

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5918

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Higher Education & Workforce Development, February 1, 2022

**Title:** An act relating to adding a faculty member to the board of regents at the research universities.

**Brief Description:** Adding a faculty member to the board of regents at the research universities.

**Sponsors:** Senators Frockt, Conway, Hasegawa, Holy, Lias, Lovick and Wilson, C..

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Higher Education & Workforce Development: 2/01/22, 2/01/22 [DP].

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Adds a full-time or emeritus member of the faculty to the Board of Regents for both the University of Washington and Washington State University.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Randall, Chair; Nobles, Vice Chair; Holy, Ranking Member; Lias and Sefzik.

**Staff:** Alicia Kinne-Clawson (786-7407)

**Background:** The University of Washington and Washington State University are governed by a Board of Regents. Each consists of ten members, one of whom is a student. The Board of Regents' members are appointed by the Governor with the consent of the Senate. The members hold terms of six years, except for the student member who holds a

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one-year term. The student member is not allowed to participate or vote on matters related to the hiring, discipline, or tenure of faculty members and personnel.

The powers and duties of the Board of Regents include employing the university president, faculty, staff, and all university employees; establishing admissions requirements; establishing colleges, schools, or departments to carry out the purposes of the university; granting certificates and degrees, including honorary degrees; offering new degree programs and off-campus programs; participating in consortia or centers; contracting for off-campus educational programs; and purchasing or leasing major off-campus facilities.

**Summary of Bill:** The Board of Regents for both the University of Washington and Washington State University are increased to 11 members, with the eleventh member being a full-time or emeritus member of the faculty. The faculty member must be selected by the Governor from a list of candidates submitted by the university's faculty senate and confirmed by the Washington Senate. The faculty member serves for a three-year term and must excuse oneself from voting on matters related to the hiring, discipline, or tenure of specific faculty members.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**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:** PRO: Just as the student perspective on the board of regents, so is the faculty perspective. Adding a faculty member would shorten the distance between the universities governing body and the people that work there. Shared governance is a primary tenant of higher education. The inclusion of a faculty member on the board of regents would affirm this priority. Faculty are working both in and outside the university and this perspective needs to be shared with the board of regents. WSU has taken a trial run with our past faculty chair participating in WSU board of regents meetings as an ex-officio member of the board. Having a faculty member participate as a full member would further legitimize this important role. The challenges we face in leadership change but a consistent truth is that we maintain sight lines through different constituencies. Having the faculty perspective will help bring new perspectives to the board which will enhance the ability of the board to responsibly steward the university.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Jacob Vigdor, University of Washington Faculty; Stephen Bollens, WSU Faculty Representative to the Legislature, on behalf of the WSU Faculty Senate; Chris Laws, University of Washington Faculty Senate.

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