

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 6464

As Passed Senate, February 14, 2006

Title: An act relating to expanding access to baccalaureate degree programs at Washington State University, Tri-Cities.

Brief Description: Expanding the baccalaureate degree program at WSU, Tri-Cities.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education (originally sponsored by Senators Delvin, McAuliffe, Hewitt, Pridemore and Rasmussen).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education: 1/20/06, 1/27/06 [DPS-WM].

Ways & Means: 2/6/06, 2/7/06 [DPS(EKHE)].

Passed Senate: 2/14/06, 48-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING, K-12 & HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6464 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Weinstein, Vice Chair, Early Learning & K-12; Schmidt, Ranking Minority Member; Berkey, Carrell, Delvin, Eide, Kohl-Welles, Rasmussen, Rockefeller, Schoesler and Shin.

Staff: Ingrid Mungia (786-7423)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6464 as recommended by Committee on Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Doumit, Vice Chair, Operating Budget; Zarelli, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Fairley, Kohl-Welles, Parlette, Pflug, Rasmussen, Regala, Roach, Rockefeller, Schoesler and Thibaudeau.

Staff: Steve Jones (786-7440)

Background: Last session, the Legislature passed E2SHB 1794 allowing Washington State University Tri-Cities to continue its co-admission and co-enrollment options with Columbia Basin College, and expand its upper-division capacity for transfer students and graduate capacity and programs. The campus was also allowed to seek additional opportunities to collaborate with the Pacific Northwest National Laboratories in biotechnology research programs. Beginning in the Fall of 2006, the campus is permitted to offer lower-division courses linked to specific majors in fields not addressed at local community colleges. The

campus is permitted to admit lower-division students in a co-admission or co-enrollment agreement with a community college. In addition to the lower division courses linked to specific majors, the campus is permitted to directly admit freshmen and sophomores only for a bachelor's degree in biotechnology.

Summary of Bill: Beginning in the fall of 2006, Washington State University Tri-Cities may admit lower division students without the limitation of co-admission and co-enrollment with Columbia Basin College. The campus will develop into a four-year institution of higher education by simultaneously admitting freshman and sophomores, increasing transfer enrollment, co-admitting transfer students and expanding graduate and professional programs.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 18, 2006.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Testimony For: This bill allows the Tri-Cities to take the opportunity of the unique assets the Tri-Cities has with the National Lab, the community college, and WSU. There is great support for this bill; there is great collaboration in the Tri-Cities. The city of Richland supports this bill to advance our educational opportunities in the Tri-Cities area. There are a lot of benefits to our communities. There is a need for this bill. Bringing together the resources from the Laboratories and the Higher Educational Institutions brings a unique strength, and it is important for the economy statewide. It is extremely important for our Tri-Cities workforce. This will help pull students through the very early pipeline of the educational community. This bill is about leveraging the communities' assets. This bill unites the region and brings the community together. WSU Tri-Cities looks forward to having the same status as other branch campuses across the state. There needs to be a seamless education system. The bill helps the region leverage its local assets and brings in jobs to our community. The bill will help enhance cooperation between WSU, Northwest Laboratories, and the community colleges. The community in the Tri-Cities hoped to achieve parity with the other branch campuses in the state last year. The community wants to align academic calendars between all the higher education communities in Tri-Cities. Allowing WSU Tri-Cities to offer baccalaureate and advanced degrees is critical not only to the Tri-Cities but to the continued success of business in Eastern Washington. WSU is in strong support of this bill and anxious to help implement the plan. The mission of WSU Tri-Cities is significantly narrow compared to other branch campuses in the state. This bill brings the mission on par with other missions of branch campuses in Washington. If our community and state are to stay competitive, we need to invest in higher education. Columbia Basin College is in support of this bill and looks forward to working with WSU. This is the single most important issue for Tri-Cities. WSU Tri-Cities wants the same chance as the other branch campuses in Washington.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Senator Delvin, prime sponsor; Senator Hewitt, sponsor; Rob Welch, City of Richland; Dr. Laura Powell, Advanced Imaging Technology; Chris Sivula, Tri-city Chamber; Kris Johnson, Tri-city Chamber; Fren Forgette, TRIDEL; Andi Smith, HECB;

Bruce Botka, HECB; Chris Thompson, HECB; Carl Adrian, Tri City Development Council; Frank Armijo, Lockheed Martin Information Technology; Larry Ganders, WSU; Dave Lemack, WSU-TC; Lee Thornton, Columbia Basin College; Mike Lawrence & Jim Jesernig, Battelle/Pacific Northwest National Laboratories.