

Key Senate bills addressing higher education system growth and tuition move to House

Two major bills affecting tuition rates and laying out a process for future expansion of the higher education system have been passed by the Senate and are now before the House Higher Education Committee.

System Design

SSB 6355 endorses the System Design Plan developed last year by the HECB in collaboration with a wide spectrum of the higher education community. The plan proposes a principle called “expand on demand” when making decisions about expansion of the higher education system. The principle calls for a showing that proven demand exists for major new programs or facilities before they are approved.

More specifically, SSB 6355 defines “major expansions” and “mission changes” that would be subject to a new review and approval process. The bill also removes the current limit on the number of applied baccalaureate degrees offered by community and technical colleges.

The bill had a public hearing Feb. 17, and awaits further committee action prior to a Feb. 23 deadline for bills to clear policy committees.

Tuition

The tuition bill (E2SSB 6562) - now titled *An act relating to higher education accountability and access*, was approved by the Senate on a 29-19 vote last weekend and sent to the House, where a hearing is scheduled in the House Higher Education Committee at 10 a.m. on Feb. 23. To review the bill's major elements, read page one of last week's [Legislative Report](#).

The bill sent to the House contains additional provisions not reported on last week. Tuition-setting authority within the range described in the bill would apply to the UW, WSU, and WWU only if the following requirement was met:

- Resident undergraduate tuition would be subject to the same limits as resident undergraduate tuition.
- The State Need Grant must cover the same percentage of resident, undergraduate tuition for students with incomes below 70 percent of MFI as it did in 2009-2010.

Another way of stating this is that unless funding for the State Need Grant rises in tandem with increased tuition levels, those tuition increases cannot be implemented.

Clarification: Senate staff requested the HECB clarify a statement in last week's Legislative Report. In last week's issue we reported “the increased cost to maintain the state policy of increasing financial aid for its neediest students to offset the effects of tuition increases would be \$6 million.” In fact, the \$6 million figure was derived by computing the increased appropriation needed to maintain the State Need Grant program at a 9 percent increased tuition rate rather than a 7 percent increased rate.

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A weekly report on
higher education
during the 2010
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Governor unveils revenue plan to restore proposed cut in State Need Grant funding

Gov. Chris Gregoire this week unveiled a \$605 million revenue proposal to help offset a forecasted revenue shortfall and restore \$146 million in State Need Grant (SNG) funding proposed for elimination in the Governor's initial supplemental budget.

The Governor's latest proposal would preserve SNG funding for nearly 73,000 students. However, State Work Study and other financial aid programs would be suspended under the Governor's plan.

The revenue proposal includes closing tax loopholes, eliminating tax exemptions, and increasing taxes on tobacco, bottled water and other discretionary products. [Read more about the Governor's proposal.](#)

Loan bill passes in House

A bill establishing an account to be used for a self-sustaining program of low-cost student loans, conditional scholarships or other financial assistance passed the House on Saturday Feb. 13.

2SHB 2854 establishes the Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) account to receive money for future low-cost loans, scholarships, or other financial assistance for low- and middle-income college students.

The latest version of the bill restricts future money in the account to legislative appropriations, private sources or participant repayments. HELP supporters hope to establish a self-sustaining funding mechanism after the current bill passes.

The bill also requires the HECB to establish an annual loan limit equal to the cost of attendance minus any other financial aid received.

A hearing on the bill is scheduled before the Senate Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Development on Tuesday Feb. 23.

Bill to train health professionals gets hearing

A Senate bill to provide training for health professionals who treat developmentally disabled adults had a hearing before the House Higher Education Committee on Wednesday.

SSB 5376 would require the HECB to develop a grant program for institutions to design training projects focused on improving services to adults with developmental disabilities. The grant program would be contingent on the Legislature providing funds.

Bill supporters say health professionals need special training to more effectively treat and communicate with persons who have developmental disabilities.

LiLA bill passes Senate and goes to House committee

The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTECB) would create a steering committee to work on establishing a statewide Lifelong Learning Account (LiLA) program under a bill reintroduced in the Senate this session and now before a House committee.

LiLAs are portable, employee-owned and employer-matched savings accounts that help working adults pay for additional college education to improve their work opportunities. Accounts stay with individuals regardless of whether they change jobs.

