

May 2010

## Report on New Degree and Off-Site Program Enrollments

### Information Item

This report provides information for the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) on the enrollment status of new of degree programs, off-campus degree programs, and distance degree programs at the state's six baccalaureate institutions. No action is required.

### Overview

The Higher Education Coordinating Board is charged with overseeing state higher education resources, including the review and approval of academic programs, off-campus teaching sites, centers, and distance education programs.

The institutions are required to issue biennial reports to the HECB on the total enrollments in new degree programs and in all off-campus degree programs (including distance programs). They also report new degree options and certification programs and changes to existing programs.

Three basic sets of data are provided in this report.

1. **Table 1** provides the 2008-09 FTE enrollments for the bachelor's and advanced degree programs, implemented between 2004 and 2008, at the six public baccalaureate institutions, and the community and technical colleges enrolling applied baccalaureate students in 2008-09. The HECB and the institutions use this information to measure the accuracy of enrollment projections made when new degree programs are approved.
2. **Table 2** provides a summary of the enrollment in all degree and certificate programs conducted at sites other than the main or branch campuses of the baccalaureate institutions. This summary includes programs available via distance learning.
3. **Table 3** notes changes during the 2008 and 2009 academic years in the naming and status of degree programs at the baccalaureate institutions. This includes:
  - renamed departments, programs, specializations, certificates, and minors;
  - new specializations, certificates, and minors;
  - eliminated or suspended programs; and
  - programs for which the planning authorization has sunset.

To provide an additional level of both internal and external accountability, institutions also issue status and progress reports on all continuing degree programs every five, seven, or 10 years (depending on institutional policy). These reports are submitted to the HECB as well as accrediting organizations. However, to comply with changes in accreditation requirements implemented recently by the Northwest Commission of Colleges and Universities, many institutions have changed or plan to change their review cycles.

## Summary of Report Findings

### Program Enrollments

- Enrollment in the 84 new degree programs implemented between 2004 and 2008 totaled 2,219 FTE students in the 2008-09 academic year.
- Overall enrollment in new programs was within 10 percent of projected enrollment. Fifteen programs were well below projections and seven programs substantially exceeded projected enrollments.
- Institutions reported that most programs achieving less than 90 percent of their projected enrollment had experienced some causal factors, including:
  - changes in their implementation schedule,
  - changes in industry or economic conditions, and
  - changes in the timing of when students certify into the majors.

In most cases, institutions have outlined plans to improve enrollment in these under-performing programs. However, two of the programs<sup>1</sup> are slated for suspension or elimination.

It is clear from the enrollment detail and supplemental notes that institutions are responsive to discrepancies in actual enrollment versus enrollment projections. However, it also is apparent that more attention should be given to thorough analysis of student demand as part of the program approval process. **Table 1** provides summary information on enrollment in new degree programs.

### Off-campus enrollments

- The public baccalaureate institutions reported a total of 4,445 FTE students enrolled at various off-campus sites or centers<sup>2</sup> and 1,031 FTE students enrolled in distance learning programs during the 2008-09 academic year. Many programs are offered at multiple locations concurrently and several of these programs are quite small at a given location. **Table 2** contains summary information.

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<sup>1</sup> Central Washington University BAS in Food Service Management and University of Washington Master of Strategic Planning for Critical Infrastructures.

<sup>2</sup> Does not include enrollments at the Branch Campuses or WSU Spokane.

### **Planned programs/program changes**

- During the 2008 and 2009 academic years, the public baccalaureates eliminated or suspended 79 programs. As required by HECB policy and the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), students enrolled in the programs have been provided options to complete their programs in a timely manner and with minimum disruption.
- Institutions also added 96 new specializations, options, minors, and certificates. These are not subject to HECB approval in part because they provide a way for an institution to rapidly respond to student or industry needs in areas closely related to existing programs. They are also used to test new curriculum and gauge student demand prior to development of a full program. A summary of key program changes is provided in **Table 3**.

### **Continuing Academic Program Review**

As previously noted, each institution is required to submit to the HECB a summary of internal program reviews conducted over a preceding two-year period. For this report, institutions submitted materials for programs reviewed during the 2008 and 2009 academic years.

Under our current program review guidelines, we receive data on faculty and enrollment levels in each program reviewed. In addition, we receive a detailed narrative on each program including a statement of continuing need and plans for improvement.

