
Higher Education Committee

HB 2615

Brief Description: Improving student success at community and technical colleges by considering benefits of full-time faculty and staff.

Sponsors: Representatives Pollet, Haler, Moscoso, Appleton, Fitzgibbon, Gregerson, Ormsby, Ortiz-Self, Lytton, Riccelli, Ryu, Reykdal, Cody, Tarleton, Frame, Van De Wege, Stanford and Goodman.

Brief Summary of Bill

- States a goal that 75 percent of state-funded classes in community and technical colleges should be taught by full-time tenure track faculty by the year 2021.
- Requires the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges and the Washington Student Achievement Council to conduct a joint study on the impacts of using part-time faculty.
- Requires the development of a strategic plan to convert part-time assignments to full-time tenured assignments.
- States a goal that part-time and nontenured faculty receive priority consideration for tenure track positions, and requires the colleges to establish processes to implement that goal.

Hearing Date: 1/26/16

Staff: Trudes Tango (786-7384).

Background:

According to the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (State Board), in the 2014-15 academic year, there were 3,744 full time faculty and 7,315 part-time faculty. About 54 percent of state-funded teaching occurred through full-time faculty and 46 percent occurred through part-time faculty.

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.

In 1996, the Legislature directed the State Board to convene a task force to conduct a best practices audit of employment conditions for part-time faculty. The Best Practices Task Force made a series of recommendations on issues such as salary disparities and part-time versus full-time staffing ratios. In 2005, the Legislature directed the State Board to convene a task force to review and update the Best Practices audit. A Best Employment Practices for Part-time Faculty report was issued in 2005, which identified 10 best practices on issues such as salaries, benefits, processes for selecting part-time faculty, and job security. One of the best practices provides that the ratio of full-time to part-time faculty at each college should be based upon program and student need.

Summary of Bill:

The Legislature states two goals regarding faculty staffing at community and technical colleges: (1) to have 75 percent of state-funded classes be taught by full-time tenure track faculty by the year 2021; and (2) to ensure that part-time and nontenured faculty receive priority consideration for continuing employment and tenure track positions.

Regarding the first goal, the colleges and the State Board are directed to develop a long-term strategic plan for faculty and student support staff conversions, using research from the Evans School of Public Policy and building upon the 2005 Task Force Report.

To help create the strategic plan, the State Board and the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) must conduct a joint study on the impacts of using part-time faculty. The study must examine a number of issues, including: the impact on student success and access to faculty, advising, and counseling; the impact on industry and professional instructors in high-demand certificate programs; and the differences in programs and in regions regarding the ability to hire well-qualified faculty. The State Board and WSAC may enter into agreements to fund research for the study. Based on the findings of the study, the State Board and WSAC may prioritize and revise goals for individual programs. The study must be completed by October 1, 2017. The community and technical colleges must use the plans developed by the State Board and WSAC to increase the number and percentage of full-time positions.

Regarding the second goal, each community and technical college must establish a process for part-time and full-time nontenured faculty to receive timely notice of and priority consideration for academic employment for which they are qualified.

In addition, each community and technical college must create a process for ensuring that qualified internal applicants receive priority consideration for attaining a tenure track position when one becomes available. The process should take into consideration the value of a diverse faculty. The process may include provisions such as granting job interviews if the internal applicant meets minimum requirements and notifying faculty members of job openings before posting the openings outside the institution.

The processes must be consistent with collective bargaining agreements and other state and institutional policies.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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