
Higher Education Committee

HB 2694

Brief Description: Regarding a bachelor of science in nursing program at the University Center.

Sponsors: Representatives Sells, White, McCoy, Kenney, Ericks, O'Brien, Roberts and Chase.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Recognizes a shortage of registered nurses in the state and, subject to specific funding for this purpose, directs the University Center at Everett Community College, in partnership with the University of Washington-Bothell, to offer a bachelor of science in nursing program with capacity for at least 50 full-time students.

Hearing Date: 1/20/10

Staff: Cece Clynch (786-7195).

Background:

Management and leadership responsibility for the north Snohomish, Island, and Skagit counties' higher education consortium is assigned, in statute, to Everett Community College (ECC). ECC is charged with collaborating with community and business leaders, other local community colleges, the public four-year institutions, and the Higher Education Coordinating Board to develop an educational plan for the region based on the university center model. In April of 2009, Gray Wolf Hall opened as the new home of the University Center of North Puget Sound. The University Center at Everett Community College currently offers over 20 bachelor's and master's degrees from six partner universities.

ECC offers an associate degree nursing program that graduates approximately 70 to 90 students per year. The University Center at Everett Community College does not offer a bachelor of science in nursing. There is a bachelor of science in nursing program offered by the University of Washington-Bothell at its Bothell campus and in Mt. Vernon.

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.

Despite recent growth in nursing education capacity, shortages still persist for registered nurses. According to a June 2007 study by the Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana, and Idaho (WWAMI) Center for Health Workforce Studies, the average age of Washington's registered nurses was 48 years. More than a third were 55 years of age or older. In light of the age demographics, it was predicted that there would be a high rate of registered nurses retiring from nursing practice over the next two decades which will significantly reduce the supply. This reduction comes at the same time as the state's population grows and ages. The registered nurse education capacity in Washington impacts the supply of registered nurses in the state. If the rate of graduation in registered nursing does not increase, projections show that supply in Washington will begin to decline by 2015. In contrast, if graduation rates increased by 400 per year, the supply of registered nurses would meet estimated demand by the year 2021.

The HECB's Employer Demand Joint Report 2009 Update of "A Skilled and Educated Workforce" showed an annual supply of 2,912 registered nurses, with 3,019 additional registered nurses needed to meet the average annual demand for 2004-2014.

Summary of Bill:

Subject to specific funding for 50 students, the University Center at ECC, in partnership with UW-Bothell, shall offer a bachelor of science in nursing program for 50 students.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 12, 2010.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on July 1, 2010. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.