

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESSCR 8425

As Reported By House Committee On:
Higher Education

Brief Description: Adopting the recommendations of the higher education coordinating board's year 2000 update of the master plan.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Senators Kohl-Welles and Sheahan; by request of Higher Education Coordinating Board).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 2/22/00, 2/25/00 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill
(As Amended by House Committee)

- Approves the recommendations and strategies in the Higher Education Coordinating Board's year 2000 master plan update.
- Directs the board to re-examine its assumptions with regard to projected upper division and graduate enrollment; the role of the community and technical colleges in meeting enrollment demand; and the capital needs of the institutions.
- Requests that the board proceed with the implementation of the updated plan and report back on its progress and on the results of its review of projected enrollments and capital needs assumptions.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Carlson, Republican Co-Chair; Kenney, Democratic Co-Chair; Lantz, Democratic Vice Chair; Radcliff, Republican Vice Chair; Dunn; Edmonds; Esser and Gombosky.

Staff: Erika Prager (786-7120).

Background:

The Higher Education Coordinating Board was created to provide planning, coordination, monitoring, and policy analysis for higher education in the state of Washington. The board was directed to consult institutions and other segments of postsecondary education as it carried out these responsibilities. The board was also directed to represent the broad public interest above the interests of the individual colleges and universities.

By statute, the board must prepare a comprehensive master plan and update it every four years. The plan and updates must be submitted to the Governor and appropriate legislative policy committees. Following public hearings, the Legislature must, by concurrent resolution, approve or recommend changes to the initial plan and subsequent updates. The plan then becomes state higher education policy unless legislation is enacted to alter the policies in the plan.

The board updated its master plan again in 2000. The resulting document, entitled *The 21 Century Learner - Strategies to Meet the Challenge*, outlines five goals for higher education in Washington and accompanying strategies to achieve these goals. The board also reports that the state's higher education system will need to provide opportunities for an additional 70,000 students by the year 2010.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The Legislature commends the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) for its dedication and commitment to the state. The Legislature thanks the board for describing the challenges facing the state in its attempts to provide the postsecondary education and training that citizens need in the 21st century. The Legislature reaffirms its commitment to respond to actual enrollment demand.

The Legislature approves the following recommendations in the updated plan:

- (1) The state's postsecondary education system needs to provide higher education opportunities for additional students by the year 2010; and
- (2) Solutions the enrollment challenge may be found in strategies that:
 - make student learning the yardstick by which accountability, effectiveness, and efficiency is measured;
 - link students' participation in higher education to their K-12 achievement;
 - provide the information citizens need to make the best use of the learning opportunities available to them and support outreach efforts to ensure the higher education system reflects the diversity of the state's population;
 - expand the use of e-learning technologies and using public facilities to the fullest extent possible; and

- help colleges and universities meet student needs and compete in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

The Legislature also directs the HECB to re-examine its assumptions with regard projected upper division and graduate enrollment; the role of the community and technical colleges in meeting enrollment demand; and the capital needs of four-year institutions, community colleges, and branch campuses.

The Legislature asks the HECB to examine alternatives to address the operating and capital budget needs identified in the updated plan. The Legislature also requests that the HECB proceed with the implementation of the updated plan and report to the Legislature in 2001 on the progress toward implementing the strategies and on the results of its review of projected enrollments and capital needs assumptions.

Amended Bill Compared to Engrossed Substitute Bill: The amendment changes one of the findings to the board reporting that Washington's higher education system needs to provide opportunities for additional students by 2010. It also adds this finding to the list of recommendations approved by the Legislature. The HECB must also report back to the Legislature in 2001 with its review of its projected enrollments and capital needs assumptions.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Testimony For: (Engrossed substitute bill) The Senate was concerned about being held to the specific future enrollment numbers reported by the board. The HECB prefers the old version if it had a choice. The board does not want to see an overreaction to the future enrollment needs based on a temporary dip in the current year enrollment. The state needs to anticipate future enrollment, not just react to it. The HECB will look at its assumptions about enrollment each biennium. This is not a zero sum game between upper and lower division. There is room for growth in both areas.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Kohl-Welles, prime sponsor; and Bruce Botka, Higher Education Coordinating Board.