

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHCR 4408

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, APRIL 2, 1993

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

SPONSORS: 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)

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Bauer, Chairman; Drew, Vice Chairman; Jesernig, Prince, Sheldon, and West.

Staff: Jean Six (786-7423)

Hearing Dates: March 30, 1993; April 2, 1993

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:

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.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: available

TESTIMONY FOR:

The concurrent resolution commends the work of the HECB and affirms the major themes that form the foundation of the update of the Higher Education Master Plan.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: Jim Sainsbury, Acting Executive Director, Higher Education Coordinating Board