

FINAL BILL REPORT

ESHB 2637

C 110 L 96

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Changing provisions relating to the joint center for higher education.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Representatives D. Sommers, Sheahan, Jacobsen, Dellwo, Schoesler, Carlson and Grant; by request of Joint Center for Higher Education).

House Committee on Higher Education

Senate Committee on Higher Education

Background: In 1985, the Legislature established the Joint Center for Higher Education in Spokane. The joint center's purpose is to coordinate programs offered in the Spokane area by Washington State University (WSU) and Eastern Washington University (EWU).

The mission of the joint center was expanded in 1989. During that year, the Legislature created the Spokane Intercollegiate Research and Technology Institute (SIRTI). The institute is a multi-institutional education and research center housing programs conducted in Spokane by WSU, EWU, the community colleges of Spokane, Gonzaga University, and Whitworth College. The joint center became the administrative and fiscal agent for the institute. The joint center was also responsible for coordinating programs and activities planned for SIRTI.

During 1989, the Legislature also approved a branch campus in Spokane for WSU and the co-location of EWU in the Spokane area. The joint center's role of coordinator was retained for programs offered by the two universities in Spokane. Money was provided to acquire land and to construct buildings for SIRTI, WSU, and EWU's program expansions.

Statutes related to the joint center were revised in 1991. The joint center became an independent, state-funded entity which acted as the fiscal and administrative agent for the Spokane Higher Education Park and SIRTI. The joint center has oversight responsibilities for all land and facilities in the Spokane Higher Education Park and SIRTI. The park is the location for the WSU branch campus and new classroom buildings for EWU. The joint center continues to coordinate programs offered by WSU and EWU in Spokane.

The joint center's governing board has 12 voting members. Three members are trustees or regents representing each of the public higher education institutions. Six

members are citizens residing in Spokane County. The citizen members are appointed by the Governor and approved by the Senate. The presidents of Eastern Washington University, Washington State University, and the Spokane Community College district are the three remaining voting members. The executive director of the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB), the president of Gonzaga University, and the president of Whitworth College serve as non-voting members of the board.

Summary: The Joint Center for Higher Education's program coordination role is clarified. The joint center will coordinate degree programs offered jointly by WSU and EWU. The joint center will also coordinate degree programs offered by either of the universities with Gonzaga University and Whitworth College. In addition, the joint center may mediate disputes among institutions about degree programs or courses.

The membership of the joint center's governing board is revised. The board will consist of 14 rather than 12 voting members. One of the new members will be from an independent, nonprofit university located in the Spokane area. The other will be from a separate independent, nonprofit institution of higher education located in the Spokane area. The two new members will be appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. They will serve four-year terms. Until these new members are appointed, either the president or the chancellor of Gonzaga University and the president of Whitworth college will continue to serve as non-voting members of the board. In addition, the president of WSU may send a designee to board meetings. The designee may be either the provost of WSU or the vice-president for research and dean of the graduate school.

The joint center may act as a sole agent for procuring printing and binding services and for the purchase and disposal of materials, supplies, services, and equipment when contracting with a public college or university that exercises this authority.

The joint center's board may hire a director and staff for SIRTl. It may delegate to the director any of its authority except its responsibility to adopt rules. The responsibility of the joint center for SIRTl is clarified. It will provide central administration services for the institute.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	98 0
Senate	39 0

Effective: June 6, 1996