

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6391

As of February 14, 2008

Title: An act relating to creating a University of Washington branch campus.

Brief Description: Authorizing an additional University of Washington branch campus.

Sponsors: Senators Shin, Berkey, Delvin, Franklin, Sheldon, Swecker and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 1/17/08, 1/21/08 [DPS-WM, DNP].
Ways & Means: 2/06/08.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6391 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Shin, Chair; Kilmer, Vice Chair; Delvin, Ranking Minority Member; Berkey and Schoesler.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Sheldon.

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Staff: Tim Yowell (786-7435)

Background: A number of studies have been undertaken over the past decade to determine the higher education needs of north King, Snohomish, Island, and Skagit Counties. In November 2006 a consultant team final report found that the needs of about 10,800 full-time equivalent students would be unmet by 2025 if students from those counties participated in baccalaureate and graduate degree programs at the 1998 national average for all adults. The consultant report recommended investment in a four-year university with a polytechnical focus. After receiving this report, the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) issued its assessment of the higher education needs of Snohomish, Island, and Skagit (SIS) Counties in December 2006. The HECB recommended: (1) that the state's first priority should be to increase core funding and enrollment at the existing public colleges and universities; (2) that future decisions about creation of a new four-year campus should be made when the existing institutions reached their maximum capacity; and (3) that planning for a new four-year

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campus in the SIS region should continue in order to more fully describe the requirements, costs, and system impacts of creating a new campus.

A proviso in the 2007 Capital Budget Act directed the University of Washington (UW) to operate an additional branch campus in the SIS area, with a particular focus on education of upper-division and graduate students in science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM) and other high-demand programs. The proviso directed the Office of Financial Management (OFM) and the UW to assess potential sites for the new campus, and to submit siting recommendations and a preliminary academic plan to the Governor and Legislature by November 2007.

OFM retained a consultant to evaluate potential sites for the branch campus. Seventy-three potential site proposals were submitted, and that number was narrowed to the four most viable options. These four potential sites were ranked in the following order: (1) Pacific Station in Everett; (2) Smokey Point in North Marysville; (3) Riverside in Everett; and (4) Cavalero in south Lake Stevens.

The preliminary academic plan submitted in November 2007 recommends: (1) the creation of a comprehensive branch campus with an emphasis on engineering, health, sciences, education, and business and an anticipated enrollment of 5,000 students by 2025; (2) a coordinated effort to increase student interest in and preparation for higher education in general, and study in the STEM fields in particular; (3) initiation of the University of Washington North Sound programs in 2008; and (4) more rapid campus development than occurred at earlier branch campuses, in order to achieve sufficient size to support quality offerings in the STEM fields.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Substitute): A University of Washington branch campus, to be called the University of Washington North Sound, is created in Everett. The top priority for this branch campus is the expansion of upper division capacity for transfer students, graduate capacity, and programs in science, nursing, teacher education, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Lower division courses, linked to specific majors not addressed at local community colleges, may be offered beginning the fall of 2009. In addition to offering these courses, the campus may also directly admit freshman and sophomore students in accordance with plans submitted to the HECB in 2009.

When developing the capital plan for the University of Washington North Sound, the HECB balances the overall capital needs of all of the state's institutions of higher education. The capital plan for the University of Washington North Sound is developed in a manner that is consistent with the overall capital facilities plan and the strategic master plan.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE (Recommended Substitute): The HECB balances the overall capital needs of the colleges. The capital plan for the new University of Washington North Sound is developed consistently with the overall capital facilities plan and strategic master plan.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill (Higher Education): PRO: This is an idea whose time has come. We need a campus that is designed to address our state's need for workers in high demand fields. Size of the physical plant is a secondary consideration, quality academics is paramount. The City of Everett will provide 100 new parking spaces within walking distance when classes start this fall. Outreach has been done with property owners in the area, and they are committed to higher education in the area. Everett provides proximity to a large student population, proximity to employers, internship possibilities, urban center amenities, housing and transit, and available classrooms now. This is an urgent concern for employers in the area. Renewing the downtown core would be the ultimate in recycling. The Everett site is the best location to minimize global warming and other environmental concerns. The Everett site has the smallest carbon footprint. No matter where the college is located, transportation will need to be addressed. Expected growth in the area will make this the most central location in relation to population. There is already an effort in Everett to raise money for student scholarships. Everett is the county seat and the metropolitan center. Proximity to urban services is important to students. The Everett site has passionate support from the business community. The process was fair and the conclusions need to be respected.

CON: We need to keep in mind that this institution needs to address the needs of Skagit and Island counties as well. The college will need a large footprint to accommodate the needs of the students. Businesses in the Smokey Point area are also willing to provide employment opportunities. Washington is in an educational crisis and this small branch campus is not going to adequately address the need. The process for choosing the site was flawed and lacks integrity. We need to be thinking more long term for expansion. Students deserve a peaceful campus that is safe and the Everett site does not provide these things. The Everett site offers easier commuting.

Persons Testifying (Higher Education): PRO: Senator Paull Shin, prime sponsor; Mayor Ray Stephanson, City of Everett; Louise Masten, Everett Chamber of Commerce; Crystal Donner; Daryll Chapman, Snohomish County Labor Council; Mo McBroom, Washington Environmental Council; April Putney, Future Wise; Brian Sullivan, Snohomish County Council; Dave Somers, Snohomish County Council; Linda Johannes, Everett Mall; Sue Strickland, Downtown Everett Association; Peter Jackson, Gail Larson, Providence Medical Center; Katheryn Beck, David Evans and Association; Loretta Seppanen, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; Karen Shaw; Deborah Wright, City of Everett Neighborhoods CS; Allan Giffen, City of Everett Planning.

CON: Bill Binford, Catherine Binford, Joel Harback, Jane Roberts, Kenneth Dahlstedt.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Ways & Means): PRO: Students in the Snohomish-Island-Skagit region are less likely to go on to higher education than those in other parts of the state. Seventy percent of the area population is located in Everett or south Snohomish County. Many companies support the Everett location, and have indicated their willingness to support it by providing internship opportunities and financial support.

CON: The jail is very close to the Everett site, and would pose safety risks to students. The Everett site isn't large enough, isn't contiguous, and is contaminated. An objective application of the criteria would show that Marysville is a better site.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means): PRO: Ray Stephanson, Mayor of Everett; Patrick Pearce, Everett Chamber of Commerce.

CON: Norm Olsen, Becky Foster, UW-North Tri-County.