In reviewing these materials, we have found them informative, but in most cases they are more detailed and internally focused than is needed for a state-level review of programs. In addition there is no common schedule for review, so the reviews are unable to provide a statewide look at a particular discipline.

While there is often logic in the collection of programs submitted from a given institution, we do not get reviews for similar programs across institutions, making it impossible to take a system-level look at the various disciplines.

Based on these observations, and the requirements of the legislation implementing the System Design Plan, we are considering ways to improve the program review process in the future so it can better inform the Board's work related to statewide coordination of higher education resources.

**Table 1: New Program Enrollments**  
(Programs Implemented Fall 2004 - Fall 2009)

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Program</b>	<b>2008-09 Annual Average FTE*</b>
Community and Technical College Applied Baccalaureate Programs	4 Bachelor's	143
Central Washington University	18 Bachelor's	288
	2 Master's	9
Eastern Washington University	9 Bachelor's	239
	9 Master's	445
The Evergreen State College	2 Master's	27
The University of Washington (including branches)	8 Bachelor's	262
	9 Master's	258
	7 Doctorate	182
Washington State University (including branches)	5 Bachelor's	64
	3 Master's	13
	2 Doctorate	25
Western Washington University	4 Bachelor's	181
	2 Master's	87
<b>Total New Programs</b>	<b>44 Bachelor's</b>	<b>1,175</b>
	<b>27 Master's</b>	<b>838</b>
	<b>9 Doctorate</b>	<b>206</b>

\* FTE's rounded to nearest whole number total does not match sum of the column due to rounding error.

**Table 2: Off-Campus Program Enrollments**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Sites</b>	<b>Programs*</b>	<b>2008-09 Annual Average FTE**</b>
Community and Technical College Applied Baccalaureate Programs		N/A	
Central Washington University	8 Distance	30 Bachelor's, 7 Master's 1 Master's	1,284 3
Eastern Washington University	8 Distance	16 Bachelor's, 14 Master's, 1 Doctorate, 1 Certificate 1 Master's	2,112 6
The Evergreen State College	5	6 Bachelor's	263
The University of Washington	3 Distance	2 Bachelor's, 3 Master's, 2 Doctorate 8 Master's	204 217
Washington State University	8 Distance	6 Bachelor's, 3 Master's 10 Bachelor's, 4 Master's, 1 Doctorate	180 797
Western Washington University	6 Distance	12 Bachelor's, 5 Master's, 9 Certificate 1 Bachelor's	390 21
<b>Total Off Campus Enrollments</b>	<b>38 Distance</b>		<b>4,445 1,031</b>

\* Note: Programs represent a cumulative count of programs at each site. In many cases, the same program is offered at multiple sites, and those programs are counted for each site at which they are delivered in this table.

\*\* FTE's rounded to nearest whole number total does not match sum of the column due to rounding error.

**Table 3: Planned Programs/Program Changes**  
(2007-08 and 2008-09 Academic Years).

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Planning Activity</b>	<b>Programs Affected</b>
Central Washington University	Renamed Departments, Programs, Specializations, Certificates, and Minors	17
	New Specializations, Certificates, and Minors	31
	Eliminated or Suspended Programs	27
Eastern Washington University	Renamed Departments, Programs, Specializations, Certificates, and Minors	12
	New Specializations, Certificates, and Minors	12
	Eliminated or Suspended Programs	14
The Evergreen State College	Renamed Departments, Programs, Specializations, Certificates, and Minors	-
	New Specializations, Certificates, and Minors	-
	Eliminated or Suspended Programs	-
The University of Washington	Renamed Departments, Programs, Specializations, Certificates, and Minors	5
	New Specializations, Certificates, and Minors	36
	Eliminated or Suspended Programs	2
Washington State University	Renamed Departments, Programs, Specializations, Certificates, and Minors	6
	New Specializations, Certificates, and Minors	16
	Eliminated or Suspended Programs	33
Western Washington University	Renamed Departments, Programs, Specializations, Certificates, and Minors	3
	New Specializations, Certificates, and Minors	1
	Eliminated or Suspended Programs	3
<b>Total Program Changes</b>	Renamed Departments, Programs, Specializations, Certificates, and Minors	<b>43</b>
	New Specializations, Certificates, and Minors	<b>96</b>
	Eliminated or Suspended Programs	<b>79</b>