
Higher Education Committee

SB 5475

Brief Description: Limiting courses of instruction that are exclusive to research institutions of higher education.

Sponsors: Senators Horn, Shin, Sheahan, Kohl-Welles, Carlson and Winsley.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Removes the restriction that only the University of Washington (UW) or Washington State University (WSU) may offer electrical engineering degrees.

Hearing Date: 3/28/03

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

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. The Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) must also approve the creation of a new degree program at any public four-year institution.

There are a few exceptions where state laws stipulate that only the UW or WSU may offer degrees in particular major 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 engineering 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.

Summary of Bill:

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

WSU.

Note: In the House version of this bill (EHB 1808), the HECB is directed to conduct an independent analysis of any request by an institution to offer a new degree program that had previously been restricted only to UW or WSU. The analysis includes: a) detailed evidence justifying the program, including demand for the program; b) the feasibility and cost of using existing capacity for the program; and c) projected future enrollment. The HECB submits its analysis to the Legislature prior to making its final determination on the program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

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