

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1353

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 institutions of higher education.

Sponsors: Representatives Nelson, Cody, Sells, Sullivan, Haigh, Simpson, Seaquist, Campbell, Carlyle, Hunt, Roberts and Liias.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 2/3/09, 2/20/09 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires community and technical colleges to create conversion plans that would have 75 percent of state funded academic teaching assignments held by faculty in full-time, tenure track positions by 2015.
- Requires the college conversion plans to be submitted to the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC).
- 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.
- Requires the SBCTC to report to the Legislature regarding the faculty conversion plans.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Wallace, Chair; Sells, Vice Chair; Carlyle, Driscoll, Hasegawa and White.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Anderson, Ranking Minority Member; Schmick, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Angel and Haler.

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.

Staff: Andi Smith (786-7304)

Background:

According to reports from the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), there were 9,673 full- and part-time state funded faculty members teaching at community and technical colleges in the fall quarter of 2007. Of those, 3,591 were full-time faculty and 6,082 were part-time. Community and technical college full-time equivalent faculty (FTEF) increased by 2 percent from the previous fall, compared with 1 percent increase in state-supported students.

During the same quarter, 55 percent of state-supported teaching occurred through full-time faculty, while 45 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:

Conversion of Faculty Teaching Assignments.

Each community and technical college must create a conversion plan to create more full-time, tenure track positions. The plan must be submitted to the SBCTC by October 1, 2010, and must include strategies to have 75 percent of state-funded teaching assignments taught by full-time, tenure track faculty by 2015. The plan cannot include discharging currently employed part-time faculty who have taught in the college for three or more years.

The plan will be submitted each year to the SBCTC. The SBCTC must submit reports regarding faculty conversions and updated conversion cost information to the Legislature by December 1, 2010, and biennially thereafter until 2015.

Notification of Employment Opportunities.

Each community and technical college must establish a process to notify part-time faculty of employment assignments for which they are qualified. The colleges must give these faculty priority consideration for these positions.

Colleges must also notify qualified internal applicants of tenure-track positions. These applicants should also be given priority consideration. The "notification" will include

notification of job openings or a job interview for positions where minimum qualifications have been met.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

Colleges are no longer required to request sufficient funds to cover the projected costs of implementing faculty conversions. The SBCTC is not required to include college faculty conversion plans in the SBCTC's biennial funding request to the Legislature. The first college conversion plan submission deadline is moved one year to October 1, 2010. The SBCTC's first legislative submission date is moved to December 1, 2010.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) There are an overwhelming number of part-time faculty in our community and technical college system and they are great instructors. However, many of them teach at multiple campuses and simply cannot be available for their students in the same way that a full-time instructor could be. This bill is good for students by being fair to the faculty. Research indicates that relying on part-time faculty actually has a negative impact on student learning.

Full-time faculty have additional resources that part-timers don't, like workshops, dialogue with colleagues, and office space. The problem with part-time faculty is that they lack these resources and that impacts students. Full-timers are more available, more reliable, more consistent. English as a second language (ESL) programs are especially hard hit with reliance on part-time instruction given all of the paperwork that is required to teach immigrant and refugee students. Filling out that paperwork takes time away from teaching and sometimes prevents our students from fully engaging. In this way, we can open the window a crack, where full-time instructors could open it all the way.

If you look historically at the composition of the faculty make-up at community and technical colleges, you will see that the percentage of classes taught by full-timers has decreased considerably. Beware of the term "flexibility" because it is simply a term used by deans and administrators to save money. We do not have guaranteed workloads or benefits and that is how the budget is balanced. The SBCTC says that its purpose is to provide education to people so that they can find living-wage jobs. If they were serious about that purpose, then they should support more full-time faculty because the wages that they currently provide part-timers don't get us up to livable wages.

(Opposed) The SBCTC agrees that there is a need for more full-time faculty, but the approach in this bill limits local control and flexibility. This bill would make significant changes in that it requires 75 percent of positions to be held by full-time, tenure track faculty. The SBCTC and the collective bargaining units had agreed on language that was geared toward increasing the number of teaching assignments. In addition, it will be especially difficult in the case of our adult basic education and English as a second language class, since most of these are taught in the evening and on the weekends, sometimes in church basements. It will be difficult to find full-time faculty to teach these classes. This bill will also be tremendously expensive.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Nelson, prime sponsor; Sandra Schroeder, Phil Jack, Judy Learn, Krieg Schwartz, Mike Hickey, and Allen Stowers, American Federation of Teachers, Washington; Dave Conners, North Seattle Community College and Seattle Central Community College; Lorellen Nausner, North Seattle Community College; and Nat Hong and Jim Sizemore, Olympic College.

(Opposed) John Boesenberg, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.