
Higher Education Committee

HB 2648

Brief Description: Enhancing campus safety and security.

Sponsors: Representatives Wallace, Morrell, Kelley, Nelson, Loomis, Green, Barlow, Conway, Simpson, Hurst, Darneille and Lantz; by request of Governor Gregoire.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Institutions of higher education create campus safety plans.
- Institutions develop agreements with local jurisdictions which delineate responsibilities and include the shared use of equipment and technology.
- Institutions establish task forces to review safety plans and assign a specific staff person responsible for coordinating safety planning processes.
- Four and two-year institutions submit two plans to the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) and State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) respectively:
 - Self study assessing each institutions' ability to ensure the safety of student, faculty, and staff.
 - Plan to address unmet safety and security needs. This plan must be updated every two years.
- The HECB and SBCTC report biennially on the efforts of each institutions regarding campus safety.

Hearing Date: 1/23/08

Staff: Andi Smith (786-7304).

Background:

Campus safety planning can be broken down into five major components:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

- Mental health services: availability of mental health counselors, psychiatrists, and mental health outreach programs.
- Communications: public address systems, sirens, instant warning systems, intercoms, etc.
- Police: commissioned and non-commissioned officers and other first responders, including training.
- Campus planning and awareness: violence prevention programs, campus safety assessments and review, campus safety advocates, emergency management coordinators.
- Building mapping and access: including key card systems, campus mapping, security cameras, etc.

The Council of Presidents conducted a survey of the public baccalaureate institutions to compile basic background information on the policies and procedures that are in place to respond to campus security issues. The baccalaureates agreed that responding to emergencies is "highly episodic and circumstantial" and that institutions require flexibility to evaluate, assess and respond according to the best judgment on hand at the moment.

Responses from the baccalaureate institutions indicate that each has established procedures to make the university community and public aware of emergency preparedness policies, has some means of alerting students, faculty, and staff to emergency situations, has "mapped" campus buildings to include floor plans, utility diagrams, and the location of hazardous materials. The survey also indicates that public baccalaureate institutions have entered into mutual aid agreements with emergency management agencies, law enforcement agencies, and other partners in addition to the commissioned police forces they employ.

There is not as much consistency in baseline policy and practice within the community and technical college system. While the colleges have each developed emergency preparedness plans and have identified mechanisms for public alert, the SBCTC estimates that only 10 percent of colleges have extensive "mapping" of campus buildings. Because community and technical colleges do not typically have commissioned police forces, they are also more reliant on local law enforcement and emergency management organizations to provide emergency response.

Summary of Bill:

Institutions of higher education create campus safety plans and provide the plan to students, faculty, and staff. The plan must include several components:

- Policies, procedures, and programs for preventing and responding to violence, sexual harassment, domestic violence, stalking, and sexual assault. The policies must include contact information for campus and community victim advocates.
- Descriptions of the duties of campus security personnel, security and mutual assistance arrangements with local police, mental health counseling services, emergency management and communications plans.

Institutions of higher education must enter into memoranda of understanding with local police and emergency response jurisdictions that set forth responsibilities for each party involved.

Institutions must also develop mutual aid agreements with local jurisdictions regarding the shared use of equipment and technology.

Each institution must establish a task force to review the campus safety plan and make suggestions for improvement. In addition, the president of each institution must designate a specific person responsible for monitoring and coordinating the institution's compliance with the plan.

Each two-year and four-year institution must submit two reports to the SBCTC and HECB respectively.

1. A self-study assessing the institution's ability to ensure the safety of students, faculty, and staff by September 30, 2008.
2. A plan to address the unmet safety and security needs including a timetable for making progress in addressing those unmet needs.

Each institution is additionally responsible for updating its plan every two years.

The HECB and SBCTC must report to the Governor and higher education committees of the Legislature on efforts of each institution regarding campus safety and security.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 15, 2008.

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