

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1079

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Higher Education & Workforce Development, February 25, 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: Passed House: 3/12/19, 86-12; 2/12/20, 83-14.

Committee Activity: Higher Education & Workforce Development: 3/19/19, 4/02/19 [DP];
2/20/20, 2/25/20 [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.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Randall, Chair; Stanford, Vice Chair; Holy, Ranking Member; Brown.

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 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.

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 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: Available.

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 (Regular Session 2019): PRO: Our mission is education and research and who better than the faculty senate to nominate someone who should help steer that mission. We have successfully had a student regent for many years. It makes sense and is part of the historic shared governance model. We have worked to ensure there is no conflict of interest inherent in this position. Having had the opportunity to sit on the board of regents I have a much different perspective on a multitude of issues. I believe my participation as a faculty representative to the board was valuable to both parties. I encourage you to formalize an incredibly important bridge between the faculty governing body and the regents. The faculty are participants in shared governance and we play a unique role in shaping the decisions institutions make. This is the right time to create a faculty position on the board. There are pressures about funding and on the types of choices we are making. These decisions can benefit from a faculty perspective. Having a faculty member serve on the board of regents would formalize the exchange of information between the faculty and university leadership. Faculty strongly support this bill. A faculty regent would offer an important perspective on university operations and help inform our governance and the decisions being made on behalf of the institution.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Gerry Pollet, Prime Sponsor; JoAnn Taricani, Faculty Legislative Representative, University of Washington; Steve Bollens, Faculty Legislative Representative, Washington State University; George Sandison, Faculty Senate Chair, University of Washington; Judi McDonald, Washington State University, Past President, Faculty Senate.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Regular Session 2020): PRO: This bill has been before the committee twice before. We have student regents but we do not have faculty regents at our major research universities. The universities reputation rests on the shared governance model with the faculty which is their dedication to teaching, research, and public service. How better to ensure that those factors are included in regent conversations then to include them in the governing process. The selection process is still in the hands of the governor with nominations from the faculty senate. The bill is supported by our administration and faculty. The time has now come for faculty regents to have an opportunity to engage in conversations of how the university operates. Their perspective will be valuable to the board of regents. Shared governance is a primary tenant of higher education and a faculty presence on the board reinforces this.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Gerry Pollet, Prime Sponsor; JoAnn Taricani, UW Faculty Senate; Joe Janes, UW Faculty Senate; Steve Bollens, WSU Faculty Senate.

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