

ONE HUNDRED NINTH LEGISLATURE

SECOND SESSION

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION 402

Introduced by Quick, 35.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this resolution is to propose an interim study to examine compensation for laboratory hours taught at a community college and to review the statutory definition of laboratory hours. Nebraska's community colleges designate certain courses as laboratories, and the existing definitions in section 85-1503 of credit hour, laboratory hour, and contact hour have a significant impact on faculty and staff compensation. These definitions establish the ratios of contact to laboratory hours required to generate one credit hour, which in turn affect workload assignments, overload and adjunct pay, and equity in compensation for comparable instructional effort. The study will examine these definitions and practices and explore statutory or policy alignments to ensure fair and equitable compensation for community college faculty and staff while preserving educational quality and institutional flexibility.

The study shall include, but not be limited to, an examination of the following:

(1) Current compensation structures, workload policies, and pay practices for faculty and staff teaching laboratory hours versus lecture or classroom hours at community colleges, including how institutional policies interpret or apply the credit-to-contact ratios defined in subdivision (6) of section 85-1503;

(2) The statutory definitions in section 85-1503, including the definitions of contact hour, credit hour, and laboratory hour;

(3) How institutions designate courses as laboratories and the resulting effects on faculty workload calculations, overload pay, adjunct compensation, benefits eligibility, and overall equity in pay for comparable effort,

particularly due to the higher contact-hour-to-credit hour ratios for laboratory instruction under subdivisions (6)(b) and (c) of section 85-1503;

(4) Comparative data from peer institutions in surrounding states and national best practices regarding the valuation of laboratory instruction in faculty compensation and workload, including alignments with federal credit-hour standards under 34 C.F.R. section 600.2;

(5) Input from faculty senates, collective bargaining units, administrators, students, the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, and other stakeholders on the fairness, transparency, and sustainability of current definitions and practices under section 85-1503 and related institutional policies; and

(6) Potential statutory, regulatory, or policy recommendations to better align the definition and treatment of laboratory hours with actual instructional effort and to promote fair compensation without unintended impacts on tuition, the community college aid formula, or program viability.

In conducting this interim study, the Education Committee of the Legislature may confer with the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, Community College Boards of Governors, community college administrations, faculty organizations and representatives, individual faculty and staff members, students, policy experts, and any other relevant entities or stakeholders.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA, SECOND SESSION:

1. That the Education Committee of the Legislature shall be designated to conduct an interim study to carry out the purposes of this resolution.

2. That the committee shall upon the conclusion of its study make a report of its findings, together with its recommendations, to the Legislative Council or Legislature.