

FINAL BILL REPORT

EHB 1808

PARTIAL VETO

C 82 L 03

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Requiring standards of review before changing lines of instruction at research universities.

Sponsors: By Representatives Kenney, Cox, Fromhold, Priest, Berkey, Jarrett, Gombosky, Morrell, Chase, McCoy and Lantz.

House Committee on Higher Education
Senate Committee on Higher Education
Senate Committee on Ways & Means

Background:

Exclusive Lines of Study. Generally the state does not dictate which degree programs or major lines of study a public institution of higher education may offer. These decisions are left to the governing boards of each institution.

There are a few exceptions where state laws stipulate that only the University of Washington (UW) or Washington State University (WSU) may offer degrees in particular lines of study. One example is electrical engineering.

Electrical Engineering. In 2002 WSU granted 76 bachelor's degrees in electrical and computer engineering. The UW granted about 135 degrees in electrical and 220 degrees in computer science and engineering. Both universities also have graduate programs. Independent institutions also offer electrical engineering programs: Seattle Pacific University, Walla Walla College, and Seattle University. Gonzaga University offers both electrical and computer engineering. Total enrollment in these programs is approximately 400 students.

HECB Program Approval. The Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) is required to approve the creation of a new degree program at any public four-year institution. There are no statutory criteria for this review. According to HECB guidelines, institutions are required to provide the following types of information:

- objective data regarding the need for the program;
- plans for how student achievement and program effectiveness will be assessed;
- program budget and expected enrollment; and
- assurances that expert reviewers attest to the quality of the program.

Summary:

Electrical engineering as a major line of study is no longer restricted only to the UW or WSU.

Whenever the exclusive lines of study for both the UW and WSU are changed (including the change made in this act), the HECB must conduct an independent analysis of a request by a higher education institution to offer a new degree program.

The analysis includes information from a variety of sources, including that submitted by the institution. Such information includes: a) detailed evidence of why the program is justified, including the size and scope of student, employer, and community demand; b) the feasibility and cost of using existing public or private capacity for the program; c) projected future enrollment; and d) any other information the HECB may require regarding demand, need, and cost-effectiveness.

The HECB will submit a complete analysis of such a proposal to the House and Senate higher education committees prior to making its final determination on the program.

Votes on Final Passage:

House 95 0

Senate 29 17

Effective: July 27, 2003

Partial Veto Summary: The Governor vetoed the section that required the HECB to examine certain information and provide an analysis to the higher education committees of the Legislature whenever an institution seeks approval to offer a degree program previously restricted only to the UW or WSU.