

HB 1631/SB 5507

Providing for academic employee salary increments for community and technical colleges.

The core principles of this bill have been worked on for many years so that they are acceptable to college presidents, boards of trustees, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, the faculty—including part-time faculty—and their unions.

WHAT THIS BILL DOES

- 1) Provides a budget mechanism by which two year college faculty can receive regular and automatic funding for their local salary step increases (increments). Funding in the past has been highly unpredictable, requiring extensive lobbying each year for a special appropriation. Other state and educational employees receive funding for their step movements as part of the maintenance budget for their agencies.
- 2) Drives the funding out through a set formula based upon the employee salary base proportional for full-time and part-time faculty.
- 3) Requires that part-time increments also be used as a general salary increase in the event that it exceeds the amount needed for their step movement.
- 4) Provides language on how the funding could be suspended in the event of a fiscal crisis.

BENEFITS OF THE BILL

- 1) Colleges will be able to predict the amount of funding they will receive and, through bargaining, can adjust steps to meet the actual amount they will receive and not a theoretical amount.
- 2) Since the funding received for part-time faculty can be used for general salary increases, all part-time faculty will always receive regular salary increases, something that was never true in the past. (Full-time faculty funds cannot be used in this way.)
- 3) Since there will be a predictable stream of funds for part-time faculty increments, it will incentivize individual colleges to create or expand their steps for part-time faculty.
- 4) Professional development will be more reliably rewarded.
- 5) Faculty who left higher paying positions in private industry can predict when their teaching salaries will catch up with what they lost, creating better recruitment opportunities.

WHAT THE BILL DOES NOT DO *and why*

- 1) Does not force colleges to create or expand the number of steps on their part-time salary schedules.
 - Although having similar numbers of steps for part-time and full-time faculty is an admirable goal, the cost is so high that burdening this bill with that requirement would mean that it could not pass and the underlying problem of irregular funding could not be solved.
 - Forcing colleges to change salary schedules would require suspending the bargaining rights of colleges and locals on that issue—a highly divisive proposition that would kill the bill.
 - Many part-time faculty do not have access to or need for professional development; making their increases dependent on that would be a barrier to attainment.

- 2) Does not try to speed up closing the salary gap between part- and full-time faculty by taking increment funding dollars away from full-time faculty.
- The legislature (until the budget crisis) has been acting to close the salary gap through special budget appropriations. They have increased salaries nearly 20% on average in a decade. Using special appropriations makes the funding for part-time faculty salaries larger while not decreasing funding for full-time faculty.
 - The salary gap is an enormous, historical, systemic problem. Closing it far exceeds the limited scope of what this bill is trying to do.

AFT Washington represents full- and part-time faculty in 19 community and technical colleges. For more information, call Bernal Baca at 509-961-7840 or bbaca@aftwa.org.

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