

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5867

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education, February 28, 2005

Title: An act relating to authorizing baccalaureate degrees at selected community and technical colleges on a limited and pilot basis.

Brief Description: Creating a pilot program for baccalaureate degrees at selected community and technical colleges.

Sponsors: Senators Schmidt, McAuliffe, Finkbeiner, Esser, Mulliken, Berkey, Shin, Kohl-Welles, Delvin and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education: 2/24/05, 2/28/05 [DPS, MMR].

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

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5867 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Weinstein, Vice Chair; Berkey, Eide, Kohl-Welles, Mulliken, Pflug, Rasmussen, Rockefeller and Shin.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Schoesler.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Delvin.

Staff: Heather Lewis-Lechner (786-7448)

Background: In June 2004, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) undertook a baccalaureate capacity study that included analysis of statewide and regional demand for upper-division enrollment and review of options and costs for expanding capacity.

One of the study findings was a need to expand applied baccalaureate degree pathways for technical associate degree graduates. Currently, approximately 10 percent of these graduates transfer to a four-year degree program. These include technicians moving from their specialty into management and those planning to work at a more advanced level in their professional or technical specialty. According to the study, fields with demand for an applied baccalaureate degree include: nursing; accounting; engineering, radiologic, and information technology; and management of technology, public safety, and food services.

One option used by other states to meet this need is granting authority to community or technical colleges to award baccalaureate degrees. The SBCTC conducted a review of 23

community colleges in 15 other states, and concluded that Washington should also consider allowing a limited number of community or technical colleges to develop applied baccalaureate degree programs.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Three community colleges and one technical college are authorized to offer applied baccalaureate degrees on a pilot basis. The SBCTC selects the pilot colleges from those who apply. Minimum criteria for selection include:

- the college demonstrates an unmet need for graduates in high demand fields;
- the college has capacity to make a commitment of resources for a high quality program;
- the college has or can readily engage faculty with the necessary qualifications; and
- the college can demonstrate a demand for the proposed programs from both students and employers.

After being selected, a pilot college can develop the curriculum for a high demand applied baccalaureate degree. The SBCTC and higher education coordinating board must give final approval of the degree programs before the college can enroll students in upper-division courses. After graduation of each pilot college's first cohort of students the college must submit a report to the SBCTC. The SBCTC must send that report to the Legislature.

An applied baccalaureate degree is one specifically designed for individuals with an Associate of Applied Science degree in order to maximize the application of their technical credits, and is based on both theoretical and applied knowledge in a technical field.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The original bill was not considered.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 21, 2005.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Testimony For: This bill is an excellent step in meeting the state's need for high demand degrees. We have limited resources and areas with limited access for placebound students. This bill is a way to produce increased high demand degrees in a very efficient way because we can use existing institutions and the colleges already have the qualified staff needed to offer these degrees. We will just have to fund the FTE's for the students.

We want to make sure that technical colleges are included in the pilot program. The technical colleges are an important part of producing graduates to enter into the technical fields work force. These students need a way to continue their education to complete a bachelor so that they can be prepared and competitive for managerial and supervisory level jobs. The health care system has a shortage of nurses as well as an increasing demand for graduates in technical fields and managerial level personnel. Many businesses and industries have these same increasing technology and managerial personnel needs. This bill will help increase the supply of people who have the expertise and training we need.

The Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) supports this bill and is committed to expanding access to upper-division programs and increasing the number of students that receive baccalaureate degrees. We believe the timing is right for this type of pilot program. We would like to request that the bill be amended so that the HECB is involved in the degree approval process in order to be consistent with current practice.

In Washington, the SBCTC found that there are gaps in the degrees being supplied versus the need for those degrees and found that the option of allowing community and technical colleges to help provide for that need by offering baccalaureate degrees is a viable and feasible option for the state. A number of states have used this option to meet the higher education needs in their state and they provide good models for our state to follow. It is a cost effective option that builds on the state's existing investments and produces high quality programs that meet the needs of students and communities. Students want to continue their education at the technical colleges and this would allow them to do that.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Senator Schmidt, prime sponsor; Paul Axtell, Mike Metke, Shirley Metcalf, Lake Washington Tech. College; Ben Lindekugel, Evergreen Hospital; Christine Hoffman, LWTC, Redmond Chamber; Bruce Botka, HECB; Humam Talhami, LWTC, Genie Industries; Charles Gary, LWTC, Model Werks Inc.; Jan Yoshiwara, SBCTC; Jean Floten, Bellevue CC; Kerissa Scott, Irina Maunow, Rick Fernandez, LWTC Student, Sharon McGavick, Clover Park Tech. College; Gerald Pumphrey, Bellingham Tech. College; Nancy Atwood, AeA.