
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5350

State of Washington

52nd Legislature

1991 Regular Session

By Senate Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Senators Saling, Patterson, Thorsness, Bauer, Metcalf, Gaspard, Cantu, Amondson, Sellar, Hayner, Stratton, Craswell, Wojahn and Snyder).

Read first time February 28, 1991.

1 AN ACT Relating to requiring English proficiency for faculty and
2 graduate assistants at state institutions of higher education; adding
3 new sections to chapter 28B.10 RCW; and creating a new section.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that the large
6 number of international graduate students has highlighted the need for
7 state institutions of higher education to give careful attention to the
8 issues of language proficiency, sensitivity to cultural differences,
9 and pedagogical skills when making faculty and graduate service
10 appointments. The legislature also finds that the quality of the
11 undergraduate learning experience at many state institutions of higher
12 education is directly affected by graduate teaching assistants who are
13 responsible for a significant percentage of class sections taught in
14 lower-division courses. The legislature recognizes that over the years
15 it has received reports about the problems some students experience in

1 understanding the English language as spoken by some of the graduate
2 teaching assistants employed as instructors at our state institutions.
3 It is the intent of the legislature to assure students and parents that
4 instructors at our state institutions of higher education are
5 proficient in writing and speaking the English language.

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.10
7 RCW to read as follows:

8 (1) A person who has received a faculty or graduate assistant
9 appointment in which that person will be providing classroom
10 instruction, or will work with students in participatory and activity
11 courses such as clinics, studios, seminars, and laboratories, shall be
12 fluent in both written and spoken English language.

13 (2) A person who has received a faculty or graduate assistant
14 appointment in which the classroom instruction to be provided is
15 specifically designed to be taught primarily in a foreign language is
16 exempt from subsection (1) of this section.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.10
18 RCW to read as follows:

19 (1) Each state institution of higher education shall provide for
20 all international teaching assistants orientation programs that include
21 at least twenty hours of instruction emphasizing pedagogical skills
22 appropriate to a Washington institution of higher education;
23 intercultural competency; and English language proficiency for
24 instructional purposes.

25 (2) Each state institution of higher education shall evaluate its
26 instructional faculty and graduate assistants for fluency in English as
27 such fluency pertains to the classroom, laboratory, studio, and seminar
28 setting. Fluency shall be evaluated using varied and appropriate

1 criteria including, but not limited to, personal interviews; student
2 observations and evaluations; and tests.

3 (3) A committee composed of faculty and at least two students shall
4 review procedures affecting instructional faculty and teaching
5 assistants and act as a resource for any student who is concerned about
6 the proficiency of international faculty or teaching assistants.
7 Faculty and graduate assistants whose assignments include instruction
8 specifically designed to be provided primarily in a foreign language
9 are exempt from this subsection.

10 (4) By August 1, 1991, each state institution of higher education
11 shall submit to the higher education coordinating board a plan for
12 certifying the instructional proficiencies of international teaching
13 assistants. The certification process shall provide for student
14 participation. The certification shall state that the instructional
15 faculty members and graduate teaching assistants hired either after the
16 effective date of this section or hired subsequent to the last annual
17 certification are fluent in the English language as provided in section
18 2 of this act.

19 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** If any provision of this act or its
20 application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the
21 remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other
22 persons or circumstances is not affected.