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**Higher Education Committee**

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**SSB 5731**

**Brief Description:** Creating a committee on the education of students in high demand fields.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Senators Shin, Delvin, Berkey, Sheldon, Tom, Oemig, Rasmussen, Pridemore, Roach, Jacobsen and Kohl-Welles).

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Establishes a committee focused on the education of students in high demand fields.

**Hearing Date:** 3/28/07

**Staff:** Jennifer Thornton (786-7111).

**Background:**

Nationally, the state of Washington ranks 36th in the production of bachelors degrees, 38th in the production of bachelors degrees in science and engineering, and 42nd in the number of science and engineering graduate students in proportion to the state's population of 18-24 year olds.

Beginning in 2007, it is estimated that for job openings in Washington that require a bachelor's degree, 47 percent will be in fields identified as high demand or high impact, but only 14 percent of Washington students each year graduate with degrees in one of these fields. In the 2005-06 academic year, the most baccalaureate degrees awarded were in Business Management (16 percent), Social Sciences (14 percent), and Liberal and General Studies (7 percent).

By 2005, over 30 percent of Washington adults had earned a bachelor's degree or higher and Washington ranked 10th among the states. The Washington economy has usually outperformed the U.S. economy and provided relatively high-wage job opportunities, attracting large numbers of well-educated migrants to the state.

**Summary of Bill:**

A committee focused on the education of students in high demand fields is established to:

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- develop a plan to increase the capacity of institutions of higher education in Washington by 10,000 students per year by 2020 to produce baccalaureate and advanced degrees in high impact, high demand areas of study;
- develop a marketing project to inform students, parents, and educators of opportunities in high demand fields;
- investigate ways to motivate high school and college students to take more math and science courses; and
- identify ways to enhance partnerships between the business community and institutions of higher education to produce graduates in high demand fields.

The committee consists of two members of the House of Representatives, two members of the Senate, and one representative of each of the following: the Higher Education Coordinating Board; the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction; the Labor Council, the Council of Presidents; the Prosperity Partnership; the Council of Faculty Representatives; an employer of persons in high demand fields; and a graduate student member of the Washington Student Lobby. The committee will report its findings to the Legislature by December 1, 2007.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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