

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2615

As Reported by House Committee On:
Higher Education

Title: An act relating to improving student success at community and technical colleges by considering benefits of full-time faculty and staff.

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 History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 1/26/16, 2/3/16 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- States a goal to increase full-time faculty positions in community and technical colleges by adding 200 new full-time tenure track positions in each of the next three biennia.
- Requires the development of a strategic plan to convert part-time assignments to full-time tenured assignments.
- 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.
- 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.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Hansen, Chair; Pollet, Vice Chair; Haler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Frame, Reykdal, Sells and Tarleton.

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 5 members: Representatives Zeiger, Ranking Minority Member; Hargrove, Holy, Stambaugh and Van Werven.

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.

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 Substitute Bill:

The Legislature states two goals regarding faculty staffing at community and technical colleges: (1) increase full-time faculty positions by adding 200 new full-time tenure track positions in each of the next three biennia; and (2) 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. If specific funding for conversions is not funded by the Legislature, the conversions proposed must be delayed until funding is provided.

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 the overuse of part-time faculty. The study must examine: the impact on student success and access to faculty, advising, and counseling; the differences in programs and in regions regarding the ability to hire well-qualified faculty; the need for increased compensation; and the need for diversifying the faculty to better represent the students of color. The State Board and the 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 the WSAC to increase the

number and percentage of full-time positions if specific funding for conversions is provided by the Legislature.

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. 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.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The original bill: (1) had a goal that 75 percent of state-funded classes should be taught by full-time faculty by the year 2021; (2) did not include language regarding funding by the Legislature; (3) required the study to examine the impact on industry and professional instructors in high-demand certificate programs; and (4) required the study to examine the need for diversifying the faculty of color to better represent the students of color.

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) Access to full-time faculty is one key factor to student success, especially in community and technical colleges. About 57 percent of courses are taught by full-time faculty, but it varies widely depending on the particular college. Students turn to full-time faculty for advising. Part-time faculty do not participate in the institution's governance, in advising, and in creating curriculum. They do not have the opportunity to become part of the college because they are traveling from one college to the next and holding multiple teaching jobs. The bill recognizes that the student body is diverse and the faculty needs to reflect that diversity. There is no job security for adjunct faculty. Adjunct faculty tend to teach remedial courses where students need advising. Part-time faculty are paid on a different salary schedule than full-time staff and receive fewer step increases. Part-time faculty often volunteer their time and hold office hours but are not paid for that time. Students in colleges that have a high percentage of part-time faculty tend to have less success and lower completion and transfer rates. Part-time faculty should be notified when a new full-time position opens at the college. This bill provides stability for part-time faculty and will decrease the amount of faculty turnover.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) The State Board and the faculty are working together to try to address this issue and some progress has been made. Part-time faculty are given priority in hiring. There are just not enough full-time tenure track positions to offer. The number of positions depends on the college. Colleges with evening programs and certain certificate programs tend to have more part-time staff.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Pollet, prime sponsor; Mike Boggess, Pierce College; Gerard Smith, Clark College; Tobi Rosenberg, Washington Education Association; Abner Pagunuran, Bellevue College; Annamary Fitzgerald, South Puget Sound Federation of Teachers; Ken Plimpton, and Rebecca Sliger, Tacoma Community College; John Sandin, and Carla Naccarato Sinclair, Spokane Community College.

(Other) John Boesenberg, Washington State Board Community Colleges & Technical Colleges.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.