

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1328

As Reported by House Committee On:
Higher Education
Education Appropriations

Title: An act relating to allowing public technical colleges to offer associate transfer degrees.

Brief Description: Allowing public technical colleges to offer associate transfer degrees.

Sponsors: Representatives Carlyle, Morrell, Maxwell, Eddy, Anderson, Green, Van De Wege, Sells, White, Hasegawa, Wallace, Dunshee, Priest, McCoy, Dickerson, Williams, Ormsby, Finn, Lias, Kelley, Probst, Kenney, Hunt, Kessler, Pettigrew, Haigh, Goodman, Ericks, Blake, Jacks, Angel, Driscoll, Schmick, Hudgins, Hunter, Moeller, Chase, Springer, Conway, Sullivan, Rolfes, Simpson, Campbell, Santos and Roberts.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 1/30/09, 2/13/09 [DPS];

Education Appropriations: 2/25/09, 2/26/09 [DPS(HE)].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Allows technical colleges to offer Associate transfer degrees that prepare students for entry into professional fields.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Wallace, Chair; Sells, Vice Chair; Anderson, Ranking Minority Member; Schmick, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Angel, Carlyle, Driscoll, Haler, Hasegawa and White.

Staff: Andi Smith (786-7304)

Background:

There are 34 community and technical colleges in the state including 29 community colleges and five technical colleges. The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges

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.

(SBCTC) provides financial, academic, and information technology coordination for all 34 colleges.

Technical colleges generally award degrees and certificates that prepare students for direct entry into the workforce. Students that graduate from a technical college and want to continue their education can transfer their workforce courses into specific Bachelor's of Applied Science (BAS) programs that are specifically designed to match up with the focus in the workforce degree. Otherwise, the technical coursework does not generally transfer.

The state's community colleges offer both technical degrees, similar to those offered at technical colleges, as well as academic degrees that are designed to transfer to baccalaureate institutions. Current statute does not allow technical colleges to offer academic transfer degrees.

The Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) is responsible for establishing a statewide transfer of credit policy and agreement, in cooperation with the public institutions of higher education and the SBCTC. Together these entities created the Direct Transfer Agreement (DTA). Any student who completes an approved DTA associate degree at a community college is considered to have satisfied the lower division general education requirements at a public four-year institution. These students are generally admitted as juniors when they transfer.

In the late 1990s, analysis of students' credit accumulation and graduation patterns revealed that transfer students in science, math, and other highly structured majors did not graduate as efficiently as non-transfer students. When they arrived at a four-year institution, these students needed to take additional lower division course requirements to qualify for their major.

To address this problem, the Council of Presidents, the HECB, and the SBCTC convened a workgroup to develop a statewide Associate of Science Transfer Degree (AS-T), which was adopted in 2000. Under the AS-T, students take more math and science prerequisites while at the community college, with the objective of transferring directly into a major once they reach the four-year institution.

More recently, the HECB asked that the Joint Access Oversight Group develop Major Related Programs (MRPs). A MRP is based on the DTA or AS-T but specifies the prerequisite coursework that will provide the best preparation for entry into certain competitive majors. In 2005 the workgroups completed four MRPs: nursing, elementary education, pre-engineering, and engineering technology. In 2007 the group completed additional programs in secondary education, earth and space science, and construction management. This cadre of degrees is generally characterized as preparing students for entry into professional fields.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

In addition to offering technical degrees, technical colleges are allowed to offer transfer degrees that prepare students for professional bachelor's degrees. Professional degrees, in this context, are those that prepare students for a specific field or occupation including engineering, engineering technology, pre-nursing, business, construction management, and teacher preparation for secondary education in science, technology, and math areas.

The SBCTC adopts rules creating consistency between community and technical colleges offering associate degrees that prepare students for these degrees. The SBCTC may address issues related to tuition and fee rates, tuition waivers, enrollment counting including the use of credits instead of clock hours, and degree granting authority.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

Additional technical corrections are made to: (1) redefine the definition of "occupational education," providing that it also prepares a student for transfer to bachelor's degrees in professional fields; (2) strike language from the definition of "occupational education" that limits the types of education a technical college can provide; and (3) strike language that provides temporary governance of technical colleges, prior to the creation of individual boards of trustees.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Making this change in legislation will create pathways to lifelong learning and family wage jobs. This bill breaks down institutional barriers by allowing technical colleges to offer academically transferable degrees.

This bill will impact students very favorably. Efforts have been made, in collaboration with the baccalaureate institutions, to ensure the transferability of certain courses. The transfer degrees that would be offered under this bill are a good fit with the four-year institutions. The state ranks poorly in its production of bachelors degrees; this change would help bridge that gap -- everyone wants to help to increase the pipeline. A study by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges found that technical colleges are already quite similar to community colleges in that most of the faculty needed to teach academic courses are already on board. Faculty already receives rigorous training. There are also plenty of students out there who have a technical degree and want to transfer and have very limited options, this would help expand those options. This change would also favorably impact students who are doing apprenticeships.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Sells, prime sponsor; Dr. John Walstrum, Kathryn Smith, and Morgan Rochan, Clover Park Technical College; Jan Yoshiwara, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; J. W. Harrington, University of Washington; and Randy Scott, Washington State Association of Plumbers & Pipefitters.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill by Committee on Higher Education be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 14 members: Representatives Haigh, Chair; Sullivan, Vice Chair; Priest, Ranking Minority Member; Hope, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Carlyle, Cox, Haler, Hunter, Kagi, Probst, Quall, Rolfes and Wallace.

Staff: Debbie Driver (786-7143)

Summary of Recommendation of Committee On Education Appropriations Compared to Recommendation of Committee On Higher Education:

No new changes were recommended.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill would result in substantial savings to students while removing the existing silos that create barriers between higher educational institutions. Students will save money as those who attend technical colleges and want to receive an associate transfer degree will now be able to do so. This will make it easier for these students to move on to a four-year degree. A recent survey revealed that the technical colleges are currently able to offer the types of courses needed to add transfer degrees to their offerings within existing resources. Courses have been developed and faculty are qualified and ready to teach the new courses. All that is needed is the authority to offer these courses and the transfer degree. This bill provides improved pathway opportunities for students and makes it easier for them to meet their educational goals.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Carlyle, prime sponsor; Calvin Pearson, Bates Technical College; John Walstrom, Clover Park Technical College; Jan Yoshiwara, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; and Sharon McGavick, Lake Washington Technical College.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.