

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1142

As Reported by House Committee On:
Postsecondary Education & Workforce

Title: An act relating to increasing tenure-track faculty at the public baccalaureate institutions.

Brief Description: Increasing tenure-track faculty at the public baccalaureate institutions.

Sponsors: Representatives Hansen, Timmons, Reed, Simmons, Reeves, Lekanoff and Pollet.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Postsecondary Education & Workforce: 1/11/23, 1/20/23 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Adds 200 tenure-track faculty positions at the state universities and regional universities, with the majority of new tenure-track faculty going to high demand programs of study.
- Requires the state universities and regional universities to submit final and preliminary reports to the Legislature on hires and conversions of part-time employees and the impacts of the additional tenure-track faculty.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION & WORKFORCE

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Slatter, Chair; Entenman, Vice Chair; Reed, Vice Chair; Ybarra, Ranking Minority Member; Waters, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Hansen, Klicker, Leavitt, McEntire, Pollet, Schmidt and Timmons.

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

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

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.

Jacobsen.

Staff: Elizabeth Allison (786-7129).

Background:

Tenure grants a professor permanent employment with certain job and salary security. A tenured professor generally may not be fired without cause.

As of 2021, the student to tenure-track faculty ratio is as follows:

- 20 to 1 at the University of Washington;
- 34 to 1 at Washington State University;
- 48 to 1 at Central Washington University;
- 42 to 1 at Eastern Washington University;
- 16 to 1 at the Evergreen State College; and
- 27 to 1 at Western Washington University.

The state universities are the University of Washington and Washington State University. The regional universities are Central Washington University, Eastern Washington University, and Western Washington University.

The Washington State Opportunity Scholarship Program provides scholarships to low- and middle-income resident students pursuing professional–technical degrees or bachelor's degrees in high-demand majors in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and health care.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Subject to amounts appropriated specifically for this purpose, beginning with the 2023-24 academic year, the Legislature intends to add 200 new full-time tenure-track positions. The new positions must be divided among the state and regional universities as follows:

- 30 at the University of Washington;
- 30 at Washington State University;
- 50 at Central Washington University;
- 50 at Eastern Washington University; and
- 40 at Western Washington University.

The majority of new full-time tenure-track faculty must be assigned to departments with the highest percentage of non-tenure-track faculty, with the majority going to departments that teach high demand programs of study and that the Washington State Opportunity Scholarship Program has listed as eligible majors for the baccalaureate scholarship.

The state and regional universities must issue two joint reports to the Governor and

appropriate committees of the Legislature.

The preliminary report is due by December 15, 2025, and must include data on all hires made under the act, including demographics of hires, the department or program in which the hire was made, and the number of positions that were part-time conversions.

The final report is due by December 15, 2030, and must include an assessment of the impact of the 200 additional full-time tenure-track faculty on student experiences and student success. The state and regional universities are directed to convene representatives of faculty, staff, and administration to report on the outcomes of increasing faculty and must include next-step recommendations.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The majority of new full-time tenure-track faculty must be assigned to departments with the highest percentage of non-tenure-track faculty, with the majority going to departments that teach high demand programs of study and that the Washington State Opportunity Scholarship Program has listed as eligible majors for the baccalaureate scholarship.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Much has been done over the years for student success. One way this is typically done is through various programs and advisors who are not faculty, navigators, and counselors. Higher education used to have more tenure-track professors doing advising for students. Tenure-track faculty spend more time on campus and have a longer-term commitment to the institution and students. The same is not true for adjunct faculty. Instead of the Legislature doing collateral actions to improve student success, the Legislature should take this action to invest directly instead in the people who make a university a university. This is the faculty, not administrators. The bill is simply going to create more of these faculty members.

Legislation from last session allocated additional tenure-track positions at community and technical colleges (CTCs) and gave CTCs the ability to hire a more diverse group of professors. It is key for students at CTCs to have full-time tenure-track faculty, and this bill will benefit the students who transfer from CTCs to four-year institutions.

Whether a professor or a researcher, faculty work better when they are supported. Students suffer when faculty is not supported. If students cannot find a professor years later for a letter of recommendation, questions, or other resources, their chances of advancing are hurt. More full-time professors will also help with turnover as full-time professors have the security to provide services for students. The positive impacts of adding full-time tenure-track faculty has been seen in the addition of such staff at the CTCs. Investing in the higher education workforce becomes an investment in students.

Research is a very important part of what tenure-track faculty work on. Tenure-track faculty can work at the same institution for 30 years or more. This leads to new technology, creating jobs, and saving lives. Research also helps us understand the world we live in, and when faculty conducts this research it benefits everyone. There is also a benefit to having such research conducted in Washington. It brings grant money in, which creates new jobs, causes money to circulate in the economy through the purchase of equipment, and also provides opportunities for students through hiring graduates and undergraduates.

All faculty want to do a good job to facilitate students' professional and personal intellectual growth to help them realize future outcomes. Full-time faculty are more likely to help students obtain jobs because they are more likely to maintain long relationships with them as opposed to adjunct faculty, who are looking for jobs. Untenured faculty do an excellent job, but they cannot be expected to do the work of tenured faculty.

There is lack of job security with untenured positions. Some do the same work and are promoted under the same requirements as tenured faculty, but are not tenured due to funding. Most of the faculty without tenure are women and faculty of color. Many in this position without tenure will be looking for other jobs where they can obtain tenure.

There is much research on the impact of tenure-track faculty on students at many levels. Relationships with faculty who have time and resources to invest in students makes a difference.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Drew Hansen, prime sponsor; Jacob Vigdor, University of Washington; Sam Ligon, Eastern Washington University; Amanda Kost, University of Washington; Carolyn Brotherton, Economic Opportunity Institute; Nora Selander, Western Washington University; Simone Boe, Washington Education Association; Bill Lyne, United Faculty of Washington State; Kip Zwolenski, American Federation of Teachers Washington - Yakima Valley College Federation of Teachers Local 4985; and David Shapiro, American Federation of Teachers Washington - Cascadia College Federation of Teachers Local 6191.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.