
Higher Education Committee

SSB 5487

Brief Description: Concerning higher education programs at Washington State University and the University of Washington.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Senators Baumgartner, Billig, Rivers, Keiser, Schoesler, Hatfield, Angel, King, Liias, Mullet, Dansel, Ericksen, Warnick, Honeyford, Brown, Hasegawa, Hewitt and Chase).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Provides that Washington State University (WSU) may offer and teach medicine and forestry as major lines of study.
- Authorizes the board of regents of WSU to establish, operate, and maintain a school of medicine.

Hearing Date: 3/25/15

Staff: Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

Background:

In 1917 the Legislature defined the term "major line" to mean the development of the work or courses of study in certain subjects to their fullest extent, leading to a degree in that subject. Over the years, the Legislature designated major lines to be offered exclusively by either the University of Washington (UW) or Washington State University (WSU), or to be shared by both UW and WSU.

Currently, state laws stipulate that major lines of study:

- offered only by the UW include: law, medicine, forest products, logging engineering, library sciences, and fisheries.
- offered only by WSU include: agriculture (in all its branches and subdivisions), veterinary medicine, and economic science in its application to agriculture and rural life.

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.

- offered only by the UW or WSU include: pharmacy, architecture, and forest management.

In 1945 the Legislature authorized and directed the board of regents of the UW to establish, operate, and maintain a school of medicine. In the early 1970s, the UW created a regional medical education program to train and prepare physicians throughout Washington, Alaska, Montana, and Idaho. Wyoming joined in 1996. This program is known as WWAMI. Universities, including WSU, from the five states partner with the UW to offer basic sciences courses to first-year medical school students enrolled in WWAMI. Second-year students travel to the UW School of Medicine in Seattle or Spokane for their entire second year. The third and fourth years of medical education involve clinical rotations throughout the five-state region.

Summary of Bill:

The board of regents of WSU is authorized to establish, operate, and maintain a school of medicine at the university. In addition to the UW, WSU may offer and teach medicine and forestry as major lines.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.