

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5425

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As of February 15, 2005

**Title:** An act relating to creating a new institution of higher education in northern Snohomish county.

**Brief Description:** Creating North Snohomish State College.

**Sponsors:** Senators Haugen, Berkey, Kohl-Welles, Shin, Rasmussen, Jacobsen and Schmidt.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education: 2/9/05.

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

**Staff:** Heather Lewis-Lechner (786-7448)

**Background:** There are currently six public four-year higher education institutions in Washington State. The main campuses of these six institutions are located in: Seattle, Pullman, Cheney, Bellingham, Ellensburg, and Olympia. Two of these institutions are research universities, three are comprehensive (also called regional) universities and there is one college, The Evergreen State College (TESC). The two research universities are governed by a ten member board of regents and the remaining four institutions are governed by an eight member board of trustees. The research institutions are authorized to offer baccalaureate through professional degree programs. The comprehensive institutions and TESC are authorized to offer baccalaureate through master's level programs with the exception of Eastern Washington University which is also authorized to offer applied doctoral level degrees in physical therapy with the approval of the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB).

The availability of higher education services in north King and Snohomish County has been the subject of numerous studies since at least 1987. A report by the HECB in 1988 recommended an upper-division branch campus be established in the Bothell-Woodinville area. In response, the 1989 Legislature established the University of Washington- Bothell campus. The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) also conducted a study around that time to identify underserved areas of the state. The SBCTC reported in 1991 that the area with the greatest recent population growth, greatest need for education services and least access to community college services was the north King and south Snohomish counties.

In 1992, outgoing Governor Gardner proposed the creation of a new four-year regional university: Cascade University. The 1993 Legislature instead directed the HECB to study alternative models for meeting the higher education needs of the north King and south Snohomish counties. The result of that study was the creation, by the 1994 Legislature, of Cascadia Community College collocated on the UW-Bothell campus.

Recently, the SBCTC and Council of Presidents (COP) completed a baccalaureate capacity study in which the SBCTC and COP found that to keep up with population growth and to meet currently underserved populations now to 2010, the state needs capacity for an additional 8,780 FTE at the junior and senior level at publicly funded baccalaureate institutions. The study found that the largest capacity gaps were in Snohomish County and Southwest Washington. The capacity study findings are consistent with the 2004 HECB strategic master plan and 2005 HECB report on Branch campus development plans. In the report on branch campuses, the HECB found that there is a need to expand upper-division and lower-division capacity at locations that would draw students from Southwest Washington and the Puget Sound area, which by definition includes: King, Snohomish, Pierce, Kitsap, Thurston, Island, Skagit, Whatcom, and San Juan counties.

**Summary of Bill:** A new four-year higher education institution, the North Snohomish State College (NSSC), is created in north Snohomish county. Governance of the NSSC is vested in an eight member board of trustees. The operation, powers and duties of the NSSC board, including appointments by the Governor, are the same as The Evergreen State College.

NSSC is given the authority to establish entrance requirements and is authorized to offer baccalaureate through mater's level degree programs. NSSC may train teachers and other personnel for whom teaching certificates or special credentials are required for any grade, level, department, or position of the public schools.

NSSC is added to relevant definitions of "higher education institutions" throughout the Washington code and is included with the other higher education institutions in all provisions throughout the code, including but not limited to:

- the purchase, sale, or lease of property;
- the authority to construct, renovate, remodel, maintain, and improve capital facilities and all provisions related to those actions, including public bid requirements;
- the ability to issue bonds and the creation of a capital projects account;
- provisions related to the ability to contract and incur debt;
- all tuition, financial aid, fees and waiver provisions with a waiver cap percentage equal to TESC;
- the creation of student loan funds and ability to participate in federal student aid programs;
- faculty and staff retirement and benefit provisions;
- collective bargaining laws; and
- public disclosure laws.

Technical amendments to clean up provisions of the code where old terminology was present are also made.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on February 1, 2005.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

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

**Testimony For:** We have not created a new college or university in this state for 35 years but we have built four new prisons in the last 20 years. We need to change direction and build higher education institutions to provide opportunities for our citizens. North of Everett in Northwest Snohomish Count there has been a rapid population growth and there is a great need for more access to higher education opportunities. Snohomish County is the largest county west of the Mississippi River without a four year institution. Businesses are saying that there is not enough graduates with advanced technology degrees from Washington to fill their needs. Instead businesses have to recruit from out-of-state. Microsoft has named the lack of higher education institutions producing students with high tech degrees as one of the major issues facing this state. While we understand that there are budgetary constraints that must be dealt with, in today's economy people need access to a four year degree to be successful and contribute to the economic development of the state. The 19th Century was about bigger and better farms, the 20th was about factories, this century is about bigger and better ideas. We need to make sure our students have access to that and can compete with the rest of world. This bill would be a win-win for the state's economy, the local communities, for businesses, for students, and for maintaining our state's place in the global economy. The Legislature needs to act soon because land in this area is disappearing fast and we do not want to wait too long and have the chance pass by.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Who Testified:** PRO: Senator Haugen, prime sponsor; Senator Berkey, sponsor; Ray Stephanson, Mayor, City of Everett; Aaron Reardon, Snohomish County Executive; Connie Niva; Snohomish County Citizens Cabinet; Pedro Gonzales, Citizen.