

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHCR 4408

As Passed House
March 9, 1993

Brief Description: Commending the Higher Education Coordinating Board, and approving goals of the update of its master plan for higher education.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Jacobsen, Brumsickle, Quall, Shin, Flemming, Carlson, Rayburn, Kessler, J. Kohl, Bray, Ogden, Wood, Horn and L. Johnson.)

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Higher Education, February 16, 1993, DPS.
Appropriations, March 2, 1993, DPS(HE);
Passed House, March 9, 1993, 98-0.

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; Brumsickle, Ranking Minority Member; Sheahan, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Basich; Bray; Carlson; Casada; Flemming; Kessler; J. Kohl; Ogden; Orr; Rayburn; Shin; and Wood.

Staff: Susan Hosch (786-7120).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill by Committee on Higher Education be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 27 members: Representatives Locke, Chair; Valle, Vice Chair; Silver, Ranking Minority Member; Carlson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appelwick; Ballasiotes; Basich; Cooke; Dellwo; Dorn; Dunshee; G. Fisher; Jacobsen; Lemmon; Leonard; Linville; Morton; Peery; Rust; Sehlin; Sheahan; Sommers; Stevens; Talcott; Wang; Wineberry; and Wolfe.

Staff: Sherie Story (786-7142).

Background: Under current law, the Higher Education Coordinating Board was required to adopt a master plan for higher education by December 1, 1987. The board is also required to update the plan biennially, and present it to the governor and to appropriate legislative committees. Following public hearings, the Legislature, by concurrent resolution, is required to approve the plan and the biennial updates or recommend changes to each. The plan then becomes state higher education policy unless legislation is enacted to alter the policies set forth in it.

During the last two years, the board has followed an exhaustive process to update the master plan. The process included surveying more than 1,000 state residents to determine the critical challenges facing Washington education. In addition, nine regional meetings were held with community leaders across the state. The board also discussed issues with college and university presidents and the heads of various state agencies.

Through that process, the board identified five critical challenges: increasing access to higher education for residents in a variety of categories; ensuring that increased access contributes to the achievement of the state's social and economic objectives; and promoting excellence in undergraduate education. Two additional issues were: expanding higher education partnerships with other educational sectors, business and community service organizations; and establishing an adequate funding basis for public higher education.

At the conclusion of the process, the board adopted 14 recommendations for improving higher education. Those recommendations became the backbone of the master plan update.

Summary of Bill: The Legislature approves the 14 goals of the update of the master plan for higher education. Those goals include:

ACCESS

Washington will continue to expand educational opportunities for all residents, striving to achieve enrollment opportunities that equal the 90th percentile in national participation rates for the entire higher education system, and the 70th percentile for upper division and graduate enrollments. Access will also be expanded for students of color, students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, and residents programs. In addition, higher education will attempt to ensure that the state has a highly educated, skilled, and flexible work

force capable of meeting the challenges of a changing economy.

QUALITY

The basic responsibility of colleges and universities is to offer an education of the highest quality to undergraduate students. Therefore, the state will require evidence of improvements in undergraduate education at all public institutions of higher education. In addition, the state will support expansion of program and student assessment efforts, and expansion of higher education partnerships with the common schools, community service organizations and the business community. Finally, the postsecondary educational system has an obligation to contribute to reform at all educational levels.

PUBLIC INVESTMENT

The state will provide a stabilized budget base for postsecondary education that incorporates provisions to accommodate population growth. The institutions and state level higher education agencies will identify measures to increase institutional efficiencies. In addition, the Higher Education Coordinating Board will produce and disseminate an annual report on postsecondary education.

STUDIES

The board will submit a report on tuition and fee policies to the 1994 Legislature. A citizen-legislator task force will conduct a comprehensive study on funding policies and revenue sources for postsecondary education. The study will include a comparison of the current funding methodology to a funding system based on programmatic and upper and lower division funding. The task force will include at least two members from each caucus of the House and the Senate. The director of the Office of Financial Management, a member of the Higher Education Coordinating Board, a member of the Work Force Training and Education Coordinating Board, and up to six citizens selected by the governor will also participate on the task force. By June 1, 1994, the task force's findings and recommendations will be submitted to the governor, the Legislature, and the board. In addition, its findings and recommendations will be included in the 1995-97 operating budget for postsecondary education.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: Upon filing with the Secretary of State.

Testimony For: (Higher Education) The concurrent resolution describes the major themes that form the foundation of this update of the Higher Education Master Plan. Washington must have a system of postsecondary education that is student centered. This means providing more opportunities for Washington's residents to access an education of the highest quality. It also means providing relevant education and training programs that will provide the state's work force with the skills needed to remain competitive and productive in a changing economy. Washington's system of postsecondary education should also serve the needs of the state. These include: providing educational opportunities; helping people stay out of poverty; expanding partnerships with the common school system, business, and community service organizations; and meeting the state's needs for specific expertise in various educational disciplines. In addition, the update proposes building a new compact between the state and its institutions of higher education. In return for providing a stable funding base for higher education, and removing some state regulation, institutions will operate more effectively and will continue to rigorously assess student outcomes and academic programs.

(Appropriations) The concurrent resolution sets forth the major goals contained in the 1992 update of the higher education master plan. In addition to adoption by the Higher Education Coordinating Board, the plan has been endorsed by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges and the Workforce Training and Education Board. The House Higher Education Committee passed the resolution unanimously. In addition to the resolution, HB 1997 and HB 1998 are two supporting pieces of legislation for the master plan.

Testimony Against: (Higher Education) None.

(Appropriations) None.

Witnesses: (Higher Education) (in favor) Steven Seward, Higher Education Coordinating Board; Terry Teale, Council of Presidents; and Mary Marcy, Central Washington University.

(Appropriations) (in favor) Jim Sainsbury, Higher Education Coordinating Board.