

SENATE No. 2880

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)

SENATE, December 24, 2025.

The committee on Higher Education, to whom was referred the petitions (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 930) of James B. Eldridge for legislation to establish compensation and employment standards for contingent faculty in public higher education; (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 934) of Patricia D. Jehlen for legislation to establish the public higher education faculty advancement pilot program; (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 937) of Edward J. Kennedy for legislation to invest in public higher education; and (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 940) of Paul W. Mark, Vanna Howard, Michael D. Brady, Jacob R. Oliveira and other members of the General Court for legislation to improve the working conditions and benefits of part-time and adjunct faculty at public institutions of higher education Commonwealth., report the accompanying bill (Senate, No. 2880).

For the committee,
Joanne M. Comerford

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An Act relative to adjunct faculty in public higher education.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 15A of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2024 Official
2 Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after section 15G the following section:-

3 Section 15H. (a) For the purposes of this section, the following terms shall, unless the
4 context clearly requires otherwise, have the following meanings:

5 “Adjunct faculty”, faculty employed at 1 or more public institutions of higher education,
6 as defined in section 5 of chapter 15A, on a semester-by-semester basis.

7 “Impacted adjunct faculty”, adjunct faculty, as defined in this section, who cumulatively
8 work half-time or more at 1 or more public institutions of higher education.

9 (b) There shall be established and set up on the books of the commonwealth a Full-Time
10 Faculty Pilot Fund, hereafter referred to as the fund, to be administered by the department. The
11 fund shall be credited with: (i) revenue from appropriations or other money authorized by the
12 general court and specifically designated to the fund; (ii) interest earned on such revenues; and

(iii) funds from public and private sources, including, but not limited to, gifts, grants and donations. Amounts credited to the fund shall not be subject to further appropriation, and any money remaining in the fund at the end of the fiscal year shall not revert to the General Fund. Amounts received from private sources shall be approved by the department and subject to review before deposit into the fund to ensure that pledged funds are not accompanied by conditions, explicit or implicit, on hiring decisions or academic operations.

(c) Subject to appropriation, the department shall use resources in the fund to administer a Full-Time Faculty Pilot Program. The department shall establish guidelines for the program and distribute resources from the fund by issuing a request for proposal through which public institutions of higher education may apply for funding to create 1 new full-time faculty position. Grants awarded under this section shall be competitive, one-time grants and shall be used solely to support salary and related personnel costs.

The department shall award grants based on demonstrated institutional capacity, need, readiness to support the faculty position and ability to financially sustain the full-time position after the grant funds are exhausted. In evaluating proposals, the department shall consider regional equity to ensure equitable distribution of funds across the commonwealth. The department shall fund at least 1 campus in each of the following: (i) the University of Massachusetts segment; (ii) the state university segment; and (iii) the community college segment.

(d) Not later than 6 months after the completion of the hiring process for a position funded under this section, each grant recipient shall submit a report to the department including, but not limited to, the following:

- (i) benefits and challenges experienced in creating the new full-time faculty position;
- (ii) how the campus or institution advertised the position internally and externally;
- (iii) whether the campus or institution hired an adjunct faculty member or impacted adjunct faculty member already employed at the same campus or institution and an explanation of its decision;
- (iv) an explanation of the impact of the hire on adjunct faculty at the same institution, including, but not limited to, whether positions for impacted adjunct faculty were reduced or eliminated;
- (v) an explanation of the institution or campus' approach to funding fringe benefits for all eligible employees and for the new full-time employee and any associated challenges; and
- (vi) any recommendations for improving the process for hiring full-time faculty at public institutions of higher education and for achieving a balanced utilization of adjunct faculty at the recipient's campus.
- (e) Not later than 1 year following the release of the grant funds, the department shall submit a report analyzing the results of the Full-Time Faculty Pilot Program to the clerks of the house of representatives and senate, the house and senate committees on ways and means and the joint committee on higher education. The report shall include, but not be limited to:
- (i) the information submitted by grant recipients pursuant to subsection (d);
- (ii) the department's analysis of the compiled reports and any associated trends, patterns or anomalies;

(iii) recommendations for improving upon the process and feasibility of hiring full-time faculty at public institutions of higher education, delineated by segment;

(iv) recommendations for quantifying and achieving a balanced utilization of adjunct faculty at public institutions of higher education, including, but not limited to, recommendations addressing the role of fringe benefits on the ability and interest of campuses to hire full-time faculty members; and

(v) the text of any proposed legislation necessary to carry out its recommendations.

