

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1019

As Reported By House Committee On:
Higher Education

Title: An act relating to foreign degree-granting institutions.

Brief Description: Changing provisions relating to foreign degree-granting institutions' branch campuses.

Sponsors: Representatives Carlson, Kenney, Radcliff, Dunn and Lantz.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 1/26/99, 2/5/99 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

The Higher Education Coordinating Board's responsibility to approve foreign degree granting institutions is changed from mandatory to permissive.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Carlson, Republican Co-Chair; Kenney, Democratic Co-Chair; Lantz, Democratic Vice Chair; Radcliff, Republican Vice Chair; Dunn; Edmonds and Esser.

Staff: Marilee Scarbrough (786-7196).

Background:

The Foreign Degree Granting Branch Campuses was enacted in 1993. The act requires a foreign degree granting college or university that wishes to operate a branch campus in this state to provide the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) with specified information. The information must prove to the board's satisfaction that the foreign degree granting institution is authorized to operate in its home country. The institution must also indicate to the board that it intends to operate a branch campus in the state.

Central to the act are the definitions of foreign degree granting institution and branch campus.

A foreign degree granting institution is defined as: (1) a public or private college or university, either profit or nonprofit; (2) domiciled in a foreign country; (3) that offers in its country of domicile credentials, instruction, or services prerequisite to the obtaining of an academic or professional degree granted by such college or university; and (4) is authorized under the laws or regulations of its country of domicile to operate a degree-granting institution in that country.

Branch campus means an educational facility located in this state that: (1) is either owned and operated by a foreign degree granting institution or indirectly through a Washington profit or nonprofit corporation; and (2) provides courses solely and exclusively to students enrolled in a degree-granting program offered by the foreign degree granting institution who: (a) have received academic credit for courses of study completed at the foreign degree granting institution in its country of domicile; (b) will receive academic credit towards their degree from the foreign degree granting institution for the courses of study completed at the educational facility in the state; and (c) will return to the foreign degree granting institution in its country of domicile for completion of their degree granting program or receipt of their degree.

Approval of a foreign degree granting institution to operate in this state is dependent upon an institution completely satisfying the definition of a foreign degree granting institution. The campus they wish to operate in Washington must also meet the statutory definition of a branch campus.

The first campus approved under the new act was the Russian Law School in America. The law school offers courses in Russian law exclusively to students enrolled in degree programs in Russia. The HECB has authorized four foreign degree granting institutions to operate in this state.

Summary of Bill:

This bill clarifies that a foreign degree granting institution that desires to operate a branch campus in Washington must satisfy all the requirements of the statutory definitions. The HECB's responsibility to approve foreign degree granting institutions is changed from mandatory to permissive.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The law as currently written has been interpreted to require approval by the HECB of all foreign applicants who want to establish branches in Washington. It has been difficult to administer the existing statute. Changing the language from mandatory to permissive adds an element of flexibility. The bill sends a message to foreign degree granting institutions that approval is not automatic. The HECB supports this bill.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Bruce Botka, Higher Education Coordinating Board.