

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2528

As Reported by House Committee On:
Higher Education

Title: An act relating to employment opportunities at institutions of higher education.

Brief Description: Regarding employment opportunities at community and technical colleges.

Sponsors: Representatives Nelson, Hasegawa, Roberts, Lantz, Sullivan and Simpson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 1/21/08, 2/4/08 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Sets a goal that by 2014 the community and technical colleges increase the numbers of full-time tenured positions on their campuses by adding 350 full-time academic employee positions.
- Sets a goal that part-time and non-tenure track faculty receive priority consideration for full-time faculty positions.
- Requires the community and technical colleges to decide how many positions to create, develop a plan, and submit those plans to the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges with appropriate budget requests.
- Requires the community and technical colleges to create plans to ensure that part-time faculty and internal candidates get priority consideration for full-time positions.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass.
Signed by 7 members: Representatives Wallace, Chair; Sells, Vice Chair; Hasegawa, Jarrett, McIntire, Roberts and Sommers.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Anderson, Ranking Minority Member; Hankins and Schmick.

Staff: Andi Smith (786-7304).

Background:

According to reports from the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), there were 8,996 full and part-time state funded faculty members teaching at community and technical colleges in the fall quarter of 2006. Of those, 3,540 were full-time faculty and 5,456 were part-time. Community and technical college full-time equivalent faculty increased by 3 percent from the previous fall, compared with 2.4 percent increase in state-supported students.

During the same quarter, 55.5 percent of state-supported teaching occurred through full-time faculty, while 44.5 percent occurred through part-time instructors. The percent of instruction taught by full-time faculty has remained essentially stable for the last five years. A full-time load is defined by each campus and may vary by discipline and mode of instruction.

The ratio of part-time to full-time faculty varied significantly depending on course area. Workforce and academic instruction is primarily by full-time faculty while the reverse is true for pre-college and basic skills instruction.

The median age for full-time faculty was 52 in the fall quarter of 2006, an increase from a median age of 50 in 2002. The SBCTC calculates that nearly 60 percent of full-time faculty will need to be replaced in the next 15 to 20 years due to retirement.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Ratio of Part-Time to Full-Time Teaching

Goal

The Legislature sets a goal that by 2014 the community and technical colleges increase the numbers of full-time tenured positions on their campuses by adding 350 full-time academic employee positions.

Plan

By December 1, 2008, each community and technical college will determine the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) faculty positions it plans to create each year through 2014. These findings will be reported to the SBCTC, boards of trustees, and faculty representatives. The plan must include statements regarding how the college intends to meet its goal by: (1) creating new full-time, tenure track appointments; (2) creating opportunities for adjunct faculty to get full-time positions; and (3) converting classes or assignments left vacant. The goal cannot be met by planning to discharge part-time or non-tenure track faculty who are currently employed and have worked for the college for two or more years.

Action

The governing board of each community and technical college submits biennial budget requests to cover the projected costs of steps outlined in their plans.

The SBCTC shall review the submitted plans and work with the college districts to ensure consistency with the Legislature's goals.

Reporting

The SBCTC shall report to the higher education committees of the Legislature by December 2008 and every two years thereafter until 2014, on the SBCTCs progress in increasing the percentage of full-time, tenure or tenure-track academic employees.

Consideration for Employment and New Tenure-Track Positions

The Legislature sets a goal that part-time faculty in community and technical colleges receive consideration for continuing employment and for new tenure-track positions.

Each community and technical college establishes a process through which part-time faculty receive timely notice and priority consideration when a full-time faculty position becomes available.

Each community and technical college establishes a process through which internal candidates receive priority consideration for tenure-track positions, provided that the minimum qualifications have been met. In this case, priority consideration includes being granted an interview.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

Changes language in the intent section to positive goals in line with the "best practices" recommendations of the SBCTC.

The substitute bill removes the 75 percent full-time employment goal and replaces it with a goal of 350 conversions over a five-year period. Those community and technical colleges that determine a need to increase the percentage of courses taught by tenured or tenure-track faculty must create a plan and submit that plan to the SBCTC.

The substitute bill changes the requirements contained in plans submitted to the SBCTC to include protection during the conversions for part-time faculty employed for at least two years rather than for all part-time faculty that are "currently employed."

Several changes are also made to the rights guaranteed to part-time and internal candidates. The substitute bill removes the requirement that the priority consideration process for re-employment for part-time faculty include either rights of first refusal or continuing contracts. It also removes the requirement that colleges develop plans to ensure those non-tenure track faculty accumulate seniority.

The substitute bill adds a reporting requirement that the SBCTC must report to the Legislature by December 1, 2008, and every two years thereafter until December 1, 2014, on progress related to increasing the percentage of full-time, tenured, or tenure-track academic employees.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Fiscal note for substitute bill requested on February 5, 2008.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The bill provides a step in the right direction in reducing the system's reliance on part-time faculty. Increasing the percentage of part-time faculty will lend a richer faculty experience for students. The more students are able to engage with their faculty members, either for office hours or to serve as a mentor, the better their learning outcomes become. Faculty quality is not just measured in content knowledge, it is that the faculty can fully participate in the college environment and be available for students when they are needed. This bill is also necessary because part-time faculty often times experience economic hardship teaching classes at several different campuses; sometimes equal to a full-time teaching load but without the equal pay. Part-time faculty must get part-time jobs to augment their income.

(Opposed) The provisions of the bill are too prescriptive and take away campus decision making ability. The approach does not take into consideration some of the unique community needs; for instance, 75 percent of evening and weekend classes are taught by part-time faculty. The job security provisions are also too prescriptive and should be a subject of collective bargaining at the local level. Eighty-five percent of full-time positions are filled by part-time faculty already, which would suggest that job security needs are already being met. The bill maintains a two-tiered system in which the full-time minority makes decisions for the part-time majority. Full-time professors are not better; many part-time faculty do an excellent job and this bill does not seem to recognize that. Part-timers may want to stay in a part-time role but want better guarantees of security. The language in the bill is too weak and needs to be more specific.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Nelson, prime sponsor; Sandra Schroeder, Washington Associated Federation of Teachers; Karen Patjens, Bates Technical College; Michael Faucette, South Seattle Community College; Phil Jact; Joselyn Nelson; Charlie Tampkins; Lynne Dodson; and Ruth Windhover, Louis Watanabe, Nat Hong, Jack Longmate, Jim Sizemore, and Linda Kendall-Hagan, Washington Education Association.

(Opposed) Jon Boesenberg, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; and Keith Hoeller, Doug Collins, and Dana Rush, American Association of University Professors.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.