

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5956

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Higher Education, March 3, 1999

Title: An act relating to part-time employees of community and technical colleges.

Brief Description: Relating to part-time employees of community and technical colleges.

Sponsors: Senators Kohl-Welles, Sheahan, Shin, Goings, Gardner, Winsley, Thibaudeau, Spanel, B. Sheldon and Costa.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 2/24/99, 3/3/99 [DPS-WM, DNPS].
Ways & Means: 3/5/99.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5956 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Kohl-Welles, Chair; Shin, Vice Chair; Bauer, Finkbeiner, Horn, McAuliffe, Sheahan and B. Sheldon.

Minority Report: Do not pass substitute.

Signed by Senator Jacobsen.

Staff: Risa Sandler (786-7708)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Staff: Karen Barrett (786-7711)

Background: Part-time faculty who teach at the state's community and technical colleges represent more than half of all community and technical college faculty. The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges reports that part-time faculty do not receive a pay rate that is equivalent to the rate paid to full-time faculty.

Additionally, part-time faculty are currently not eligible for retirement benefits unless they work more than 80 percent of a full-time faculty member's workload.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The differences between full- and part-time pay rates are addressed in two ways--increased compensation and establishment of a joint select committee to explore the availability of resources to address the issue long-term.

Regarding compensation, the long-term goal of 100 percent equal rates of pay for equal work is established. Currently, part-time faculty compensation is based on 91 percent of the rate paid to full-time faculty, subject to legislative appropriation.

A bipartisan joint select committee is also developed. This committee is comprised of members of the House and Senate Higher Education Policy Committees, as well as of members of the House Appropriations and Senate Ways and Means committees. The committee must identify resources to reach 100 percent pro rata compensation, an appropriate ratio between full- and part-time faculty, increased access to health care coverage, strategies to provide equitable retirement benefits to part-time faculty, and practices that ensure part-time consideration for full-time positions.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The term "retirement" was added to the intent section. Sections that required the Board for Community and Technical Colleges to offer retirement benefits to part-time employees who work 50 percent or more of a full-time load was removed. Identification of strategies to provide more equitable retirement benefits was added to the tasks of the joint select committee established in the bill.

The term "academic" was removed as a clarifier for the term "workload." A reference to another part of statute defining a workload was removed as well.

The requirement that part-time faculty be considered for full-time positions before candidates who are not already part of the community and technical college system was removed. Identification of practices that ensure part-time consideration for full-time positions was added to the tasks of the joint select committee.

The requirement that the joint select committee identify methods to reach a ratio of 75 percent to 25 percent between full- and part-time faculty was removed. The substitute bill states instead that the joint select committee should identify an appropriate ratio.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 22, 1999.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The pro-rata and retirement benefit concepts are appreciated. This bill is a major step.

Testimony w/concerns: Initial consideration of part-time faculty for full-time positions is a local issue and could affect affirmative action and local outreach. The joint select committee should also address job security and due process. References to state-supported positions should be reduced.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Dana Rush, Part-time Faculty Assn., Green River Community College; Wendy Rader-Konofalsh, WA Federation of Teachers (concerns); Ron Merchant, WEA;

Vince Traccoli, part-time faculty member, Pierce College; Virginia DeForest, American Assn. of University Women; John Bosenberg, SBCTC (with concerns).