

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5315

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Higher Education & Workforce Development, February 16, 2011

Title: An act relating to the provision of doctorate programs at the research university branch campuses in Washington.

Brief Description: Regarding the provision of doctorate programs at the research university branch campuses in Washington.

Sponsors: Senators Becker, Pridemore, Delvin, Kastama, McAuliffe, Regala, Zarelli, Kilmer, Conway, Shin, Tom and Rockefeller; by request of Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education & Workforce Development: 2/02/11, 2/16/11 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Tom, Chair; Shin, Vice Chair; Hill, Ranking Minority Member; Baumgartner, Becker, Ericksen, Kastama, Kilmer and White.

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

Background: Washington State University (WSU) and the University of Washington (UW) are the only two public institutions of higher education authorized to award research doctorate degrees in Washington. Eastern Washington University is authorized to award an applied doctorate in physical therapy. UW-Bothell, UW-Tacoma, WSU-Vancouver, and WSU Tri-Cities are branch campuses of the two research universities authorized to award baccalaureate and masters level degrees.

The Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) has a comprehensive and ongoing assessment process to determine the need for additional degree programs and locations for degree programs. If the HECB determines that there is a need for a change in level of degree, an examination of the viability of the change is conducted. The HECB's recommendation on whether to proceed is then presented to the Governor and Legislature.

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.

Summary of Bill: Subject to HECB approval, UW and WSU are authorized to develop doctoral degree programs at their branch campuses. The HECB will use their assessment process to determine whether the proposed doctoral level programs are needed and viable.

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: Branch campuses are excited about the possibility of offering doctoral programs. Students will not have to travel to the main campuses to access these programs. The idea meshes with the 2008 Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education. WSU has a long history of supporting the development of graduate degrees on their branch campuses. The local option will make graduate education more accessible to place-bound students. UW-Tacoma is poised to offer doctoral programs on a self-sustaining basis.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Becker, prime sponsor; Jan Ignash, Deputy Director, HECB; Chris Mulick, WSU; Mike Wark, UW-Tacoma; John Wheeler III, Washington Student Assoc.; Ben Henry, UW Graduate, Professional Student Assoc.