

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1107

As Reported by House Committee On:
Higher Education

Title: An act relating to eliminating the term "branch" as an identifying factor for extensions of the public institutions of higher education.

Brief Description: Eliminating the term "branch" as an identifying factor for extensions of the public institutions of higher education.

Sponsors: Representatives Haler, Wylie, Riccelli, Shea, Stanford, Robinson, Fey, Tarleton and Pollet.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 1/17/17, 1/24/17 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Strikes the term "branch" from statutes referencing the satellite campuses of the public institutions of higher education.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Hansen, Chair; Pollet, Vice Chair; Holy, Ranking Minority Member; Van Werven, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Haler, Orwall, Sells and Stambaugh.

Staff: Megan Mulvihill (786-7304).

Background:

The federal government defines a "branch campus" as a location of an institution of higher education that is geographically apart and independent of the main campus of the institution. The branch campus is considered independent if it is permanent in nature; offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential; has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization; and has its own budgetary and hiring authority.

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.

In 1989 the Legislature authorized the creation of five branch campuses to be operated by the state's two public research universities, the University of Washington (UW) and Washington State University (WSU), to serve citizens residing in major metropolitan areas. Originally, the branch campuses had two missions: (1) increase access to higher education by focusing on upper division and graduate programs, target place-bound students, and operate as a two-plus-two educational system in cooperation with the community and technical colleges; and (2) promote regional development by responding to demand for degrees from local businesses and support regional economies through research activities. The two-plus-two educational system means the branch campuses have articulation agreements and dual admissions policies with the local community and technical colleges to support transfer students. Since 2006 and 2007, the branch campuses have been allowed to offer lower division courses and admit first-year students and sophomores.

The five branch campuses include the UW-Tacoma, UW-Bothell, WSU-Tri-Cities, WSU-Vancouver, and WSU-Spokane.

Summary of Bill:

The term "branch" is struck from all statutes referencing the satellite campuses of the state's public institutions of higher education.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The state's branch campuses have grown and changed, and they need to be able to break away from the term branch. Dropping this term from their name does not take them away from the main campuses, but rather allows them to develop their own identities. The institutions are proud of the accomplishments of the branch campuses, and if the term "branch" implies a less worthy education, then this should be removed. This change merely codifies current practice, but does not change budget practices, faculty employment, or even football teams.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Haler, prime sponsor; Jillian Kilby, University of Washington; and Chris Mulick, Washington State University.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.