

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5864

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As of February 10, 2009

**Title:** An act relating to a University of Washington branch campus in Snohomish county.

**Brief Description:** Establishing the University of Washington Snohomish county branch campus.

**Sponsors:** Senators Berkey and Shin.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Higher Education & Workforce Development: 2/06/09.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

**Staff:** Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

**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 Board (HECB) issued its assessment of the higher education needs of Snohomish, Island, and Skagit (SIS) counties in December 2006. The HECB recommended that: (1) the state's first priority should be to increase core funding and enrollment at the existing public colleges and universities; (2) future decisions about creation of a new four-year campus should be made when the existing institutions reached their maximum capacity; and (3) 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

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Management (OFM) and the UW to assess potential sites for the new campus. 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.

In 2008 the Legislature directed the HECB to assist these parties in coming to an agreement on the location of the potential campus and to issue a report to the appropriate legislative fiscal and policy committees by December 1, 2008. A consultant was retained. While there was agreement that the region needed a four-year institution, no consensus was reached on where a campus should be located.

**Summary of Bill:** A third UW branch must be located in Snohomish County. At the UW Snohomish County, a top priority is expansion of upper division capacity for transfer students and graduate capacity and high-demand programs with a particular focus on science, technology, and engineering. The campus may offer lower division courses linked to specific majors in fields not addressed at local community colleges. The campus may also directly admit freshmen and sophomores gradually and deliberately in accordance with the campus plan to be submitted to the HECB. The campus must admit students through coadmission or coenrollment agreements with a community college emphasizing access for transfer students codeveloped by the UW 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:** PRO: We need to create more opportunities to maintain our global competitiveness. We are wasting time; now is the time to act. Our state is importing professionals because we are not producing enough graduates at home. Identification with UW would provide clarity, certainty, and instant national recognition. It is critical that we maintain progress toward making this happen. This college would provide the education needed for people seeking high employer demand, recession resistant jobs.

CON: We have already passed this step in the process.

OTHER: There is a documented need for more post-secondary educational opportunities in this area, but given the present budget projections we should very carefully plan our future and consider the progress we have already made. The state has significantly extended educational opportunities in the area over the last 20 years. In this time of very limited resources, we should be careful not to spread them too thin. The HECB is working on a new unified state planning model, including guiding principles, for the development of higher education opportunities throughout the state. This needs to be completed this year before we

make new investment decisions. Our system has a tradition of cooperation, quality, and careful planning that we need to preserve.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Shin; prime sponsor.

CON: Aaron Reardon, Snohomish County Executive; Mike Cooper, Snohomish County Council; Mayor Ray Stephanson, City of Everett; Patty DeGroot, Providence Medical Center.

OTHER: Ann Daley, Executive Director, HECB; Randy Hodgins, UW; Terry Teale, Executive Director, Council of Presidents.