

---

SENATE BILL 6697

---

State of Washington

59th Legislature

2006 Regular Session

By Senators Berkey, Schmidt, Shin, Haugen, McAuliffe, Kohl-Welles and Rasmussen

Read first time 01/19/2006. Referred to Committee on Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to establishing a state priority and state  
2 objectives for access, enrollment, delivery, and degree achievements in  
3 the fields of engineering, technology, biotechnology, science, computer  
4 science, and mathematics in higher education; and adding new sections  
5 to chapter 28B.10 RCW.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.10 RCW  
8 to read as follows:

9 (1) The legislature recognizes the vital importance to the state's  
10 economic prosperity and the economic benefit of placing a priority on  
11 enrolling and conferring degrees upon students in the fields of  
12 engineering, technology, biotechnology, science, computer science, and  
13 mathematics.

14 (2) The legislature has significant concerns that other countries  
15 are outpacing the United States in graduating qualified engineers, and  
16 that major corporations within Washington state are searching out-of-  
17 state and even outside the United States to find the qualified and  
18 trained employees they need.

1 (3) Data compiled by the technology alliance shows that Washington  
2 state ranks thirty-fourth among the fifty states in the percentage of  
3 residents who have earned a science or engineering degree, per capita.

4 (4) Data collected by the office of financial management indicates  
5 that between the academic years of 1993-94 and 2003-04 at public four-  
6 year institutions of higher education in Washington state:

7 (a) There was a twelve percent decline in the number of full-time  
8 equivalents enrolled in the fields of engineering and related  
9 technologies; and

10 (b) There was nearly a nine percent decline in the number of  
11 bachelor's degrees conferred in the fields of engineering and related  
12 technologies.

13 (5) Data collected by the office of financial management also shows  
14 that for the 2003-04 academic year, only four percent of all full-time  
15 equivalents were enrolled in engineering and related technologies and  
16 just two percent of all full-time equivalents were enrolled in computer  
17 science studies at public four-year institutions of higher education in  
18 the state.

19 (6) Therefore, it is the intent of the legislature to promote  
20 increased access, delivery models, enrollment slots, and degree  
21 opportunities in the fields of engineering, technology, biotechnology,  
22 sciences, computer sciences, and mathematics. It is recognized that  
23 these areas of study and training are integrally linked to ensuring  
24 that Washington state's economy can compete nationally and globally in  
25 the twenty-first century marketplace. It is also recognized that  
26 community colleges play a unique role in supporting degree attainment  
27 in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics  
28 through the development of transferable curricula and the maintenance  
29 of viable articulation agreements with both public and private  
30 universities.

31 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.10 RCW  
32 to read as follows:

33 (1) A state priority is established for institutions of higher  
34 education, including community colleges, to ensure that growing numbers  
35 of enrollments and degrees are secured in the fields of engineering,  
36 technology, biotechnology, sciences, computer sciences, and  
37 mathematics.

1 (2) In meeting this state priority, the legislature understands and  
2 recognizes that the demands of the economic marketplace and the desires  
3 of students are not always on parallel tracks. Therefore, institutions  
4 of higher education shall be provided with a three-year period in which  
5 to establish student demand for programs in the fields of engineering,  
6 technology, biotechnology, sciences, computer sciences, and  
7 mathematics.

8 (3) While it is understood that these areas of emphasis should not  
9 be the sole focus of institutions of higher education, steady progress  
10 in these areas shall occur. The higher education coordinating board  
11 shall track and report progress in the fields of engineering,  
12 technology, biotechnology, sciences, computer sciences, and mathematics  
13 including, but not limited to, the following information:

14 (a) The number of students enrolled in these fields on an annual  
15 basis;

16 (b) The number of associate, bachelor's, and master's degrees  
17 conferred in these fields on an annual basis;

18 (c) The amount of expenditures in enrollment and degree programs in  
19 these fields; and

20 (d) The number and type of public-private partnerships established  
21 relating to these fields among institutions of higher education,  
22 including community colleges, and leading corporations in Washington  
23 state.

24 (4) Institutions of higher education, including community colleges,  
25 shall be provided discretion and flexibility in achieving the  
26 objectives under this section. Examples of the types of institutional  
27 programs that may help achieve these objectives include, but are not  
28 limited to, establishment of institutes of technology, new polytechnic-  
29 based institutions, new divisions of existing institutions, and a  
30 flexible array of delivery models, including face-to-face learning,  
31 interactive courses, internet-based offerings, and instruction on main  
32 campuses, branch campuses, and other educational centers.

33 (5) The legislature recognizes the global needs of the economic  
34 marketplace for technologically prepared graduates, and the  
35 relationship between technology industries and higher education.  
36 Institutions of higher education, including community colleges, are  
37 strongly urged to consider science, engineering, and technology program  
38 growth in areas of the state that exhibit a high concentration of

1 aerospace, biotechnology, and technology industrial presence. Expanded  
2 science and technology programs can gain from the proximity of  
3 experienced and knowledgeable industry leaders, while industry can  
4 benefit from access to new sources of highly trained and educated  
5 graduates.

--- END ---