

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2313

As of February 22, 2012

Title: An act relating to the meeting procedures of the boards of trustees and boards of regents of institutions of higher education.

Brief Description: Concerning the meeting procedures of the boards of trustees and boards of regents of institutions of higher education.

Sponsors: House Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Zeiger, Carlyle, Probst, Wilcox, Anderson, Haler, Fagan, Reykdal, Springer, Buys, Pollet, Wylie, Crouse, Jinkins, Moscoso and Overstreet).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/08/12, 98-0.

Committee Activity: Higher Education & Workforce Development: 2/21/12.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Staff: Kimberly Cushing (786-7421)

Background: The Open Public Meetings Act (Act) requires that all meetings of governing bodies of public agencies be open and public with certain limited exceptions. Public agencies include state educational institutions, such as universities, colleges, and community college districts. Governing bodies include multimember boards, such as boards of regents and boards of trustees.

The Act outlines certain procedures for meetings at which action is taken by governing boards of public agencies. It does not require governing bodies to allow the public to speak at public meetings.

Summary of Bill: It is restated that the governing boards of the institutions of higher education must follow the procedures for open public meetings required under the Open Public Meetings Act.

The governing boards also must provide time for public comment at meetings.

Appropriation: None.

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.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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: There is no specific problem to address but it is important to ensure the public voice is there that may have lessened in the legislative process. Decisions are made by the governing boards that affect the public and students, particularly now that they have tuition-setting authority. The institutions are the largest governmental and economic entities in every community in which they operate and their reach spreads beyond that to the whole state and region. The boards are appointed by Governor and aren't directly accountable to the people. To have an open board and to take testimony from the public is the only access the public has.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Zeiger, prime sponsor; Jessie Fu, WA Student Assn., Associated Students Central WA University; Andrew J. Lewis, Associated Students UW; Rowland Thompson, Allied Daily Newspapers.