

FINAL BILL REPORT

2SSB 5636

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Synopsis as Enacted

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).

Senate Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Development

Senate Committee on Ways & Means

House Committee on Higher Education

House Committee on Ways & Means

Background: A number of studies have been undertaken over the past decade to determine the higher education needs of North King, Snohomish, Island, and Skagit Counties. In November 2006 a consultant team's final report found that the needs of about 10,800 full-time equivalent students would be unmet by 2025 if students from those counties participated in baccalaureate and graduate degree programs at the 1998 national average for all adults.

The mission of the University Center of North Puget Sound (University Center) is to develop partnerships with other colleges and universities for the purpose of providing baccalaureate and graduate degrees for the residents of North Snohomish, Island and Skagit Counties and to provide the services and facilities that deliver these educational opportunities. The University Center offers on-line and in-class courses from Washington State University (WSU), University of Washington (UW)-Bothell, Western Washington University (WWU), Central Washington University, The Evergreen State College, Hope International University, and Saint Martin's University. Instruction is delivered in various formats including web-based distance education, two-way interactive video, technology supported classrooms and combinations of these. In 2005 the legislature named consortium member Everett Community College (ECC) as manager of the University Center and in March, 2009 the University Center moved to the new Undergraduate Center in Gray Wolf Hall on the main campus.

Summary: WSU assumes management and leadership for baccalaureate and graduate degree production at the University Center by July 1, 2014. The Director of the University Center reports to the President of WSU and implements decisions of the Coordinating and Planning Council (council). The council is established to provide long-range strategic planning, facilitate collaborations, and resolve internal disputes. The membership of the council is specified, but may be modified by agreement.

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.

The council must establish a strategic plan addressing the employers' needs for skilled workers by expanding high employer demand programs of study, with an ongoing emphasis by WSU on undergraduate and graduate engineering degree programs in a variety of engineering disciplines such as civil, mechanical, aeronautical, and aerospace manufacturing. The plan must specifically address the operating and capital budget required to implement the plan, expansion of the range of regional educational opportunities, include specified strategies, and establish a process for program development. It must be completed by December 1, 2012. The strategic plan is considered approved if the Legislature does not take further action during the 2013 legislative session.

Academic programming and delivery are developed in accordance with the missions of WSU, ECC, and other institutions that have a presence at the University Center. Each participating institution awards degrees granted in its programs at the University Center. The council establishes a process for prioritizing new programs and revising existing programs to fit the needs of the region.

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

The act takes effect only 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 and recommends that this should move forward. The Office of Financial Management, the Legislature, and the Code Reviser must be notified of the HECB's recommendations by July 1, 2012.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	39	9	
House	66	31	(House amended)
Senate	38	10	(Senate concurred)

Effective: Contingent.