SECTION 2. (a) For the purposes of this section, the following terms shall, unless the context clearly requires otherwise, have the following meanings:

“Adjunct faculty”, faculty employed at 1 or more public institutions of higher education, as defined in section 5 of chapter 15A of the General Laws, on a semester-by-semester basis.

“Impacted adjunct faculty”, adjunct faculty, as defined in this section, who cumulatively work half-time or more at 1 or more public institutions of higher education.

(a) Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, a special commission is hereby established to develop a system and implementation plan that enables impacted adjunct faculty members to be eligible for and receive benefits including, but not limited to, health insurance and retirement benefits that are otherwise available to other benefited public employees.

(b) The special commission shall include, but not be limited to: the secretary of administration and finance or a designee, who shall serve as co-chair; the chair of the board of higher education or a designee, who shall serve as co-chair; the commissioner of higher

education or a designee; the comptroller or a designee; the executive director of the public employee retirement administration commission or a designee; the executive director of the group insurance commission or a designee; the chairs of the joint committee on higher education; a representative from the the University of Massachusetts segment, appointed by the president of the University of Massachusetts; a representative from the state university segment, appointed by the State University Council of Presidents; a representative of the community college segment, appointed by the Massachusetts Association of Community Colleges; a representative from the Massachusetts Teachers Association; a representative from the Massachusetts State College Association; a representative from the Massachusetts Community College Council; 3 members appointed by the commissioner of higher education who shall represent adjunct faculty from each of the 3 segments of the Massachusetts public higher education system; and a member of the student advisory committee to the board of higher education, appointed by the student advisory committee committee. Subject to appropriation, the executive office of administration and finance and the department of higher education shall furnish reasonable staff and other support for the work of the special commission.

(c) The special commission shall collect, review and report on:

(i) current data, practices and strategies on adjunct faculty utilization across the public higher education system in the commonwealth, including the number and use cases of adjunct faculty and professional staff and impacted adjunct faculty employed by institution and by segment, as compared to the number of full-time faculty;

(ii) the compensation and benefits currently available to adjunct faculty members and professional staff across the public higher education system in the commonwealth, including how such costs are borne between institutional resources and state appropriations;

(iii) nationwide best practices in the employment and compensation of adjunct faculty; and

(iv) other relevant aspects including the impacts on campuses, students and student outcomes of adjunct faculty utilization.

(d) The special commission shall issue recommendations and an implementation plan for providing state benefits to impacted adjunct faculty including, but not limited to:

(i) steps necessary to develop a system that allows any impacted adjunct faculty, including those who work in a division of continuing education, regardless of funding source, including but not limited to subsidiary account CC, to be considered an employee eligible for membership in the state employees' retirement system and able to earn creditable service for such time, or in the optional retirement program;

(ii) steps necessary to develop a system that allows any impacted adjunct faculty, including those who work in a division of continuing education, regardless of funding source, including but not limited to subsidiary account CC, to be considered an employee eligible for employee benefits outlined in chapter 32A of the General Laws which are made available to other benefitted half or full-time employees at the same institution;

(iii) estimates of annual costs for implementation of clauses (i) and (ii) and proposals for how the commonwealth could fund said costs;

117 (iv) solutions to barriers that currently prevent or limit public institutions of higher
118 education from increasing the number of full-time faculty positions, including, but not limited to,
119 an analysis of the funding mechanisms currently in place related to hiring additional full-time
120 faculty and recommendations for potential incentives to encourage the hiring of full-time faculty;
121 and

122 (v) additional recommendations for improving access to public benefits, professional
123 development opportunities and other institutional resources for adjunct faculty.

124 (d) Not later than 12 months following the enactment of this act, the working group shall
125 submit its report and recommendations, including the text of any proposed legislation and costs
126 necessary to carry out its recommendations, to the governor, the clerks of the house of
127 representatives and the senate, the chairs of the house and senate committees on ways and means
128 and the chairs of the joint committee on higher education.

129 SECTION 3. Not later than 90 days following enactment of this act, the department of
130 higher education shall promulgate rules and regulations for the Full-Time Faculty Pilot Program
131 established in section 15H of chapter 15A of the General Laws.

132 SECTION 4. Members shall be appointed to the special commission established in
133 section 2 of this act not later than 30 days following enactment of this act.