

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5264

As of February 2, 2009

Title: An act relating to academic employee salary increments for community and technical colleges.

Brief Description: Providing for academic employee salary increments for community and technical colleges.

Sponsors: Senators Kohl-Welles, McAuliffe, Shin, Jarrett and Kilmer; by request of State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor, Commerce & Consumer Protection: 1/27/09.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE & CONSUMER PROTECTION

Staff: Kathleen Buchli (786-7488)

Background: Salary increments are increases in pay for faculty who upgrade their skills and experiences. Increment funding is not automatic. Salary increments are available only if funding is provided in the budget.

Currently, each fiscal year, each college district receives a cost-of-living allocation sufficient to increase community and technical college academic employee salaries, including mandatory salary-related benefits, by the rate of the yearly increase in the cost-of-living index.

Community and technical college districts distribute their cost-of-living allocation for salaries and salary-related benefits in accordance with the district's salary schedules, collective bargaining agreements, and other compensation policies. At the end of each fiscal year, each college district certifies to the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) that it has spent funds provided for cost-of-living increases on salaries and salary-related benefits. The SBCTC includes any funded cost-of-living increase in the salary base used to determine cost-of-living increases for academic employees in subsequent years.

Summary of Bill: As a part of its biennial budget request, SBCTC must request funds which, together with academic turnover savings, are sufficient to fund state-funded cost increments for the community and technical college system. The basis for the request must

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be 0.8 percent of the academic employee's salary base plus the value of any associated benefits. Allocation of funds appropriated for this purpose are made using a method determined by SBCTC, but any appropriation generated from the proportionate share of the part-time salary base or part-time faculty turnover savings is accessible only for part-time faculty. Boards of trustees of community colleges award employee salary increments based on local collective bargaining agreements. Funds allocated by the SBCTC to local boards of trustees for part-time faculty may be used for general salary increases for part-time faculty.

Boards of trustees may combine the allocated employee salary increment funds with cost-of-living salary adjustments. To the extent that cost-of-living adjustment funding is used to pay academic employee increments, the cost-of-living adjustment is reduced by the same amount.

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: Faculty increments are an important retention tool. Faculty needs to know that when they upgrade their skills and keep current, there will be positive results. With this bill, the Legislature will not have to address this every year. This is another piece of trying to solve the faculty salary problem. If colleges do not have steps, the colleges can give across-the-board raises. This helps to change policy to make a long-term vibrant faculty salary system to attract new staff and replace retiring faculty. If this is not made consistent, the community colleges will not be able to retain quality faculty. We would like this to become part of the ongoing maintenance budget. We are addressing the disparity between full-time and part-time faculty. If this is not fixed now and college faculty lose their increments, faculty will experience a larger cut than the other groups in their budget. If their cost-of-living allowance and increments are not funded, they lose both. Other faculty groups would continue to get their increments.

CON: The issue of increments is contentious for good reason. Current increments are bargained locally and are unfair to part-time faculty. The majority of the money will go to full-time faculty. This does not provide equal increments to full and part-timers. We have asked that the bill be written to provide equal dollar amounts to be fair to part-time faculty.

Persons Testifying: PRO: John Boesenberg, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; Linda Kaminski, Yakima Valley Community College; Sandra Schroeder, American Federation of Teachers, Washington; Carla Naccarato, Spokane Community College Faculty; Wendy Rader-Konofalski, Washington Education Association.

CON: Keith Hoeller, American Association of University Professors, Adjunct Faculty Committee.