



SB 5194 FULL-TIME FACULTY HIRES

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Report on Full-Time Faculty Hires via SB 5194

Background on Senate Bill 5194 Full-Time Faculty Hiring

SB 5194 was enacted in 2021. It is a broad bill that aims to increase equity and access at community colleges in the state. Among many provisions, Section 5 of the act increases the number of full-time, tenure track faculty, and provides the following guidance: “This goal is best accomplished through converting part-time faculty positions to full-time tenure-track positions and by hiring new full-time faculty through processes identified in each college's diversity, equity, and inclusion of all races strategic plan described in section 3 of this act.”

Funding to move forward with these conversions was made available for Fiscal Year 2023, which started on July 1, 2022.

Results of Hiring Processes

As indicated earlier, these funds were made available to colleges in Fiscal Year 2023. Colleges started hiring processes in the Winter and Spring of 2022, with the goal of having positions filled in the Fall of 2022.

In the Fall of 2023, SBCTC staff surveyed colleges for the result of their recruiting efforts. From this data, colleges have been able to fill 173 of the 200 new positions that were allocated to the system. Of these new positions, 100 were adjunct faculty who took up newly formed positions as full-time faculty, i.e., were “converted.”

Of the remaining 27 positions that were not filled, the vast majority are due to failed searches. Failed searches occur when the hiring committees do not recommend any of the applicants move forward because of the results of their interviews and other due diligence. In many cases, the difficulty developing appropriate applicant pools is related to lower wages in the community college system than for equivalent education and experience in the private sector.

Student Outcomes

As of the due date of this report, December 15, 2023, community colleges have had funding for these positions for less than 18 months. In addition, because of the timing of the start of the academic year in which these faculty positions were filled, the colleges have had these positions in the classroom for less than five full academic quarters. As such, it is highly unlikely that there are any meaningful changes to student outcomes yet.

Colleges are working on Guided Pathways and other initiatives that align student success goals with academic advising and other wrap-around services. There is considerable work in outreach for both recruiting and financial aid.

However, the data for student outcomes due to the new full-time faculty positions is not available yet.

Recommendations

Since the hiring of faculty has only recently taken place, it is far too early to make recommendations on next steps as they tie to student outcomes. There are several promising practices for hiring faculty, such as search advocates and cluster hiring.

For example, Pierce College engaged in cluster hiring, which is the practice of hiring a group of faculty with differing backgrounds and fields but with the purpose of achieving an interdisciplinary goal. In this case, the interdisciplinary goal was the success of Black and Brown students. Their recruiting announcement included the following introduction, which directly recognized the role of SB 1594:

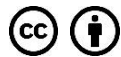
As Pierce College deepens its commitment to racial equity, it is of the highest priority that we focus our tenure and permanent status-track faculty hiring process to seek faculty with the expertise to lead our institution in serving Black and Brown students. This cluster hire is an opportunity for the college community to continue to act upon our values but more importantly for the empowering of our students' self-efficacy, for cultivating sense of belonging, and for the diversity of our entire student body, especially Black and Brown students, being reflected in a position of power in the classroom. We are fortunate that the Washington state legislature recognizes this through SB 5194 in its efforts to address student areas of inequities with the funding of additional faculty positions.

During the recruitment process, candidates are evaluated not just on their specific knowledge and abilities within their academic field, but on their ability to jointly work with other faculty in the cluster and throughout the institution on the success of students.

The search advocate system empowers an existing staff member of a college through training and other development to be an advocate for transparent and equitable hiring processes. The search advocate sits in with the search committee in each step of the search process and is charged with questioning status-quo and promoting practices that minimize barriers, advance diversity, promote social justice, and mitigate the impacts of intentional and unintentional biases.

Walla Walla Community College has effectively employed Search Advocates as a member of the process for hiring Faculty related to SB 5194.

While changing hiring practices is only the first step in advancing equitable student success, SBCTC and system colleges are encouraged by the ways colleges are approaching hiring faculty. Better student outcomes should be able to be experienced by historically underrepresented students in the foreseeable future. The SBCTC will report additional information on student outcomes as these results are available.



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Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges