

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1051

As Reported by House Committee On:
College & Workforce Development

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, Leavitt, Shewmake, Kloba, Ryu, Chopp, Fitzgibbon, Ortiz-Self, Goodman, Valdez, Lovick, Frame, Santos, Macri, Stokesbary and Bergquist.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

College & Workforce Development: 1/18/21, 1/21/21 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

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

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COLLEGE & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Slatter, Chair; Entenman, Vice Chair; Leavitt, Vice Chair; Chambers, Ranking Minority Member; Jacobsen, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Hansen, Kraft, Paul, Pollet and Sells.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Chandler, Hoff and Sutherland.

Staff: Elizabeth Allison (786-7129).

Background:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The University of Washington (UW) and Washington State University (WSU) are the Washington'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 the 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 the 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 the 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 the 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 a 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: Not requested.

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) The current Boards are not fully representative because it is missing a faculty representative. Adding a faculty member to the board will add the expertise of teachers, which is especially important when returning from the economic impacts of Coronavirus Disease 2019. Faculty members have a unique role at universities because they work with students, staff, and outside stakeholders on a daily basis. Faculty voice is an important pipeline between regents and faculty and would add to the board of regents' knowledge.

Adding a faculty member to the board replaces a game of telephone with direct input and facilitates two-way communication. Some faculty members monitor budgets and perform duties without supervision. Shared governance is a primary tenant of higher education and adding a faculty member would extend this process. At the WSU, the Faculty Senate develops education and research policies in addition to overseeing the faculty employment.

Good communication is essential for an effective model of governance. Graduate students work very closely with faculty as teaching assistants, mentees for research, and learners in classrooms. This is a good example of partnership between faculty.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Pollet, prime sponsor; Stephen Bollens and Gregory Crouch, Washington State University; Robin Angotti and Jacob Vigdor, University of Washington; and Hannah Sieben, University of Washington Graduate and Professional Student Senate.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.