

HOUSE BILL REPORT

2SSB 5636

As Passed House - Amended:
April 9, 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: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Haugen, Harper, Shin and Delvin).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 3/16/11, 3/24/11 [DPA];

Ways & Means: 3/30/11, 3/31/11 [DPA(WAYS w/o HE)].

Floor Activity:

Passed House - Amended: 4/9/11, 66-31.

**Brief Summary of Second Substitute Bill
(As Amended by House)**

- 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 (University Center) and other university partners that offer baccalaureate degrees at the University Center to create a Coordinating and Planning Council and develop a strategic plan.
- Requires that the strategic plan be completed by December 1, 2012, and be submitted to the Legislature for review, and if the Legislature takes no further action, that the transfer of operation and management occur by July 1, 2014.
- Makes the act contingent on Higher Education Coordinating Board recommendations that are due by July 1, 2012.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Seaquist, Chair; Carlyle, Vice Chair; Haler, Ranking Minority Member; Parker, Assistant Ranking

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Minority Member; Buys, Fagan, Hasegawa, Probst, Reykdal, Sells, Springer, Warnick and Zeiger.

Staff: Madeleine Thompson (786-7304).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended by Committee on Ways & Means and without amendment by Committee on Higher Education. Signed by 24 members: Representatives Hunter, Chair; Darneille, Vice Chair; Hasegawa, Vice Chair; Bailey, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Carlyle, Chandler, Cody, Dickerson, Haigh, Haler, Hinkle, Hudgins, Hunt, Kagi, Kenney, Ormsby, Parker, Pettigrew, Ross, Schmick, Seaquist, Springer, Sullivan and Wilcox.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Alexander, Ranking Minority Member; Dammeier, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Orcutt, Assistant Ranking Minority Member.

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 forecasted 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 (University Center) was established at Gray Wolf Hall. The University Center offers over 20 bachelor's and master's degrees from eight partner universities. In 2010 legislation was enacted (House Bill 2694) authorizing the establishment of a bachelor of science in nursing at the University Center, in partnership with the UWB.

Summary of Amended Bill:

Management and leadership of the University Center is assigned to the Washington State University (WSU). Everett Community College (ECC), WSU, and other partner universities are required to collaborate on establishing a plan for the University Center.

A Coordinating and Planning Council (Council) is established, and the Director of the University Center implements decisions of the Council and reports to the President of the WSU. The membership of the Council is specified, but may be modified by agreement.

The WSU, in collaboration with ECC, University Center partners, and community leaders, must develop a plan that addresses expansion of the range of regional educational opportunities. The plan must meet employers' needs for skilled workers by expanding high employer demand programs of study, with an initial emphasis by the WSU on undergraduate and graduate engineering degree programs in a variety of engineering disciplines such as civil, mechanical, aeronautical, and aerospace manufacturing, in addition to the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) programs. The plan must include other specified strategies, and establish a process for program development. It must be completed by December 1, 2012.

The University Center expansion needs and capital facility funding are reviewed annually by the WSU in cooperation with ECC. The WSU designs, constructs, and manages any facility developed at the University Center with the exception of facilities utilizing ECC capital funding. The WSU is responsible for infrastructure development and maintenance with costs shared equitably.

The act will take effect only after the HECB determines whether a needs assessment and analysis is required and, if so, conducts a needs assessment and viability determination and recommends implementation. These recommendations are due by July 1, 2012. The Office of Financial Management, the Legislature, and the Office of the Code Reviser shall be notified of the HECB's recommendations. Contingent on the HECB's recommendations, WSU's leadership role begins by July 1, 2014.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Preliminary fiscal note available.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: 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) It is time to give hope to the future of the generation in the area and provide more baccalaureate and graduate programs. There is an interest in baccalaureate hotel management programs in addition to the other engineering programs. The other four-year degree granting institutions are too far away. It is 100 miles round-trip to the Western Washington University campus or UWB campus. The current University Center offers some

options but there are not enough. Industries in the area need to have a research institution offering a variety of programs.

(With concerns) There is concern that this proposal would take away from STEM programs across the state by concentrating only on this area.

(Commented) This is sending a negative message to students who already attend the University Center.

(Other) There is a need for a greater emphasis on STEM programs and a need to support any proposal that provides an emphasis on STEM programs.

(Opposed) There is a very successful University Center already established. This proposal, the way it is written, is flawed and risky. The proposal sets up some costs for the future that the Legislature has not adequately talked about to this point. It commits the state to long term funding. The Council in the proposal is not equitable. The University Center is to serve three counties and yet mayors from all the cities involved are not represented. There are major problems related to construction and maintenance as well as control of facilities. The programs already offered at the University Center are in jeopardy.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Ways & Means):

(In support) The university center model is driven by collaboration and WSU is committed to that and also to maintenance of the existing programs at the University Center. Washington State University will undertake its planning for this change with the most efficient service delivery model possible. As a land grant university, WSU is a logical fit for just this type of undertaking. For the City of Everett, and the three surrounding counties, this is a very important issue. The most conservative study relating to the unmet need for full-time enrollments in the region is over 5,000. Additionally, the aerospace and high tech employers have a lot of retirements coming up. There is a significant need for engineering talent. The initial STEM degrees are critical to this bill. This is about a long-term vision to serve students and industry. We appreciate several provisions that were added in the policy committee, including a more balanced planning committee.

(In support with concerns) We would prefer if the bill required a legislative opt-in as opposed to an opt-out. We anticipate that outstanding budget concerns can be addressed in the planning committee. We urge support of the policy committee amendment. We have some reservations about the ultimate directions intended by this move as well as questions about whether this is going to serve students better. However, improvements have been made. Key issues will be addressed openly. You will be able to decide whether the changes will meet the needs of students. We are very concerned about the additional costs that could be incurred; the Legislature has to consider this.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying (Higher Education): (In support) Senator Haugen, prime sponsor; Pat McClain, City of Everett; and Chris Mulick and Brian Pitcher, Washington State University.

(With concerns) Sherry Burkey, Western Washington University; and Margaret Shepherd, University of Washington.

(Commented) Mauri Moore and Pete Crane, Community and Technical College Trustees.

(Other) Leslie Goldstein, Office of the Governor.

(Opposed) Charlie Earl, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; Christine Kerlin, University Center; Denise Yochum, Pierce College; and David Beyer, Everett Community College.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means): (In support) Chris Mulick, Washington State University; and Doug Levy, City of Everett.

(In support with concerns) Margaret Shepherd, University of Washington; Charlie Earl, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; and Sherry Burkey, Western Washington University.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Higher Education): (In support) Linda Lanham, Aerospace Futures Alliance; Larry Brown, Association of Machinists; and Kristin Farr, Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace.

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