

HOUSE BILL REPORT

E2SHB 1792

As Passed House:
March 4, 2011

Title: An act relating to expanding opportunities in higher education in north Puget Sound.

Brief Description: Concerning the University Center of north Puget Sound.

Sponsors: House Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Representatives Sells, Hope, Dunshee, Haler, McCoy, Moscoso and Liias).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 2/10/11, 2/17/11 [DPS];

Ways & Means: 2/23/11, 2/25/11 [DP2S(w/o sub HE)].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/4/11, 74-23.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Second Substitute Bill

- Assigns management and leadership of the University Center of North Puget Sound to Washington State University.
- Requires Washington State University to collaborate with the University Center at Everett Community College and other university partners that offer baccalaureate degrees at the University Center to develop a strategic plan.
- Requires that the strategic plan be completed by July 1, 2013, and that the transfer of operation and management occur by July 1, 2014.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Seaquist, Chair; Carlyle, Vice Chair; Haler, Ranking Minority Member; Parker, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Fagan, Hasegawa, Jacks, Probst, Reykdal, Sells, Springer, Warnick and Zeiger.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Buys and Crouse.

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.

Staff: Madeleine Thompson (786-7304).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: The second substitute bill be substituted therefor and the second substitute bill do pass and do not pass the substitute bill by Committee on Higher Education. Signed by 21 members: Representatives Hunter, Chair; Darneille, Vice Chair; Hasegawa, Vice Chair; Bailey, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Carlyle, Cody, Dickerson, Haigh, Haler, Hudgins, Hunt, Kagi, Kenney, Ormsby, Parker, Pettigrew, Schmick, Seaquist, Springer, Sullivan and Wilcox.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Alexander, Ranking Minority Member; Dammeier, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Orcutt, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Hinkle and Ross.

Staff: Trista Zugel (786-7157).

Background:

Research by the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) and State Board for Community and Technical Colleges has found that certain regions in the state do not have adequate access to upper division baccalaureate education or graduate degrees. Access to higher education in north King, Snohomish, Island, and Skagit counties has been the subject of many studies since 1988. In 1989 the Legislature established the University of Washington, Bothell (UWB) campus.

In 2005 Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 1794, directed Everett Community College, in collaboration with community and business leaders, other higher education institutions, and the HECB, to develop an educational plan for the region based on the university center model. The group was directed to submit a plan to the Legislature in December 2005, and the HECB was directed to provide a progress report in 2008.

The HECB 2008 report found that the three-county area is large, geographically diverse, and forecast to experience continued significant population growth to 2025 and beyond. The report forecast an unmet need for over 10,700 full-time equivalent students in 2025, without increased higher education service delivery. The HECB found that young adults aged 17 to 24 years make up 74 percent of the need. Based on employer interviews, the report found that there were needs for engineering and engineering technology program offerings in addition to a variety of other high demand programs of study.

In April 2009 the University Center at Everett Community College was established at Gray Wolf Hall. The University Center at Everett Community College offers over 20 bachelor's and master's degrees from six partner universities.

In 2010 Legislation was enacted (House Bill 2694) authorizing the establishment of a bachelor of science in nursing at the University Center at Everett Community College, in partnership with the UWB.

Summary of Engrossed Second Substitute Bill:

Washington State University (WSU) is assigned management and leadership of the University Center of North Puget Sound. The WSU must collaborate with Everett Community College and other university partners that offer baccalaureate degrees at the University Center to develop a strategic plan.

A Coordinating and Planning Council is created to develop the strategic plan. The strategic plan must build on degrees offered at the University Center; address demand for degrees in the region; and employers' needs for skilled workers, with an initial emphasis by Washington State University on undergraduate and graduate engineering degree programs in a variety of engineering disciplines such as civil, mechanical, aeronautical, and aerospace manufacturing.

The strategic plan must include a multibiennium budget that addresses both operating and capital expenses required to effectively implement the plan. The strategic plan must be completed by July 1, 2013, and the transfer of operation and management must occur by July 1, 2014.

