

Department of Legislative Services
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FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 347 (Senator Pugh, *et al.*)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Appropriations

Task Force to Study the Impact of Adjunct Faculty on Graduation Rates at Historically Black Institutions

This bill establishes a Task Force to Study the Impact of Adjunct Faculty on Graduation Rates at Historically Black Institutions (HBIs). The Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) must provide staff for the task force. A final report with findings and recommendations is due by January 1, 2013.

The bill terminates September 30, 2013.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures increase by \$34,800 in FY 2012, which accounts for the bill’s October 1, 2011 effective date. This estimate reflects the cost of hiring one part-time contractual employee at MHEC to staff the task force. Future year expenditures reflect inflation and the termination of the contractual employee in FY 2013. No effect on revenues.

(in dollars)	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	34,800	19,700	0	0	0
Net Effect	(\$34,800)	(\$19,700)	\$0	\$0	\$0

Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate effect

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The task force is charged with:

- analyzing the number and type of adjunct faculty and the number of tenured faculty at HBIs in the State and other institutions of higher education in the State;
- evaluating the ratio of adjunct to full-time faculty at HBIs in the State in comparison to other institutions of higher education in the State and assessing the impact of the ratio on retention and graduation rates at HBIs in the State;
- evaluating the impact of different kinds of adjunct instruction including full-time, nontenure-track instructors, graduate student instructors, part-time instructors, and postdoctoral fellows on retention and graduation rates; and
- making findings and recommendations regarding the relationship between the ratio of adjunct to full-time faculty at HBIs in the State and current disparities in retention and graduation rates in Maryland's institutions of higher education.

Task force members may not receive compensation but are entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the standard State travel regulations, as provided in the State budget.

Background: Educators at institutions of higher education often include full-time, tenured or tenure-track faculty as well as those who work on a part-time or contractual basis, known as adjunct faculty. Tenure generally constitutes a lifetime employment agreement and is generally thought of as a means of protecting faculty whose research may be socially, politically, or scientifically controversial. After several years on the tenure-track, an individual is evaluated for tenure. Tenure evaluation generally consists of an examination of the individual's academic research and publications, as well as his or her teaching and service contributions.

An adjunct professor is a part-time professor who does not hold a permanent position at that particular academic institution. This may be someone with a job outside the academic institution teaching courses in a specialized field, or it may refer to persons hired to teach courses on a contractual basis. Generally adjunct faculty carry a teaching load below the minimum required to earn benefits, although the number of courses taught can vary.

Adjunct faculty are generally not required (or permitted) to participate in the administrative responsibilities at the institution expected of other full-time faculty, nor do they generally have research responsibilities. The pay for these positions is usually minimal, even though adjuncts typically hold a PhD, requiring most adjuncts to hold concurrent positions at several institutions or in industry if seeking to make a living from it. Due to the considerably lower salaries of adjunct professors, many universities in

North America have reduced hiring of tenure-track faculty in favor of recruiting more adjuncts on a contractual basis. “Contingent faculty” (nontenure-track faculty) now make up more than half of all faculty positions in the United States.

A study published in *Educational Policy* in 2010 that examined the impact of adjunct faculty on students at six four-year institutions in a public higher education system found that high levels of exposure to part-time faculty in the first year of college are consistently found to negatively affect student retention to the second year.

The State’s HBIs are Bowie State University, Coppin State University (CSU), Morgan State University, and University of Maryland Eastern Shore. **Exhibit 1** shows that the percentage of part-time faculty in full-time equivalents at most institutions is below 20%, with the HBIs (except CSU), Towson, and UM University College among the highest.

Exhibit 1
Percentage of Part-time Faculty in Full-time Equivalents
Fiscal 2010-2012

	<u>Actual</u> <u>FY 2010</u>	<u>Estimated</u> <u>FY 2011</u>	<u>Estimated</u> <u>FY 2012</u>
University System of MD			
Baltimore	8.4%	6.0%	5.8%
UM College Park	7.4%	6.8%	6.8%
Bowie State University	43.0%	43.0%	43.0%
Towson University	27.0%	27.0%	27.0%
UM Eastern Shore	18.5%	18.5%	18.9%
Frostburg State University	18.1%	18.1%	18.1%
Coppin State	27.0%	20.0%	17.0%
University of Baltimore	11.0%	13.0%	16.0%
Salisbury University	12.0%	12.0%	12.0%
UM University College	83.4%	88.4%	88.4%
UM Baltimore County	15.0%	11.0%	11.0%
Other Public Four-year Institutions			
Morgan State University	33.5%	35.4%	37.3%
St. Mary’s College	13.0%	13.0%	13.0%

Source: Governor’s Budget Books, FY 2012

State Expenditures: The State's fiscal difficulties in the past few years have reduced agency budgets, particularly at MHEC, to the point where additional assignments cannot be absorbed with existing resources. Therefore, general fund expenditures increase by \$34,832 in fiscal 2012, which accounts for the bill's October 1, 2011 effective date. This estimate reflects the cost of hiring one full-time contractual employee to staff the task force, evaluate and analyze the use of adjunct faculty at HBIs, and assist with making recommendations regarding their use and current disparities in retention and graduation rates. It includes a salary, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses.

Fiscal 2013 expenditures reflect the termination of the contractual employee on January 1, 2013, and 1% annual increases in ongoing operating expenses.

It is assumed that the public higher education institutions can handle expense reimbursements with existing resources.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Higher Education Commission, Morgan State University, University System of Maryland, *Education Policy, Inside Higher Ed, The Massachusetts Society of Professors, AFT Higher Education, Association of American Colleges and Universities*, Department of Legislative Services

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