

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## SHB 2817

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Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Establishing a technology emphasis for institutions of higher education.

**Sponsors:** By House Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Sells, McCoy, Strow, Dunshee, Lovick, Jarrett, Morris, Ormsby, Morrell, Haler, O'Brien, Fromhold, Ericks, Kilmer and B. Sullivan).

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

### **Background:**

#### State Trends in Undergraduate Enrollment and Degree Production

The Office of Financial Management (OFM) collects data on undergraduate enrollments and degrees produced in specific fields. The OFM data show that of the 90,074 full-time equivalents (FTEs) who were enrolled at the undergraduate level in 2002-2003 at public four-year institutions:

- engineering enrollments declined by 12 percent since 1992-93;
- close to 4 percent of total enrollment was in the field of engineering and related technologies;
- about 17 percent of total enrollment was in the sciences; and
- approximately 3 percent of total enrollment was in the field of computer science.

A total of 20,456 bachelor degrees were awarded in all fields, and the data show that:

- the number of engineering degrees awarded declined by 8.6 percent since 1992-93;
- 4.2 percent of the degrees were in engineering and related fields;
- 1.5 percent of the degrees were in physical science;
- 4.6 percent of the degrees were in life sciences; and
- 2.6 percent of the degrees were in computer science.

#### Relationship Between Specific Fields of Study and Employer Demand

A recent joint study conducted by the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB), the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges states that demand for workers trained at the baccalaureate level and higher in certain occupations is not met by current supply. Current degree production meets only 67 percent of the need in engineering and 56 percent of the need in computer science. The study finds that demand would best be met through increased enrollment in related programs.

### **Summary:**

The Legislature recognizes that placing a priority on enrolling students and conferring degrees in the fields of engineering, technology, biotechnology, science, computer science, and mathematics is vital to the state's economic prosperity. Therefore, it is the Legislature's intent to promote increased access, delivery models, enrollment slots, and degree opportunities in these fields.

Institutions of higher education are required to determine local student demand in these fields and submit findings and proposed alternatives to meet demand to the HECB and the Legislature by November 1, 2008. The HECB must track and report progress in at least the following ways:

- the number of students enrolled in these fields on a biennial basis;
- the number of associate, bachelor's and master's degrees conferred in these fields on a biennial basis;
- expenditures on enrollment and degree programs in these fields; and
- the number and type of public-private partnerships established relating to these fields.

The institutions of higher education have discretion and flexibility in achieving the objectives of increasing enrollments and degrees conferred in these fields. Types of institutional programs include, but are not limited to, establishment of institutes of technology, new polytechnic-based institutions, and new divisions of existing institutions. Examples of delivery models include face-to-face learning, interactive courses, internet-based offerings, and instruction on main campuses, branch campuses, and other educational centers.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

House	98	0	
Senate	48	0	(Senate amended)
House	95	0	(House concurred)

**Effective:** June 7, 2006