



# **COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE ADJUNCT FACULTY PAY**

*REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE ESSB 5187*

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# Introduction

Washington's community and technical college system is comprised of 34 colleges located across the state. Each year, our colleges collectively serve about 273,000 students of all ages and backgrounds. Half (51%) of our students are students of color, 42% receive need-based financial aid in eligible programs, and 54% are enrolled part-time to manage work and family responsibilities. Excluding Running Start students, the median age is 26.

Our colleges open the doors to higher education for working adults and students who are the first in their families to go to college. We serve as a nexus between high school, higher education, and the workforce and are therefore central to meeting statewide education goals.

## Three mission areas

Three mission areas drive the community and technical college system:

- **Workforce education** – 29% of our students are enrolled in workforce education programs to learn skills for careers in high-demand fields such as cybersecurity, manufacturing, health care and green energy.
- **Academic transfer** – 37% of our students are enrolled to start their bachelor's degrees and then transfer to a university. More than half of students who graduated from a public institution with a bachelor's degree in 2020-21 were transfer students. (Washington Student Achievement Council 2023 Washington transfer associate degree effectiveness update, July 2023).
- **Basic education** – 15% of our students come to our colleges to learn foundational skills to move into college-level coursework and careers. Students in Basic Education for Adults programs learn reading, writing, math, technical skills, and job skills. They also enroll to learn English and U.S. citizenship, complete their high school diplomas, or take the GED®.

The remaining 19% of students are enrolled for other purposes, for example, in continuing education classes.

## Background

All full-time and adjunct faculty employed by community and technical colleges are represented and organized into 30 separate bargaining units, one at each college district. Each college district is obligated to bargain locally with their faculty labor representatives to reach agreement and adopt a collective bargaining agreement unique to that college. Salary schedules and rates are set through this local bargaining. Through Initiative 732 (codified as RCW 28B.50.465), faculty receive an annual Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) based upon the King County Consumer Price Index (CPI). These COLAs are distributed through collective bargaining.

Duties and responsibilities required of both full-time and adjunct faculty are products of that bargaining process and, therefore, naturally vary from college to college. This includes the number of contract and instructional days, teaching workloads, college governance duties, salary schedules, salary placement, and progression. Some colleges have negotiated full-time and part-time faculty promotional steps and/or additional duty pay. This additional pay is sometimes included in the base

salary schedule/rate or may be provided as a pay additur or stipend. These are some of the variations that generally result in an “apples-to-oranges” comparison of salaries, especially when viewed across the system, making direct comparison between colleges challenging.

In the past, the Washington state Legislature has provided funding to increase adjunct faculty salaries. However, specific funding for this purpose has not been provided since Fiscal Year 2009. Over time and more recently, some colleges and their labor partners have provided modest increases to adjunct pay through collective bargaining.

With its adoption of the 2023-2025 biennial operating budget, (ESSB 5187), the Legislature directed the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) to develop a plan that includes the cost to provide compensation to part-time and adjunct faculty that equals or exceeds 85% of the compensation of full-time faculty. The proviso language states:

Within the amounts appropriated in this section, the state board for community and technical colleges shall develop a plan that includes the cost to provide compensation to part-time and adjunct faculty that equals or exceeds 85 percent of the compensation provided to comparably qualified full-time and tenured faculty by the 2026-27 academic year. The plan must be submitted to the governor and the higher education committees of the legislature, in accordance with RCW 43.01.036, by July 1, 2024.

As used in this report:

- Adjunct faculty includes part-time and associate faculty paid the negotiated adjunct faculty pay rate or from the adjunct faculty salary schedule.
- Full-time faculty includes tenured and tenure track faculty paid from the negotiated full-time faculty salary schedule.

## Responding to the Proviso

State Board staff convened a representative workgroup of labor and administration to discuss the proviso and identify methodologies to consider and use in responding to the proviso. Membership included full-time and adjunct faculty, union representatives, and administrators from large, small, rural, urban, and community and technical colleges. Special attention was given to potential members’ knowledge of the area and the type of college they represented. Labor representatives were chosen by their respective labor unions. Nine people served on the workgroup, including three college administrators, four labor representatives, and two State Board support staff.

After much discussion of the proviso requirements and developing a shared understanding of the differences between colleges, the workgroup understood the assignment as:

To determine the best methodology to identify the cost to pay adjunct faculty 85% of the amount paid to a comparably qualified full-time instructor across the community and technical college system.

The estimates described below are based on the 2022-2023 academic year, the most current salary and full-time equivalent faculty (FTEF) data available. To increase accuracy, the cost calculation should be updated as the data from the recently completed fiscal year becomes available. (The FTEF

data is lagged an academic year since the current academic year data was not available at the time of report submission.)

