

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2023**

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SENATE BILL 238

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

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

Referred to: Appropriations/Base Budget

March 9, 2023

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

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

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

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

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

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

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

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

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



- 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.