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Tuesday, October 22, 2002

Part-time instructors win on retirement benefits

SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER STAFF

Part-time community college instructors are now entitled to \$12 million in retirement benefits from a class-action lawsuit brought against the state in 1998.

Last week, King County Superior Court Judge Steven Scott approved the settlement, which was agreed to by the two sides in 2001 and for which the 2002 Legislature had set aside the full amount.

Scott had ruled in 2000 on the heart of the matter: Colleges must account for work hours outside the classroom, such as when instructors are talking with students, preparing for class or grading papers.

Teachers were denied benefits because these hours were not considered.

According to the Seattle law firm representing the instructors, the settlement will increase retirement benefits for part-time community college instructors in the state, including a boost in benefits for some instructors back to 1977.

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