

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1005

As Reported By House Committee On:
Higher Education

Title: An act relating to the governing board of the state's higher education institutions.

Brief Description: Adding student members to the governing boards of institutions of higher education.

Sponsors: Representatives Jacobsen, Wood, Ogden, Schmidt, Dellwo, Miller, Sheldon, Basich, Franklin, Mielke, Ludwig, Morris, J. Kohl, Wineberry, Anderson, Orr, Brumsickle, Kremen, H. Myers, Pruitt, Romero, Van Luven, Long, King, Springer, Dyer, Brown, Quall, Veloria, Chappell, Leonard, Edmondson, Sehlin, Rayburn, Flemming, Roland, Karahalios, Shin and Hansen.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Higher Education, February 10, 1993, DPS.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 16 members: Representatives Jacobsen, Chair; Quall, Vice Chair; Sheahan, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Basich; Bray; Carlson; Casada; Finkbeiner; Flemming; Kessler; J. Kohl; Mielke; Ogden; Orr; Rayburn; and Wood.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Brumsickle, Ranking Minority Member; and Shin.

Staff: Marilee Scarbrough (786-7196).

Background: Each Washington State regional and research institution of higher education is governed by a board of trustees or a board of regents. According to the current statutes, the boards are responsible for the management and operation of the universities.

The University of Washington and the Washington State University are governed by a board of regents. Each board has nine members who are appointed by the governor with the consent of the Senate to serve six year terms.

The regional institutions are governed by a board of trustees. Each board has seven members who are appointed by the governor with the consent of the Senate to serve a term of six years.

Students do not serve as members of the boards. However, the research universities allow one graduate student, one undergraduate student and one representative of the faculty senate to serve as advisory members to the boards. The advisory members are presidents of their respective associations. Advisory members do not vote but they have formal sections of the board's agenda.

The regional institutions allow the associated student body presidents and a representative of the faculty senate to serve as advisory members to the boards. The representatives are allowed formal sections of the boards' agenda and an opportunity to participate in the board's discussions. The student and faculty representatives do not vote or participate in executive sessions.

Summary of Substitute Bill: One undergraduate student and one graduate student will be appointed to the board of regents of the University of Washington. One undergraduate student and one graduate student will be appointed to the board of regents of Washington State University. One undergraduate student will be appointed to the board of trustees of each of the regional universities and The Evergreen State College.

The student members will be appointed by the governor from a list of no fewer than three names for each position submitted by the governing board of the recognized student government. The student members of the board will serve for a term of two years.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original: A student trustee will serve on the board of trustees of The Evergreen State College. The definition of recognized student government is clarified. The student terms will begin on the first day of August and end on the last day of July, instead of beginning in January and ending in December. Language is added that requires student nominees to be full-time and in good academic standing at the time of nomination and the time of appointment.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect January 1, 1994.

Testimony For: Thirty states have students on governing boards. Those students have brought an additional positive dimension to those governing boards. Students are consumers at institutions, and deserve a voice in the operation of those institutions. Student trustees would provide a vital link with students and the institution. Student trustees would better understand the issues that relate to students. A student as a voting regent would have more access to information and input than the current student advisory members.

Testimony Against: Adding a student member will change the composition of the board. The board will change from a citizen board to a citizen board with students. Other groups may request representation also, such as professional and classified staff. The governing board should be composed of individuals who are disinterested members. A two year term for students is too short. It takes time to become familiar with board issues and the process. This legislation is not necessary because shared governance already exists. Students are represented on search committees and as advisory members to the board. Adding students increases the potential that boards will grow larger and larger. As they grow larger, they will become less effective. This legislation creates a special class of regent. Placing a student on the board creates a potential conflict of interest.

Witnesses: (in favor) Marta Lowe, University of Washington; and Eric Christensen, Shawn Christie, Dan Steele, Keith Boyd and Steve Lindstrom, Washington Student Lobby. (opposed) Bob Edie, University of Washington; Louie Lallas, Western Washington University; George Durrie, Eastern Washington University; and Larry Ganders, Washington State University.