

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6393

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Higher Education, February 07, 2008

Title: An act relating to faculty employment opportunities at community and technical colleges.

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

Sponsors: Senators Shin, Delvin, Murray, Sheldon, Fairley, Swecker, Jacobsen, Schoesler, Franklin, Rasmussen, Eide, Kohl-Welles and McAuliffe.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 2/04/08, 2/07/08 [DPF].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

Background: At community and technical colleges, over the last five biennia, average part-time faculty salaries grew 43 percent, reaching approximately 58 percent of full-time faculty salaries. In the fall of 2003, part-time faculty comprised 66 percent of the faculty at public two-year institutions and 13 percent of the faculty at public four-year institutions. These are institutional averages; they do not indicate percentages on the department level.

Summary of Bill: In 2008 each community and technical college (college) must determine the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) faculty positions held by part-time, nontenured, tenure-track, and tenured faculty in each academic department of their institutions. Each college formulates a plan on how to meet a goal of having at least 75 percent of the FTE faculty positions held by full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty, with special attention to increasing the full-time faculty in mathematics, science, adult basic education, early childhood education, and English. The plan must address how the college intends to meet this goal by creating new full-time tenure track positions, rather than by eliminating positions for current employees.

If departments do not meet the 75 percent goal, they must plan to increase the share of full-time tenured and tenure-track to meet the goal by 2014. The governing boards of each college must request funds for the projected costs. Each college establishes a process, subject to collective bargaining, under which part-time and full-time nontenured faculty members, after successful completion of a probationary period, receive timely notice of and priority consideration for assignments in coming academic terms. The priority consideration must include either rights of first refusal for eligible classes or a continuing contract with due process rights. Each institution of higher education must create a process for ensuring that

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qualified internal applicants receive priority consideration for attaining tenure-track positions, including job interviews for positions when minimum requirements have been met.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill has been drafted carefully to make sure that all faculty are treated fairly. It will improve service to students by providing more full-time faculty. Part-time faculty have a difficult time fostering meaningful relationships with students. Part-time faculty are forced to spend time traveling between campuses when they could be interacting with students. The state has an overreliance on part-time instructors. The affordability of our higher education system is reliant on paying part-time faculty poorly. The bill will help correct the inefficient use of part-time faculty. Part-time faculty want to be more involved in their colleges, but they are actively being discouraged from doing so. Students need to know whether faculty are returning to teach so that they can plan their academic schedules.

CON: The bill would support more full-time faculty, but the provisions are too prescriptive. Part-time faculty fill spots where we want to bring in teachers with real-world experience. The best solution to the issue is through collective bargaining. Local decision-makers are in the best position to establish these priorities. The bill assumes that full-time faculty are superior. Part-time faculty may lose their jobs under these provisions. Tenure protects freedom of speech, but it could be protected just as well in other ways. Part-time faculty are rarely discharged, they are just not rehired, so this bill offers no protection.

OTHER: The bill has some elements with merit, but it needs more work. Some colleges have already bargained some of these provisions. There is no cause and effect relationship between faculty status and quality service to students.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Shin, prime sponsor; Sandra Schroeder; Karen Patjens; Guy Hamilton; Michael Farcette; Marty Olsen; Bernal Baca; Phil Jack, Green River United Faculty; Joslyn Nelson; Ruth Windover, Louis Watanabe, Washington Education Association; David Conners, Mike Hickey, American Federation of Teachers; Lynn Dodson, Seattle Community Colleges Federation of Teachers; Dan Jacoby, University of Washington-Bothell; Brian Holt, Seattle Community College Part-time Faculty.

CON: Teresa Knudson, Part-time Faculty Association; John Boesenberg, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; Doug Collins; Keith Hoeller, Walter Marquardt, American Association of University Professors; Ron Swift.

OTHER: Dana Rush, American Association of University Professors.