The provisions in this bill must only take effect after the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) determines whether a needs assessment and analysis is required and, if so, conducts a needs assessment and viability determination under RCW28B.76.230 and delivers a recommendation to carry out the provisions in section 1. The HECB must advise the Code Reviser of their recommendation.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains a contingent effective date and takes effect after the Higher Education Coordinating Board determines whether a needs assessment and analysis is required and makes certain recommendations.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Higher Education):

(In support) The conversation about the need for greater higher education capacity in Everett and the larger region has been going on for a long time. It is time to move it to the next level. Everett is a growing city. There is a need for a stronger, more significant four-year degree presence in Everett. There is a need for more engineers in the region and state. A lot of the engineers in wind engineering are retiring, and there is a need to replace them with qualified individuals. The region has a need for more degrees in science, technology, engineering, and math. Existing employees would like to advance their careers and need more options. There are important economic development opportunities when a university that is a land-grant university is present. The land-grant mission leads to a good understanding of collaboration.

(Opposed) This is just a management switch. The University Center at Everett Community College already offers engineering programs that were just launched. The process for offering this proposal was not inclusive. The University Center at Everett Community College is currently addressing a wide variety of needs. This proposal does not foster

partnerships and has the potential for fracturing the partnerships that are already in existence. There is no study to support this and no review of the plan by the Legislature. The leadership of the University Center at Everett Community College was already established by the Legislature a few years ago. The University Center at Everett Community College is run on an extremely efficient basis. There are concerns about the mortgage. Relationships with current university partners are excellent.

(Commented) It is important to think about the region in 10 years and what will be needed. The proposal sets in place a cooperative model, and the structure is based on a successful model.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Ways & Means):

(In support) This is about helping Everett meet the needs of their economy in the future. We seek a research university partner particularly in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics baccalaureate degrees. Our discussions have been about finding a way to meet the needs of employers in the region. Many engineers needed in the region will retire soon. We need to meet that growing need. This plan has to be approved by the Legislature. The parties at the table now were invited there. Washington State University has a physical presence in many cities. We seek to align with Everett in the same way we have around the state, and we welcome opportunity to craft an academic plan for the region. It is the Legislature's prerogative to create branch campuses. A certain degree of planning is certainly appropriate. We appreciate the members in the policy committee responding to our concerns about the underlying bill. Those involved are willing to be active partners in developing the strategic plan. The bill is congruent with current systems designs processes. The inclusion of the University Center leadership brings together leadership important to structuring a process to assess and create this plan.

The current University Center leadership would be pleased to move forward with a high demand program. It is important for the University Center operations to remain undisturbed by this process. We are looking forward to the continuation of existing programs. We hope that the current process will be amended to assure the results of the plan come back to the Legislature for approval. We want to assure continuity and growth, as well as the creation of options for as many students as possible. We appreciate having been heard in the policy committee, and the bill now addresses our concerns.

(In support with concerns) The current system is nimble and allows us to build on all the strengths of the constituent programs. We want to make sure it is not disturbed by this process. The development of a new branch campus is a very expensive plan, and we want to make sure that the Legislature has the ability to approve the strategic plan. We ask that the committee consider also the development of a budget so we can see the cost impact of this plan.

(Opposed) We need to consider the costs of this plan from a faculty perspective. This means considering that the cost in money, minds, and energy in this planning effort is enormous given that we need to focus our energy on dealing with the current financial situation. We have a collaborative effort in Everett already.

Persons Testifying (Higher Education): (In support) Representative Sells, prime sponsor; Mayor Ray Stephanson, City of Everett; Connie Niva, Washington State University Regent; Steve Klein, Snohomish County Public Utilities District; Crystal Donner, Everett Chamber of Commerce; Gary Meisner; and Elson Floyd, Brian Pitcher, and Larry James, Washington State University.

(Opposed) David Beyer, Gene Chase, and Christine Kerlin, Everett Community College; and Jim Bricker and Charlie Earl, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

(Commented) Representative Dunshee.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means): (In support) Representative Sells, prime sponsor; Ray Stephanson, City of Everett; Chris Mulick, Washington State University; David Beyer, Everett Community College; Christine Kerlin, Everett Community College-University Center; Charlie Earl, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; and Sherry Burkey, Western Washington University.

(In support with concerns) Margaret Shepherd, University of Washington.

(Opposed) Marsha Riddle Buly, Western Washington University Faculty.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Higher Education): None.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Ways & Means): None.