

2007 -- S 0554

LC01476

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2007

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- THE FACULTY AND COLLEGE EXCELLENCE ACT OF
2007

Introduced By: Senators Sosnowski, Moura, Sheehan, and Perry

Date Introduced: February 15, 2007

Referred To: Senate Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 16 of the General Laws entitled "EDUCATION" is hereby amended
2 by adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 59.1

4 THE FACULTY AND COLLEGE EXCELLENCE ACT OF 2007

5 **16-59.1-1. Short title.** – This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the "Rhode
6 Island Faculty and College Excellence Act of 2007."

7 **16-59.1-2. Legislative Findings.** – The general assembly hereby finds and declares as
8 follows:

9 College Faculty members, full-time and part-time, are the bedrock of our higher
10 education system and require adequate compensation and basic supports to serve our students and
11 communities most effectively. Today, however, serious problems have arisen in academic
12 staffing. While an increasing percentage of the courses offered in our colleges and universities
13 are taught by part-time/adjunct and other nontenure-track faculty hired on a temporary basis,
14 these faculty members too often are provided meager compensation and few basic professional
15 supports such as paid office hours to meet with students. At the same time, our colleges and
16 universities are allowing the ranks of full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty members to fall
17 dangerously low.

18 These twin developments – the economic exploitation of part-time/adjunct and other

1 nontenure-track faculty along with the shrinking ranks of full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty
2 – limit the ability of the state higher education system to provide high quality education, research
3 and support for economic development. Improving the conditions under which part-time/adjunct
4 and other nontenure-track faculty work, and ensuring that our colleges and universities employ
5 sufficient numbers of full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty members, will result in better
6 service for our students, our communities and our economy.

7 It is the legislature's goal to insure that a minimum of seventy-five percent (75%) of the
8 undergraduate courses at each public institution of higher education be taught by full-time
9 tenured or tenure-track faculty.

10 **16-59.1-3. Restoring the ranks of full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty.** – Each
11 public institution of higher education shall determine the number of undergraduate courses taught
12 by part-time/adjunct faculty, other contingent faculty, tenure-track faculty and tenured faculty in
13 each academic department. Those academic departments with at least eight (8) full-time
14 equivalent faculty positions that do not meet the goal of having seventy-five percent (75%) of the
15 courses taught be tenured or tenure-track faculty shall, beginning in September 2008, and in each
16 succeeding year, increase the share of courses taught by full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty
17 such that by September 2013 the legislature's goal of seventy-five percent (75%) is met. In no
18 year shall any department on any campus of each public institution of higher education have a
19 less than one-tenth (1/10) reduction in the size of the gap between the percentage of
20 undergraduate courses taught by tenured or tenure-track faculty and the legislature's goal.

21 **16-59.1-4. Compliance.** – (a) Each public institution of higher education shall create a
22 plan to meet this goal. The plan shall be subject to collective bargaining with the exclusive
23 representatives of the full-time and part-time/adjunct faculty and other nontenure-track faculty at
24 each public institution of higher education. In its plan, the institution shall state how it intends to
25 meet its goal, not by eliminating current part-time/adjunct or other contingent faculty positions
26 but by creating new full-time tenured or tenure-track positions, by creating new opportunities for
27 part-time/adjunct and other nontenure-track faculty members to attain full-time tenure-track
28 positions, and by filling vacant positions.

29 (b) Each public institution shall submit its plan to the boards of governors for higher
30 education by January 15, 2008.

31 (c) The board of governors for higher education shall require each public institution to
32 file yearly reports regarding compliance with said plan and is hereby directed to promulgate rules
33 and regulations necessary to effectuate compliance with this chapter.

34 **16-59.1-5. Consideration of current employees.** – Each public institution of higher

1 education shall establish a process under which part-time/adjunct and other nontenure-track
2 faculty, after successful completion of a probationary period, shall receive timely notice of and
3 priority consideration, consistent with other institutional and state policies, for part-time/adjunct
4 and other nontenure-track teaching assignments in coming terms. Each public institution of
5 higher education shall create a process for ensuring that qualified nontenure-track faculty
6 members receive preferential consideration in attaining a tenure-track position when one becomes
7 available, consistent with institutional and state affirmative action and other personnel policies.
8 This process shall ensure that part-time/adjunct and other nontenure-track faculty: (1) accumulate
9 seniority; (2) are notified of job openings prior to the job being posted outside of the institution;
10 and (3) have preferential consideration for appointments. The provisions of this section are
11 subject to collective bargaining between the public institution of higher education and the
12 exclusive representatives of part-time/adjunct and other nontenure-track faculty.

13 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
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RELATING TO EDUCATION -- THE FACULTY AND COLLEGE EXCELLENCE ACT OF
2007

1 This act would require that 75% of all classes taught at each public institution of higher
2 education by 2013 be taught by full-time, tenured or tenure-track faculty. Academic departments
3 with less than 8 full-time equivalent faculty positions would be exempt.

4 This act would take effect upon passage.

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