, as stated in the report, include interest in educational options for employees who already have earned a technical associate degree, but who need a bachelor's degree to strengthen their skills.

The report also describes goals which include serving between 450 and 620 full-time equivalent (FTE) students by the year 2011, and 700 to 1,500 FTEs by the year 2015. The range of needed FTEs will depend on when new programs can be added and whether new opportunities for participation in higher education will successfully meet the needs of the expected population growth in the area.

The need for higher education enrollment in the NSIS region has been documented in a study required by the 2005 Capital Budget proviso. The Budget directs the Higher Education Coordinating Board to undertake a higher education needs assessment of the Snohomish, Island, and Skagit counties region. An interim report was due to the Legislature on January 15, 2006, and a final report is due December 1, 2006. The interim report projects unmet need at the upper-division level to 4,141 FTEs and unmet need at the graduate/professional level to 2,397 FTEs by the year 2025.

Summary:

The Legislature accepts the preliminary report "Higher Education Opportunity in the NSIS Region" as representative of the needs for higher education in the NSIS region, finds unmet need at the upper-division level in the area, and intends to support enrollment growth as represented in the report.

The Legislature intends to provide funding for a minimum of 250 FTEs at the upper-division and graduate levels for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2007, to meet the higher education needs of the NSIS region. The funding will support fields of study including but not limited to, engineering, technology, nursing and health professions, environmental sciences, education, interdisciplinary studies, and others based on student and employer demand.

Everett Community College, with the assistance of Edmonds Community College, Skagit Valley College, and the participating universities will submit a report to the Legislature by July 1, 2007. The report will describe the number of enrollments and degrees resulting from the new FTE funding, as well as the effect of those enrollments and degrees on local communities.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	90	8
Senate	48	0

Effective: June 7, 2006
July 1, 2006 (Section 1)