

Testimony on Substitute House Bill 66

Senate Education Committee
Senator Peggy Lehner, Chair

Dr. Dan E. Krane,
Chair, Ohio Faculty Council

Chair Lehner, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Sykes, and Committee members, my name is Dan Krane and I am a professor of Biological Sciences (with an affiliate appointment in Computer Science) at Wright State University. I also have the honor of serving as the Chair of the Ohio Faculty Council which represents the faculty at all of the four-year public universities in the State of Ohio. Thank you for allowing me to appear before you today to give a faculty perspective on substitute House Bill 66.

I would like to start by reminding your committee that first and foremost the Ohio Faculty Council is committed to supporting and bringing attention to the critical role that Ohio's institutions of higher education play in revitalizing the economy of the State and the nation by attracting and training an educated workforce. The Ohio Faculty Council agrees that students are entitled to receive full value for their investment in both their university and their education and that students derive the greatest benefits from exposure to experienced and accomplished tenured and tenure-track faculty.

The Ohio Faculty Council appreciates that the committee that would be created by substitute House Bill 66 would explicitly include faculty representatives (Section 1. A. 3 and 4). Given that the Ohio Faculty Council represents the faculty at all of Ohio's public four-year institutions of higher education we also very much appreciate that the membership of the committee also includes a representative from the Ohio Faculty Council (Section 1. A. 11).

Instead of the grading called for by Section 1. C. 3 and 4 the Ohio Faculty Council suggests that a comprehensive "review of the faculty composition at each institution based on employment status, including tenured faculty, full-time tenure track faculty, full-time non-tenure track faculty and part-time faculty" (as required by Section C. 6) might be a more fruitful exercise by itself. The ratio of full-time to part-time faculty at Ohio's public institutions of higher education has changed dramatically over the past ten years. We suggest that each of Ohio's public institutions of higher education carefully consider what ratio is most appropriate for its mission and then report annually as part of its Affordability and Efficiency filing with the Ohio Department of Higher Education the progress it is making toward arriving at or maintaining that ratio.

It is important to bear in mind that Ohio derives great benefit from its wide variety of teaching, research and service contributions by faculty and the wide range of missions at each of our public institutions of higher education. We expect each individual faculty member and each of the institutions of which they are a part to be deeply committed to revitalizing the economy of the State and the nation by attracting and training an educated workforce. Given the very wide ranges of student abilities and interests, faculty skills, and institutional missions, it will be very difficult to identify criteria that could be used to “grade each state university as ‘exceeds expectations,’ ‘meets expectations,’ or ‘needs improvement’ with respect to the university’s efforts in encouraging tenured faculty to contribute to the undergraduate teaching mission” (Section 1. C. 3 and 4).

Chair Lehner and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to share with you a university faculty perspective on substitute HB 66. I would welcome any questions you might have for me or the Ohio Faculty Council.