

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6578

As of January 30, 2018

Title: An act relating to policies for part-time faculty at institutions of higher education.

Brief Description: Concerning policies for part-time faculty at institutions of higher education.

Sponsors: Senators Ranker, Chase, Hasegawa, Darneille, Conway, Keiser, Saldaña, Hunt, Rolfes, Hobbs, Kuderer and Liias.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education & Workforce Development: 1/30/18.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires all public institutions of higher education to evaluate and develop certain processes and considerations specific to part-time faculty, with a review every odd-numbered year.
- Aligns certain provisions regarding benefits provided to part-time faculty at community and technical colleges (CTCs) to part-time faculty at public baccalaureates.
- Instructs institutions of higher education to provide part-time faculty sick leave for illnesses, bereavement, and emergencies proportionate to the individual's teaching commitment to the institution.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Staff: Kellee Gunn (786-7429)

Background: State-Mandated Benefits and Part-Time Faculty. State employees who work more than one-half time are eligible for state health benefits. Higher education faculty are eligible for benefits if the postsecondary institution anticipates the employee will work half-time or more for the entire instructional year or equivalent nine-month period. For public baccalaureate colleges, halftime means one-half of the full-time academic workload as determined by each institution. There are six public baccalaureates in Washington State.

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.

For CTCs, full-time academic workload means the number of in-class teaching hours that a full-time instructor must teach to fulfill their employment obligations in a given discipline in a given college. Collectively bargained definitions regarding full-time prevail over this definition for represented employees.

Collective Bargaining for Faculty. Each university is authorized to have one bargaining unit for all faculty, including part-time faculty. Of the public baccalaureates, the four regional universities have faculty bargaining agreements that include regular part-time faculty. The University of Washington (UW) and Washington State University faculty do not have collective bargaining agreements. However, academic student employees at the UW are provided with the ability in statute collectively bargain.

Collective bargaining agreements at the CTCs cover full-time and part-time faculty. Temporary and casual employees, defined as those who have worked less than one sixth of the time of a regular employee within a 12-month period, are excluded from collective bargaining.

Legislative Action. The Legislature passed SSB 6583 (1996), which provided guidance to CTCs on the definition of full-time academic and part-time academic workload to determine eligibility of state-mandated benefits. Additionally, a task force was created to conduct a best practices audit of compensation packages and benefits for part-time faculty in the community and technical college system.

The Legislature reconvened the task force in 2005, to review and update the best practices audit of compensation packages and benefits for community and technical colleges' part-time faculty. The best practices were intended to encourage local collective bargaining negotiators to review and identify practices that improve part-time faculty working conditions and increase student success.

Summary of Bill: A new chapter is created governing certain aspects of part-time faculty benefits at all public institutions of higher education. Institutions of higher education include the public baccalaureates and the CTCs.

Definitions currently used by CTCs to determine employee benefits for part-time faculty are applicable to all institutions of higher education.

Each institution of higher education must:

- develop a system to track faculty work patterns and a review process to assess competence of part-time faculty;
- review faculty work patterns to identify reappointments and consider early contracts;
- develop its review process, duration, and protections through collective bargaining for represented part-time faculty;
- evaluate part-time faculty similarly to that of full-time faculty;
- develop a performance evaluation and process for represented part-time faculty by means of collective bargaining; and
- develop a job screening process for part-time faculty that uses the same criteria used to hire full-time faculty.

In odd-numbered years, the institutions must review actions related to improving working conditions for part-time faculty.

Institutions must report the amount of hours part-time faculty worked for the purposes of determining eligibility for health benefits.

Part-time faculty must receive sick leave for illnesses, bereavement, and emergencies to the same extent as full-time faculty proportionate to the individual's teaching commitment. The institution's leave sharing program pertains to part-time faculty. Part-time faculty may receive compensation for excess sick leave similar to that of full-time faculty.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 26, 2018.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: OTHER: I am strongly in support of almost everything in this bill. I started as part-time faculty, before I started out in the union. Section 8 and 14 are statutes I helped write in the 1990s. Those statutes created the statewide formula that reflected the teaching load of part-time to full-time faculty. While drafting that, we recognized that the CTC part-time faculty contingent is a monolithic group, unlike the group at the four-year institutions. This bill needs work to reflect technical differences. This would be a great thing to work on this interim. We do have a few concerns in the way the bill is written. The way this pertains to four-year faculty is concerning. We are working our way through the issues at UW and we want to be fair to part-time faculty.

Persons Testifying: OTHER: Wendy Rader-Konofalski, Washington Education Association; JoAnn Taricani, University of Washington Faculty Senate.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.