The steering committee established under ESSB 5555 would include representatives from the Association of Washington Business, HECB, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges and various other governmental, business and labor groups. The steering committee's tasks would include developing a policy framework for establishing a LiLA program, identifying technical and budget issues, and studying outreach methods to participants.

The steering committee would be required to make a report to appropriate legislative committees by Sept. 1, 2010.

Next week's schedule:

- **Tuesday Feb. 23:** Senate Higher Education & Workforce Development Committee. Public hearings: SHB 2580, 2SHB 2854. 10 a.m., SHR 3.
- **Tuesday Feb. 23:** House Higher Education Committee. Public hearings: SSB 5237, E2SSB 6562. 10 a.m., House Hearing Room A.
- **Wednesday Feb. 24:** Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education. Public hearing: SHB 2852. SHR 1.
- **Friday Feb. 26:** Last day to read in committee reports from opposite house, except House fiscal committees and Senate Ways & Means and Transportation committees.

Bills delivered to Governor

- [ESHB 2921](#) – Capturing additional savings.
- [SHB 2998](#) – Suspending certain monetary awards and salary increases.
- [SSB 6382](#) – Reducing the cost of state government operations by restricting compensation.

Bills in Senate Rules

- [HB 2858](#) – Regarding the purchasing authority of institutions of higher education.

Bills in Senate Committee

- [SHB 1545](#) – Authorizing the higher education Coordinating Board to offer higher education annuities and retirement income plans.
- [SHB 2580](#) – Concerning secondary career and technical education courses.
- [HB 2638](#) – Regarding instructional materials provided in a specialized format.
- [SHB 2683](#) – Changing provisions of the economic development council.
- [SHB 2684](#) – Establishing opportunity centers at community colleges
- [HB 2694](#) – Regarding a bachelor of science in nursing program at the University Center.
- [SHB 2852](#) – Concerning college-level online learning by high school students.
- [SHB 2854](#) – Making changes to the state higher education loan program.
- [SHB 2930](#) – Expanding the pool of qualified teachers.
- [HB 2973](#) – Creating resident student classifications for certain members of the military and their spouses and dependents.
- [HB 3068](#) – Providing access to alternative routes to certification for the recruiting Washington teachers program.
- [E2SHB 3141](#) – Redesigning the delivery of temporary assistance to needy families.

- [SB 6364](#) – Concerning the capital budget.
- [SSB 6409](#) – Creating the Washington investment in excellence account.
- [SB 6444](#) – Making 2010 operating supplemental appropriations.

Bills in House Committee

- [HB 2824](#) – Making 2010 operating supplemental appropriations.
- [HB 2836](#) – Concerning the capital budget.
- [SSB 5237](#) – Requiring the development of three-year baccalaureate programs.
- [SSB 5376](#) – Requiring the higher education coordinating board to develop a grant program to encourage training for students studying in the medical field to work with individuals with disabilities.
- [ESSB 5555](#) – Regarding lifelong learning accounts.
- [SSB 6355](#) – Expanding the higher education system upon proven demand.
- [SSB 6357](#) – Requiring policies for academic recognition of certain life and learning experiences.
- [SSB 6359](#) – Promoting efficiencies including institutional coordination and partnerships in the community and technical college system.
- [ESSB 6426](#) – Eliminating certain boards and commissions
- [SB 6467](#) – Authorizing honorary degrees for students who were ordered into internment camps.
- [ESSB 6533](#) – Granting high school credit for learning experiences.
- [E2SSB 6562](#) – Revised for 2nd Substitute: Regarding higher education accountability and access.
- [E2SSB 6579](#) – Improving the efficiency, accountability, and quality within state information systems.
- [SSB 6662](#) – Regarding developing a curriculum for a career track for home care aides.
- [2SSB 6678](#) – Concerning the creation of entities to address the long-range impact of opportunities and changes in the aerospace industry.
- [E2SSB 6696](#) – Regarding education reform.
- [SSB 6706](#) – Concerning the commercialization of research at state universities.
- [SSB 6727](#) – Concerning health sciences and services authorities.
- [ESSB 6778](#) – Establishing an alternative route to a high school diploma.
- [2SSB 6790](#) – Providing regional economic development services.
- [ESSB 6805](#) – Concerning Washington state economic development commission.