

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2398

As Reported by House Committee On: Higher Education

Title: An act relating to the authority of community colleges to confer honorary bachelor of applied science degrees.

Brief Description: Permitting community colleges that confer applied baccalaureate degrees to confer honorary bachelor of applied science degrees.

Sponsors: Representatives Walkinshaw, Haler, Seaquist, Zeiger, Muri, Smith, Ryu, Reykdal, S. Hunt, Gregerson and Pollet.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 1/24/14, 1/29/14 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Permits the Boards of Trustees of community and technical colleges that are authorized to offer baccalaureate degrees, to confer honorary Bachelor of Applied Science degrees.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 19 members: Representatives Seaquist, Chair; Pollet, Vice Chair; Haler, Ranking Minority Member; Zeiger, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Gregerson, Hansen, Hargrove, Johnson, Magendanz, Muri, Reykdal, Sawyer, Scott, Sells, Smith, Tarleton, Walkinshaw, Walsh and Wylie.

Staff: Madeleine Thompson (786-7304).

Background:

Authority to Confer Honorary Degrees.

The Boards of Regents of the state research universities and the Boards of Trustees of Central Washington University, Eastern Washington University, the Evergreen State College, and Western Washington University, are authorized, upon recommendation of the faculty, to

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confer honorary degrees upon persons other than graduates of the university or college in recognition of their learning or devotion to literature, art, or science.

Similarly, upon recommendation of the faculty, and in recognition of a person's learning or devotion to literature, art, or science, the Boards of Trustees for community and technical colleges may confer honorary Associate of Arts degrees, upon persons other than graduates of the college.

Legislation enacted in 2012 added authorization for all the Boards of Regents and Boards of Trustees at higher education institutions to confer honorary degrees upon former students of the institution who were ordered into an internment camp in 1942 and did not graduate.

Bachelor of Applied Science Programs at Community and Technical Colleges.

Legislation enacted in 2005 directed the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) to create a pilot program and to develop and offer Bachelor of Applied Science (B.A.S.) degrees at selected colleges. In 2010 the pilot status of the program was removed and the SBCTC is authorized to approve community and technical college applications to offer applied baccalaureate degree programs.

A total of 475 full-time equivalent students were enrolled in 10 B.A.S. programs in the 2012-13 academic year. In total, 17 programs have been approved to offer B.A.S. degrees.

Summary of Bill:

The Boards of Trustees of community and technical colleges that are authorized to offer baccalaureate degrees are authorized to confer honorary B.A.S. degrees.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) When authorization was given to community and technical colleges to offer applied baccalaureate degrees, the authorization to provide honorary degrees was overlooked. It is important to bring someone that has contributed significantly to the education community and honor them with an honorary degree. This ability to offer honorary degrees adds visibility to the B.A.S. degree.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Walkinshaw, prime sponsor; Stuart Halsan and Jim Walton, Centralia College; Jan Yoshiwara, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; and Paul Bell, Bellevue College.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.