

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6888

As of February 15, 2008

Title: An act relating to higher education.

Brief Description: Regarding associate faculty members of institutions of higher learning.

Sponsors: Senators Sheldon and Delvin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 2/04/08.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

Background: The community and technical college system in Washington relies heavily on part-time faculty to meet teaching needs. Over the past ten years, the issue of part-time faculty has been the subject of a number of legislative actions. Most recently, in 2007, the Legislature authorized \$35.1 million for cost-of-living increases for community and technical college faculty and staff; \$11.25 million to narrow the gap between full- and part-time faculty pay; and \$7.5 million for annual full- and part-time faculty salary increments as provided in local collective bargaining agreements.

Summary of Bill: "Associate faculty" status is established for certain part-time, nontenure track faculty of community and technical colleges. Nontenure track faculty will be eligible for associate faculty status after teaching for nine quarters at least a 50 percent of full-time load. All nontenure track faculty who have taught at least 50 percent of a full-time load for at least nine quarters before June 30, 2008 are automatically given associate faculty status.

As a result of their status, associate faculty will have a number of rights and privileges including: (1) the right of first refusal on available departmental courses based on seniority; (2) the right to bump other nontenure track faculty in the event the associate faculty member's course is canceled; (3) the right to be paid 33 percent of their contract by the college in the event there is no one with less seniority to bump and the associate faculty member's class is canceled; (4) their names and qualifications appearing in the college's biennial catalogs; (5) the right to their accustomed teaching load; (6) annual contracts presumed to be automatically renewable; (7) the right to receive annual contracts with the equivalent of full-time teaching loads when additional teaching hours become available in their field; and (8) the right to be considered qualified to teach available hours in the same manner that tenured faculty are considered qualified.

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.

Associate faculty status is revocable for probable cause. The associate faculty member has the right to appeal, including the right to a hearing and standard grievance procedures. Provisions relating to procedures and rights for reduction in force of community and technical college faculty are amended to include associate faculty with tenured and probationary faculty.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 31, 2008.

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: This legislation was introduced to give the parties an opportunity to air their issues. The bill grants rolling annual contracts without giving tenure. Without job security, there is no academic freedom. New full-time faculty have more academic rights than experienced part-time faculty. These part-time instructors have made long-term commitments to the colleges, and the colleges should reciprocate.

CON: Part-time faculty do make significantly less than full-time faculty, but this bill does not help solve that issue. Part-time faculty are valued, but this bill would not address the legitimate concerns that they are expressing.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Sheldon, prime sponsor; Teresa Knudsen, Part-time Faculty Association; Doug Collins, Keith Hoeller, Dana Rush, Walter Marquardt, AAUP; Ron Swift.

CON: John Boesenberg, SBCTC.