

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6490

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Higher Education, February 07, 2008

Title: An act relating to a University of Washington branch campus at Lake Stevens.

Brief Description: Authorizing a branch campus of the University of Washington at Lake Stevens.

Sponsors: Senator Hobbs.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 1/24/08, 2/07/08 [w/oRec-WM, DNP].
Ways & Means: 2/12/08.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: That it be referred to Committee on Ways & Means without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Shin, Chair; Kilmer, Vice Chair; Delvin, Ranking Minority Member; Sheldon.

Minority Report: Do not pass.
Signed by Senator Berkey.

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Staff: Tim Yowell (786-7435)

Background: A number of studies have been undertaken over the past decade to determine the higher education needs of north King, Snohomish, Island, and Skagit Counties. In November 2006 a consultant team final report found that the needs of about 10,800 full-time equivalent students would be unmet by 2025 if students from those counties participated in baccalaureate and graduate degree programs at the 1998 national average for all adults. The consultant report recommended investment in a four-year university with a polytechnical focus.

After receiving this report, the Higher Education Coordinating (HEC) Board issued its assessment of the higher education needs of Snohomish, Island, and Skagit (SIS) Counties in December 2006. The HEC Board recommended: (1) that the state's first priority should be to

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.

increase core funding and enrollment at the existing public colleges and universities; (2) that future decisions about creation of a new four-year campus should be made when the existing institutions reached their maximum capacity; and (3) that planning for a new four-year campus in the SIS region should continue in order to more fully describe the requirements, costs, and system impacts of creating a new campus.

A proviso in the 2007 Capital Budget Act directed the University of Washington (UW) to operate an additional branch campus in the SIS area, with a particular focus on education of upper-division and graduate students in science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM) and other high-demand programs. The proviso directed the Office of Financial Management (OFM) and the UW to assess potential sites for the new campus, and to submit siting recommendations and a preliminary academic plan to the Governor and Legislature by November 2007.

OFM retained a consultant to evaluate potential sites for the branch campus. Seventy-three potential site proposals were submitted, and that number was narrowed to the four most viable options. These four potential sites were ranked in the following order: (1) Pacific Station in Everett; (2) Smokey Point in North Marysville; (3) Riverside in Everett; and (4) Cavalero in south Lake Stevens.

The preliminary academic plan submitted in November 2007 recommends: (1) the creation of a comprehensive branch campus with an emphasis on engineering, health, sciences, education, and business and an anticipated enrollment of 5,000 students by 2025; (2) a coordinated effort to increase student interest in and preparation for higher education in general, and study in the STEM fields in particular; (3) initiation of the University of Washington North Sound programs in 2008; and (4) more rapid campus development than occurred at earlier branch campuses, in order to achieve sufficient size to support quality offerings in the STEM fields.

Summary of Bill: A University of Washington branch campus, to be called the University of Washington North Sound, is created in Lake Stevens. The top priority for this branch campus is the expansion of upper division capacity for transfer students and graduate capacity and programs in high demand fields with a particular focus on science, technology, and engineering. Lower division courses, linked to specific majors not addressed at local community colleges, may also be offered. In addition to offering courses linked to specific majors not addressed at local community colleges, the campus may also directly admit freshman and sophomore students in accordance with plans submitted to the Higher Education Coordinating Board. The campus must admit students through coadmission and coenrollment agreements with a community college emphasizing access for transfer students codeveloped by the University of Washington and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Higher Education): PRO: The Lake Stevens site has multiple commuting corridors to ease traffic concerns. It would be a reverse commute for

students, so traffic would not be too bad. Site selection should not stall progress toward a college for this area. The Legislature needs to see the faces of the people who care about higher education in this area. All of the final sites are good and should be equally considered. The potential growth in East Snohomish County is greater than acknowledged.

Persons Testifying (Higher Education): PRO: Senator Hobbs, prime sponsor; Vern Little, Mayor, City of Lake Stevens; Colleen Hill, Snohomish Chamber of Commerce.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Ways & Means): PRO: There is ample developable land available at the Lake Steven site, and it is served by three major transportation corridors. The site is only three miles from downtown Everett, while at the same time providing good access to students from eastern Snohomish County.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means): PRO: Senator Hobbs, prime sponsor.