
Higher Education Committee

HB 2807

Brief Description: Providing for rules concerning off-campus behavior of higher education students.

Sponsors: Representatives Murray, Cox, Quall, McIntire, Kenney and Edwards.

Brief Summary of Bill
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Requires each public institution of higher education to adopt rules, including sanctions, regarding disruptive off-campus behavior of students.

Hearing Date: 2/4/04

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

Although the statutory language varies slightly, a board of regents or trustees of a public higher education institution has broad authority to exercise full control of the institution and its property of various kinds, except as otherwise provided by law. Using this broad authority, each community and technical college and four-year institution has adopted a student code of conduct through administrative rule. With 36 codes, each is somewhat different. Regarding the issue of off-campus behavior of students, the codes fall into three categories:

1. The student code of conduct applies only to on-campus behavior. For example, the code of conduct for the University of Washington states: "The Board of Regents of the University of Washington has established the following regulations on student conduct and student discipline on the university campus." The code for Central Washington University states: "The university....is not responsible for conduct of students off campus." The codes of three community colleges selected at random for this analysis all apply only to student conduct on-campus or at a college-sponsored activity.

2. The student code of conduct might be applied to off-campus behavior. The codes of conduct for Eastern Washington University, Western Washington University, and The Evergreen State College (Evergreen) contain language that could be interpreted in some circumstances to apply to off-campus behavior of students. For example, Evergreen's code states "Students may be accountable to civil and criminal authorities and to the college for acts occurring on or off campus which constitute violations of law."

3. The student code of conduct clearly applies to certain off-campus behavior. Only Washington State University's code of conduct clearly states that "...students acknowledge the university's authority to take disciplinary action for conduct on or off university property. Off-campus conduct may be addressed when it is detrimental to the university mission."

Summary of Bill:

Each public institution of higher education must adopt rules regarding disruptive off-campus conduct of students, including sanctions such as counseling, probation, suspension or expulsion.

Disruptive off-campus conduct is conduct that results in a citation or conviction for violations of laws or ordinances, and either interferes with the institution's relationship with the surrounding community, harms the institution's reputation, or violates the institution's policies.

Each institution must report the substance of the rules adopted on this issue to the higher education committees of the legislature by December 1, 2004

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.