

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5442

As of February 8, 2011

Title: An act relating to an accelerated baccalaureate degree program.

Brief Description: Requiring the development of accelerated baccalaureate programs at state colleges and universities.

Sponsors: Senators Shin, Tom, Kilmer, White and Chase.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education & Workforce Development: 2/08/11.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

Background: Some public and private colleges and universities offer students the opportunity to obtain a baccalaureate degree in three years. The requirements of these accelerated baccalaureate programs vary. Frequently, these accelerated degree programs require summer school attendance, prior college credits earned during high school through such programs as Advanced Placement and Running Start, or enrollment for the maximum credits allowed per quarter.

In the Fall of 2009, the University of Washington (UW) announced a new program, called The Husky Advantage, to make it easier for students entering the university with a high number of Advanced Placement or Running Start credits to complete a bachelor's degree in three years. According to the UW, about 500 freshmen enter each year with 45 college credits obtained while they were in high school. Through careful planning and advising, these students can complete general education requirements and fulfill the requirements of certain majors, mostly in the College of Arts and Sciences.

The Evergreen State College (TESC) reports that 9 percent of those entering as first year students graduate in three years.

Summary of Bill: The state and regional universities and TESC may develop accelerated baccalaureate degree programs that will allow academically qualified students to obtain a baccalaureate degree in three years without attending summer classes or enrolling in more

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than a full-time class load during the regular academic year. Qualified students in such programs must be allowed to begin course work within their academic field during their first term or semester of enrollment.

The universities and TESC must report on their plans for these accelerated programs to the Higher Education Coordinating Board for approval.

Appropriation: None.

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: Some motivated students have been doing this already without the help of the institutions. This is a good companion to the Governor's bill. Colleges are already working on ideas to help students graduate quicker. The state has some very talented students that deserve this opportunity.

OTHER: It may be prudent to gauge student demand first. Students in these programs may lose the opportunity to participate in internships and senior projects. This idea would require very good advising and that will cost money. It will not work for students who change their field of study.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Shin, prime sponsor; Mike Reilly, Council of Presidents; Jim Fridley, UW faculty.

OTHER: Paul Locke, Anthony Flinn, Council of Faculty Representatives; Marsha Riddle Buly, faculty representative, WWU.