

Washington Student Lobby

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Students Support Higher Admission Standards for Washington's Public Universities

OLYMPIA – Jan. 20, 2005 – Yesterday, student representatives from Washington's public baccalaureate institutions testified before a State Senate committee in support of the Higher Education Coordinating Board's proposal to raise the minimum freshman admission standards at the state's four-year universities.

The HEC Board proposal, which would require a fourth year of math and a second year of lab-based science at the high school level prior to admission, would take effect with the high school graduating class of 2008 and comes on the heels of what promises to be a very difficult budget year for higher education. With an estimated \$1.8 billion budget deficit, students feel that the limited funding available to higher education should not be spent offering remedial coursework.

"The cost of teaching high-school skills in college is much greater than if we required them to be taught in high school," said Nick Cizek, student lobbyist for Western Washington University. "We need our universities to focus their time and resources on teaching college-level classes."

Jim Sulton, Executive Director of the HEC Board, presented the proposal to the Senate Early Learning, K-12, & Higher Education Committee at 3:30 p.m. this afternoon. Time was allotted following the presentation for responses by agencies and stakeholders, including university representatives, K-12 administrators, and students.

Concerns have been expressed over the potential impact that such revisions might have on access to public universities.

"We remain confident that the HEC Board and our state's K-12 institutions will be able to address these concerns to ensure that no one is left behind," said James Evans, student lobbyist for Washington State University. "But we can't just sit back and allow high school students to continue to be under-prepared for college."

The HEC Board has reported that more than half of those high-school graduates who attend college within two years of graduation are under-prepared in mathematics, and that more than 75% of all the remedial courses taught are math-related.

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The Washington Student Lobby (WSL) is a state-wide organization under the direction of the student government leadership from Washington's public four-year institutions, and represents the nearly 100,000 students attending state universities. During the legislative session, student lobbyists from each of the institutions coordinate their legislative activity with the other members of the WSL and work together on common goals. The WSL is currently headquartered in Olympia, Washington.