By necessity, identified methodologies will be expressed as averages. The actual amount needed to increase adjunct salaries to 85% of a comparably qualified full-time instructor at an individual college may be more or less than the system average developed through this process.

## Methodologies Considered

### Approach 1

At the suggestion of the workgroup's labor representatives, members first looked at using the starting salary paid to an adjunct faculty member and the first step on a full-time faculty salary schedule. These two items would determine, one, base pay levels and, two, the cost to increase adjunct faculty pay to 85%.

This methodology identified the lowest salary available for an adjunct and a full-time faculty member at each college district. This information is easily accessed and was deemed a simple method to consider salaries and generate a total cost. Through a survey, entry level salaries were collected into a spreadsheet and circulated to the colleges for feedback. This feedback included:

- Differences and caveats resulting from local bargaining as local participants to the bargaining process identified their priorities, negotiated, and adopted contract provisions.
- Qualifications of full-time and adjunct faculty vary. Use of the lowest salary available does not capture that variance or respond to the proviso requirement to develop the cost of increasing adjunct pay to meet or exceed 85% of the pay of a comparatively qualified full-time faculty.
- Colleges may have a starting salary on their schedule that is not competitive and, therefore, used infrequently or not at all.
- Additional duties and/or promotional steps may or may not be included in the base salary amounts assigned to full-time and adjunct faculty. (Colleges have negotiated additional full-time and adjunct faculty pay for additional work and/or promotions. Some have included the additional pay in the base salary schedule while others pay for the additional amount through stipends.)
- The number of contract days varies between colleges.
- Other differences may exist at a particular college or amongst colleges.

With the above understanding, application of Approach 1 shows that current adjunct average pay is roughly equivalent to 64.6% of an average full-time faculty salary. Increasing adjunct faculty pay across the system from 64.6% to 85% of full-time faculty pay costs \$55.6 million for salary and affected benefits.

### Approach 2

The SBCTC has previously used system data from its internal fiscal and payroll systems to generate fiscal notes for legislation containing language like the proviso that initiated this report. For full-time

and adjunct faculty, this data contains all FTEF and salary expenditures. This approach relies upon salaries actually paid to faculty.

As noted earlier, colleges negotiate full-time faculty salary schedules and adjunct faculty pay rates or schedules. Full-time faculty salary schedules typically are based on experience and academic qualifications. They may also include consideration of the contracted days required of faculty on a particular campus or within a program. If the college and labor union have negotiated an adjunct faculty salary schedule, it typically is based on experience but may also consider academic qualifications. Use of an average that is reflective of actual pay received more closely responds to the proviso requirements to consider comparative qualifications.

This approach results in a current adjunct faculty pay level estimated to be at 61.5% of an average full-time faculty salary. The cost to move from 61.5% to 85% pay level for adjunct faculty across the system totals \$75.1 million for salaries and benefits. Because these are salaries, this would be an ongoing cost and, as a mandatory bargaining issue, be distributed through the local collective bargaining process.

While the “apples-to-oranges” comparison concerns continue under this approach, college representatives, in general, believed that this approach was more reflective of their experience and more closely adhered to the proviso’s requirements.

## Conclusion

The pay gap resulting from Approach 2 is greater than that calculated for Approach 1 because it is based on systemwide averages of actual pay and not the lowest pay available. Additionally, to the extent possible, Approach 2 includes consideration of faculty qualifications, experience, contracted days, etc. While not perfect, this more closely represents the amount needed to pay adjunct faculty 85% of the pay provided to a comparatively qualified full-time instructor.

Progress on increasing adjunct pay requires additional and dedicated funding. There are not existing, or local funds, to meet this pay increase. Funding salary increases would be an ongoing commitment. Any funding provided by the Legislature for this purpose would be distributed through the local collective bargaining process.

## Workgroup Members

The State Board thanks the members of the workgroup who contributed their time, expertise and energy into exploring this issue:

- Reagan Bellamy, human resources executive director, Wenatchee Valley College
- Thomas Broxson, vice president of instruction, Clover Park Technical College
- Jacqui Cain, American Federation of Teachers Washington
- Choi Halladay, deputy executive director for business operations, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges
- Jaeney Hoene, English faculty, Green River College
- Julie Huss, director of human resources, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges

- Enrie Marusya, American Federation of Teachers
- Sue Nightingale, Washington Education Association
- Suzanne Southerland, communications faculty, Clark College
- Nolan Wheeler, vice president of administration, Lower Columbia College



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Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges