

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2867

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education, February 22, 2006
Ways & Means, February 24, 2006

Title: An act relating to expanding access to baccalaureate degree programs at Washington State University Tri-Cities.

Brief Description: Regarding expansion of WSU Tri-Cities into a four-year institution.

Sponsors: House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Kenney, Haler, Grant, Hankins, Cox, Sells, Roberts, Fromhold, Armstrong, Walsh, Skinner and Newhouse).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/09/06, 97-1.

Committee Activity: Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education: 2/17/06, 2/22/06 [DP-WM].

Ways & Means: 2/24/06 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING, K-12 & HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Pridemore, Vice Chair, Higher Education; Weinstein, Vice Chair, Early Learning & K-12; Schmidt, Ranking Minority Member; Berkey, Carrell, Delvin, Eide, Kohl-Welles, Pflug, Rasmussen, Rockefeller, Schoesler and Shin.

Staff: Ingrid Mungia (786-7423)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Fraser, Vice Chair, Capital Budget Chair; Doumit, Vice Chair, Operating Budget; Zarelli, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Fairley, Kohl-Welles, Parlette, Pflug, Pridemore, Rasmussen, Regala, Roach, Rockefeller, Schoesler and Thibaudeau.

Staff: Paula Faas (786-7449)

Background: Last session, the Legislature passed E2SHB 1794 allowing Washington State University Tri-Cities to continue its co-admission and co-enrollment options with Columbia Basin College, and expand its upper-division capacity for transfer students and graduate capacity and programs. The campus was also allowed to seek additional opportunities to collaborate with the Pacific Northwest National Laboratories in biotechnology research programs. Beginning in the Fall of 2006, the campus is permitted to offer lower-division courses linked to specific majors in fields not addressed at local community colleges. The

campus is permitted to admit lower-division students in a co-admission or co-enrollment agreement with a community college. In addition to the lower division courses linked to specific majors, the campus is permitted to directly admit freshmen and sophomores only for a bachelor's degree in biotechnology with approval by the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB).

Summary of Amended Bill: Beginning the fall of 2006, Washington State University Tri-Cities may admit lower division students without the limitation of co-admission and co-enrollment with Columbia Basin College. The campus will develop into a four-year institution of higher education by simultaneously admitting freshmen and sophomores, increasing transfer enrollments, continuing co-admission of transfer students, and expanding graduate and professional programs.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: Removed the section requiring WSU Tri-Cities to conduct a study and develop a plan regarding areas of need in higher education in southeastern Washington and for WSU Tri-Cities to develop into a four year institution. Removed language specifying that WSU Tri-Cities will admit lower-division students directly beyond biotechnology fields as specified in their four year institution development plan. Removes language specifying that new programs are to be approved by the Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Testimony For: WSU Tri-Cities is ready to move into a four year institution. There is time in the bill for planning and then implementation into a four year institution. The community and stakeholders have held many meetings and forums to find the needs in the community. WSU Tri-Cities and the community colleges in the area are very good, but they are not meeting the need in the upper division. This will be a benefit in the state of Washington. WSU Tri-Cities have come up with an overall education plan for the community. WSU will be playing on the strengths in the region in becoming a four year institution. WSU Tri-Cities will be a destination university. It is important to create a development plan to accompany granting authority to admit freshman.

The plan should pay special attention to student demand. It could also be used to plan future policy and budget decisions. Having a robust education system that includes four year authority is a significant issue for communities and businesses. It is also good for the quality of life in the community. This is an important step in meeting the high demands in the eastern part of the state. This is our communities' top priority. This bill has the same intent as the Senate bill passed out earlier. We hope you will find a way to get one of these pieces of legislation through the process. WSU wants this legislation because it will put the campus on the same parody as the other state universities. The vision from day one was a partnership between Washington State University and laboratories like Battelle working together. This bill allows us to develop programs and the vision. WSU is not seeking any additional FTEs in

the supplemental budget this year. However, to begin on the timetable, we do need some additional start up money which is something the other campuses were given.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Rep. Kenney, prime sponsor; Rep. Haler; co-sponsor Andi Smith, HECB; Carl Advian, Tri City Independent Development Council; Marc Cummings, Battelle/PNNL; Larry Ganders, WSU.