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HOUSE BILL 2867

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State of Washington                      59th Legislature                      2006 Regular Session

By Representatives Kenney, Haler, Grant, Hankins, Cox, Sells, Roberts, Fromhold, Armstrong, Walsh, Skinner and Newhouse

Read first time 01/16/2006.                      Referred to Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Education.

1            AN ACT Relating to expanding access to baccalaureate degree  
2 programs at Washington State University Tri-Cities; amending RCW  
3 28B.45.030; and declaring an emergency.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5            **Sec. 1.** RCW 28B.45.030 and 2005 c 258 s 4 are each amended to read  
6 as follows:

7            (1) Washington State University is responsible for providing  
8 baccalaureate and graduate level higher education programs to the  
9 citizens of the Tri-Cities area, under rules or guidelines adopted by  
10 the higher education coordinating board and in accordance with  
11 proportionality agreements emphasizing access for transfer students  
12 developed with the state board for community and technical colleges.  
13 Washington State University shall meet that responsibility through the  
14 operation of a branch campus in the Tri-Cities area. The branch campus  
15 shall replace and supersede the Tri-Cities university center. All  
16 land, facilities, equipment, and personnel of the Tri-Cities university  
17 center shall be transferred from the University of Washington to  
18 Washington State University.

1       (2) In 2005, the legislature authorized the expansion on a limited  
2 basis of Washington State University's branch campus in the Tri-Cities  
3 area. The legislature authorized the Tri-Cities branch campus to  
4 continue providing innovative coadmission and coenrollment options with  
5 Columbia Basin College, and to expand its upper-division capacity for  
6 transfer students and graduate capacity and programs. The branch  
7 campus was given authority beginning in fall 2006 to offer lower-  
8 division courses linked to specific majors in fields not addressed at  
9 the local community colleges. The campus was also authorized to  
10 directly admit freshmen and sophomores for a bachelor's degree program  
11 in biotechnology subject to approval by the higher education  
12 coordinating board. The legislature finds that the Tri-Cities  
13 community is very engaged in and committed to exploring the further  
14 expansion of Washington State University Tri-Cities branch campus into  
15 a four-year institution and considers this issue to be a top priority  
16 for the larger Tri-Cities region.

17       (3) Washington State University Tri-Cities shall continue providing  
18 innovative coadmission and coenrollment options with Columbia Basin  
19 College, and expand its upper division capacity for transfer students  
20 and graduate capacity and programs. The campus shall also seek  
21 additional opportunities to collaborate with the Pacific Northwest  
22 national laboratory. Beginning in the fall of 2006, the campus may  
23 offer lower division courses linked to specific majors in fields not  
24 addressed at local community colleges. The campus may admit lower  
25 division students through coadmission or coenrollment agreements with  
26 a community college, or through direct transfer for students who have  
27 accumulated approximately one year of transferable college credits. In  
28 addition to offering lower division courses linked to specific majors  
29 as addressed above, the campus may also directly admit freshmen and  
30 sophomores for a bachelor's degree program in biotechnology subject to  
31 approval by the higher education coordinating board. (~~The campus may~~  
32 ~~not directly admit freshmen and sophomores for degree programs other~~  
33 ~~than biotechnology, however this topic shall be the subject of further~~  
34 ~~study and recommendations by the higher education coordinating board.))~~

35       (4) The Washington State University Tri-Cities branch campus shall  
36 develop a plan for expanding into a four-year institution and shall  
37 identify new degree programs and course offerings focused on areas of  
38 specific need in higher education that exist in southeastern

1 Washington. The branch campus's plan should examine the resources and  
2 talent available in the Tri-Cities area, including but not limited to  
3 resources and talent available at the Pacific Northwest national  
4 laboratory, and how these resources and talent may best be used by the  
5 Tri-Cities branch campus to expand into a four-year institution. The  
6 branch campus shall submit its plan to the legislature and the higher  
7 education coordinating board by November 30, 2006.

8 (5) Beginning in the fall of 2007, the Washington State University  
9 Tri-Cities branch campus may begin, subject to approval by the higher  
10 education coordinating board, admitting lower-division students  
11 directly into programs beyond the biotechnology field that are  
12 identified in its plan as being in high need in southeastern  
13 Washington. Such fields may include but need not be limited to  
14 science, engineering and technology, biomedical sciences, alternative  
15 energy, and computational and information sciences. By gradually and  
16 deliberately admitting freshmen and sophomores in accordance with its  
17 plan, increasing transfer enrollment, and coadmitting transfer  
18 students, the campus shall develop into a four-year institution serving  
19 the southeastern Washington region.

20 NEW SECTION. Sec. 2. This act is necessary for the immediate  
21 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the  
22 state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect  
23 immediately.

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