

Chairman Duffy, Vice Chairman Antani, Ranking Member Sweeney, Members of the House Higher Education and Workforce Development Committee, thank you for taking the time to hear my testimony on Substitute HB 66.

My name is Dr. Linda Rouillard and I am a tenured professor of French at the University of Toledo. I am here as a concerned citizen to speak in opposition to **HB 66**, in particular, the call that there be “established a committee to study and evaluate each state university’s contribution to the undergraduate mission, including, but not limited to, its efforts to ensure tenured faculty members participate in the undergraduate mission through face-to-face interaction with undergraduate students.”

I know of very few tenured faculty on my campus who do not teach undergraduates and most of those are located in professional colleges such as our College of Medicine and Life Sciences, and in the College of Law, which by their very nature are devoted to graduate students.

Universities already ensure, through the oversight of department chairs, college deans, and provosts, that tenured faculty do participate in the undergraduate mission through workload assignments, according to their areas of expertise.

Each year faculty on my campus complete annual reports of their professional activities, reporting courses taught, other teaching duties including undergraduate advising, mentoring, independent studies, directed student research projects, honors coursework, curriculum development, course revisions. Such annual reports form the basis for tenure and promotion to associate professor, and for promotion to full professor, in addition to student evaluations of teaching, peer observations of teaching, samples of student work, syllabi, statements of teaching philosophy and methodology, to give a few examples. At each step of the tenure-track faculty’s career, there is ample evidence regarding a faculty member’s undergraduate teaching effectiveness.

Once tenured and promoted to associate, evaluations do not end. Annual evaluations continue; additionally institutions often have professional assessments that occur every five years after tenure; or a special review procedure for tenured faculty whose annual reviews show deficiencies.

Then, when applying for promotion to full professor, there is another lengthy process requiring documentation of continued teaching effectiveness.

I have brought a sample dossier for promotion to full professor, along with a sample Annual Report of Professional Activity from my own institution to demonstrate the continuous requirement that tenure-track and tenured faculty regularly demonstrate teaching effectiveness.

Next, I wish to address the requirement that the created committee recommend “at least one entity that could conduct an external review of each state university and rank all state universities with respect to contribution to the undergraduate mission.” Universities already undergo extensive accreditation reviews by organizations such as the Higher Learning Commission, which require similar documentation. The HLC also requires institutions to perform regular program assessment of student learning outcomes as part of accreditation, providing very clear evidence of tenured faculty’s dedication to the undergraduate mission.

In addition, universities also initiate regular reviews of academic programs by outside evaluators (separate from any accrediting organization) who also evaluate faculty engagement and success along with quality in undergraduate programs.

Such reviews are already costly to individual universities and now would be duplicated by the committee called for in this bill.

Finally, let me address what appear to be the underlying implications of HB66: that tenured faculty are believed to be more interested in research than in teaching undergraduates; and that research is divorced from the teaching mission. I firmly believe that the best teacher is an engaged scholar who always seeks out the latest developments in his or her discipline to inspire students.