

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2615

As of February 24, 2016

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: House Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by 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: Passed House: 2/12/16, 50-46.

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 2/23/16.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Staff: Clint McCarthy (786-7319)

Background: According to the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (State Board), in the 2014-15 academic year, there were 3744 full-time faculty and 7315 part-time faculty. About 54 percent of state-funded teaching occurred through full-time faculty and 46 percent occurred through part-time faculty.

In 2005, the Legislature directed the State Board to convene a task force to review and update a Best Practices audit that made a series of recommendations on issues such as salary disparities and part-time versus full-time staffing rations. The updated audit 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) 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 non-tenured faculty receive priority consideration for continuing employment and tenure track positions.

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.

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 University of Washington 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.

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.

Each community and technical college must establish a process for part-time and full-time non-tenured 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.

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: It is difficult for students to get a hold of and work with part-time faculty members. This makes a big difference in outcomes of students. This bill represents a goal; it is not iron-clad with respect to having to have 200 more full-time professors each biennium. There tends to be no physical space for part-time faculty to meet with students. There is little hope of ever having tenure among part-time faculty. Most adjuncts are not part-time faculty- many teach more than full-time faculty to earn a living. Community colleges are under no obligation to guarantee employment from school year to school year. Most people have a hard time dealing with the year-to-year uncertainty that goes along with being a part-time employee. The faculty mix needs to be addressed so that we have more full-time faculty. This has been a long-time issue, but there is a reasonable solution that increases students' opportunity for success in this bill.

CON: This bill does not go far enough to address the inequities that part-time faculty face.

OTHER: SBCTC shares the concerns with the proponents of the bill concerning the limitations that go hand-in-hand with part-time faculty. They support increasing the number of full-time faculty members but are concerned with the cost and how it relates to other priorities.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Matt Zuvich, Washington Federation of State Employees; Tobi Rosenberg, Bellevue College Faculty; Carla Nacarrato-Sinclair, Spokane Community Colleges-Association President; Karen Strickland, President, AFT Washington; Anna Mary Fitzgerald, South Puget Sound Faculty.

CON: Jack Longmate, Washington Part-time Faculty Association.

OTHER: Marty Brown, SBCTC.