

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1079

As Passed House:
February 12, 2020

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: Representatives Pollet, Kloba, Stanford and Frame.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

College & Workforce Development: 1/16/19, 1/29/19 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/12/19, 86-12.

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/12/20, 83-14.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Adds a full-time or emeritus faculty member to the board of regents at both the University of Washington and Washington State University.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COLLEGE & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Hansen, Chair; Entenman, Vice Chair; Leavitt, Vice Chair; Van Werven, Ranking Minority Member; Gildon, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Graham, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Kraft, Mead, Paul, Pollet, Ramos, Rude, Sells and Slatter.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Young.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Sutherland.

Staff: Megan Mulvihill (786-7304).

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.

Background:

The University of Washington (UW) and Washington State University (WSU) are the state's research universities. Each one is governed by a board of regents (Board) comprised of 10 members. The Boards have full control of the universities and are responsible for selecting and maintaining the employment of the university president. At both universities, the Boards' responsibilities include establishing university entrance requirements, establishing colleges and departments, working with faculty to prescribe and approve courses of study, and granting student degrees.

Board of Regents Composition.

At both the UW and WSU, nine of the 10 regents are appointed by the Governor with the consent of the Senate. These regents hold six-year terms. The tenth member at each university is a student selected by the Governor from a list of at least three and no more than five candidates. The lists are submitted to the Governor by the associated student governing bodies at the UW and WSU. The student regent's term is one year. The student regent may not vote on matters related to the hiring, discipline, or tenure of faculty members and personnel.

Faculty Senate.

The UW and WSU faculty senates are the legislative bodies of the faculty. The faculty senate provides recommendations to university leadership on matters including education policy, student conduct and activities, scholastic activity, and criteria for faculty tenure, appointment, and promotion.

Summary of Bill:

The UW and WSU expand their Boards to include a full-time or emeritus faculty member as the eleventh regent. The Governor selects the faculty regent from a list provided by the university's faculty senate. The list includes at least two and no more than five candidates. Each faculty regent serves a three-year term starting October 1 and running until his or her successor is appointed and qualified. The faculty regent may not vote on matters related to the hiring, discipline, or tenure of specific faculty members.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Research universities have a philosophy of shared governance that includes faculty. Given that philosophy, faculty members should be full voting members of the Boards. Adding a faculty voice to the Boards will help with decision making related to recruitment, retention, and curriculum. Since faculty work face-to-face with students and staff every day, having a faculty seat among the regents will also amplify those voices.

Without a faculty regent, issues that are deeply embedded in higher education may not be recognized or well understood. In addition, having a diverse set of voices leads to stronger decision making and solutions.

Faculty at the UW and WSU support this legislation, as well as the presidents at both institutions. The same bill was introduced last year and passed out of committee. Many of the UW and WSU's peer institutions include faculty on their Boards. There is an ex-officio faculty regent at WSU this year, and it is going well.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Pollet, prime sponsor; Carrie Matthews, Abraham Flaxman, Amy Hagopian, JoAnn Taricani, and George Sandison, University of Washington; and Steve Bollens, Washington State University.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.