
Higher Education Committee

HB 2548

Brief Description: Authorizing a branch campus of the University of Washington at Everett.

Sponsors: Representatives Dunshee, Sells, Lias, Roberts, Chase and Ericks.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs the University of Washington (UW) to operate a third branch campus, the University of Washington North Sound, in Everett.
- Directs the University of Washington to expand: (1) upper division and graduate capacity; (2) programs in high demand areas of study including science, technology, and engineering.
- Allows for the admission of freshman and sophomores "gradually and deliberately."
- Directs the University of Washington to develop co-admission or co-enrollment agreements with a community college to emphasize access for transfer students.

Hearing Date: 1/28/08

Staff: Andi Smith (786-7304).

Background:

The 2007-09 capital budget (Section 1048, Chapter 520, Laws of 2007) expressed the Legislature's intent to expand Baccalaureate and graduate capacity in the Snohomish, Island, Skagit area (SIS) and called on the University of Washington (UW) to govern and operate an additional branch campus to be located in that area. Top priorities for the campus include expansion of upper division capacity for transfer students and graduate students in high demand programs, with a particular focus on science, technology, and engineering.

The 2007-09 capital budget also appropriated \$4 million to UW and the Office of Financial Management (OFM) to recommend where to locate the campus in the SIS area and to develop a

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preliminary academic plan for it. A preliminary academic plan and site options and recommendations were released on November 15, 2007.

In 2007, a series of work groups convened by UW and OFM and including the architecture firm NBBJ began to analyze higher education needs both in SIS counties and statewide. The SIS area has historically witnessed higher than average community and technical college student participation yet lower than average student participation in four-year institutions. Lower levels of enrollment and degree production are partially offset by the in-migration of out-of-state workers with degrees to fill open jobs.

The workgroup, consultant team, and UW projected that 90 percent of the current level of SIS student participation in public four-year institutions would be met by existing institutions. Thus, enrollment for the new campus was projected at 5,059 students (4,452 undergraduate and 607 graduate) in 2025; 5,272 students (4,639 undergraduate and 633 graduate) in 2030; and 6,393 students (5,626 undergraduate and 767 graduate) in 2040. This assumes a 33 percent increase in student participation rate in the SIS area due to successful outreach and preparation efforts.

The estimates that full capital costs for the new campus will range from \$645 to \$803 million in 2007 dollars, excluding sales tax, construction contingencies, and site costs. They argue that it will be a minimum of six years, and more realistically 10 years or more, before such a large campus could be constructed. Operating costs in 2007 dollars are estimated to be \$41 million annually at full enrollment in 2025.

The OFM also contracted with architecture and design firm NBBJ to present at least three options and recommend a preferred permanent site for the new branch campus. NBBJ was also asked to assess options and make recommendations for an interim site beginning in fall 2008 that could accommodate up to 250 students with classes, including at least one possible lab science or engineering related program.

The workgroup (which included NBBJ) solicited potential sites for the new campus, resulting in a total of 84 submittals representing all three area counties by the end of July 2007. Each site was reviewed based on the following initial threshold criteria: location, transportation accessibility, and site conditions. The list was then narrowed to 11 sites and subject to more rigorous evaluation.

Each of the evaluation criteria were not deemed to be equal in their relative importance, so each was assigned a weight. For both the un-weighted and weighted site scores, the Pacific Station site in Everett ranked as the preferred site followed by the Smokey Point site in Marysville. The other Everett site (Riverside) third and the Lake Stevens site (Cavalero) site fourth.

Summary of Bill:

The UW is directed to operate a third branch campus, the University of Washington North Sound, in Everett. The UW must expand upper division and graduate capacity as well as programs in high demand areas of study including science, technology, and engineering. The campus may offer lower division courses linked to specific majors in fields not addressed at local community colleges.

Gradual and deliberate admission of freshman and sophomores is allowed in accordance with the campus plan submitted to the higher education coordinating board. The campus must also admit

transfer students through co-admission or co-enrollment agreements with a community college, developed by the UW and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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