

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2023

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SENATE BILL DRS45119-MTa-111A

Short Title: Western Carolina University Engineering Funds. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Corbin, Hise, and Moffitt (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS FOR THE COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING AND
3 TECHNOLOGY AT WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY.

4 Whereas, Western North Carolina is experiencing unprecedented growth in
5 engineering-, manufacturing-, and research-focused business and industries locating and
6 expanding in the region; and

7 Whereas, the 2022 State of Our Workforce: Western NC study from the Economic
8 Development Coalition for Asheville-Buncombe County, the Asheville Area Chamber of
9 Commerce, the Mountain Area Workforce Development Board, and the Land of Sky P-20
10 Council predicts an increase of up to 44,140 jobs in the 10-county region in the next three years,
11 with up to thirty percent (30%) of new hires coming from outside the region; and

12 Whereas, Western Carolina University (WCU) is the only constituent institution of
13 The University of North Carolina in the region with a college of engineering and technology
14 offering bachelor of science degrees and is well positioned to expand its engineering programs
15 to meet projected workforce needs and support industry with faculty expertise, student work-based
16 learning partnerships, and entrepreneurial development; and

17 Whereas, the growth needs for WCU's engineering program include the addition and
18 expansion of industry-sought, high-demand curriculum to serve more undergraduates and meet
19 the regional need for industry-ready engineers; and

20 Whereas, an expansion of WCU's engineering program will (i) encourage and support
21 new start-ups and expansions of existing businesses and (ii) encourage the launch and relocation
22 of other industries and Tier 1 and Tier 2 suppliers to the region by having a strong engineering
23 university nearby; Now, therefore,

24 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

25 **SECTION 1.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Board of Governors
26 of The University of North Carolina for the 2023-2024 fiscal year the following sums to be
27 allocated to Western Carolina University for its College of Engineering and Technology as
28 follows:

- 29 (1) Three million five hundred thousand dollars (\$3,500,000) in nonrecurring
30 funds to acquire laboratory equipment and renovate and expand current
31 laboratory facilities.
32 (2) Three million five hundred thousand dollars (\$3,500,000) in recurring funds
33 to support instructional and professional support staff with a focus on
34 hands-on, project-based learning in industry.



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- 1 (3) Ninety-five million three hundred thousand dollars (\$95,300,000) in
2 nonrecurring funds to construct a new facility for the College of Engineering
3 and Technology.
4 **SECTION 2.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2023.