

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 2398

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Higher Education, February 27, 2014

Title: An act relating to the authority of community colleges to confer honorary bachelor of applied science degrees.

Brief Description: Permitting community colleges that confer applied baccalaureate degrees to confer honorary bachelor of applied science degrees.

Sponsors: Representatives Walkinshaw, Haler, Seaquist, Zeiger, Muri, Smith, Ryu, Reykdal, S. Hunt, Gregerson and Pollet.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/11/14, 98-0.

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 2/25/14, 2/27/14 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Bailey, Chair; Becker, Vice Chair; Kohl-Welles, Ranking Member; Baumgartner, Frockt, McAuliffe and Tom.

Staff: Kimberly Cushing (786-7421)

Background: In Washington, the boards of regents or trustees of the six public four-year institutions of higher education are authorized, upon recommendation of the faculty, to confer honorary degrees upon persons other than their graduates in recognition of their learning or devotion to literature, art, or science.

Likewise, the boards of trustees of community or technical colleges are authorized, upon recommendation of the faculty, to confer honorary associate of arts degrees on persons other than graduates of the college in recognition of their learning or devotion to education, literature, art, or science.

Under current law, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) is authorized to select colleges to develop and offer applied baccalaureate degrees. Applied bachelor's degrees are career-oriented degrees designed to meet the needs of the economy in specific high-demand fields. They take two-year professional-technical degrees and add on junior and senior levels. The degrees can be a two-year management track on top of a two-

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year technical education or a continuation of a technical degree. Currently SBCTC has approved 23 bachelor of applied science (B.A.S.) programs at 11 colleges.

Summary of Bill: Upon recommendation of the faculty, the boards of trustees of community or technical colleges authorized to award baccalaureate degrees may confer honorary B.A.S. degrees.

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: In 2010 the pilot for applied baccalaureate programs in community and technical colleges became current law but it did not give authority for honorary degrees. This bill aligns honorary degrees for applied bachelor's degrees with the law for associate degrees. Centralia College has a 14-year board member they want to honor with a B.A.S. degree. While it is a distinction to give an honorary AA degree, the bill will allow colleges to give out honorary degrees at the highest level of degrees they have. This is a great way to honor a person in the community. Applied baccalaureate degrees are serving the system in the way they were envisioned, providing students with both technical and critical thinking skills.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Walkinshaw, prime sponsor; Dr. Jim Walton, Centralia College, President; Stuart Halsan, Centralia College, Chair Board of Trustees; Jan Yoshiwara, SBCTC.