



The Association of Oregon Faculties

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From the President

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Dismantling the Oregon University System (OUS), creating its replacement—the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC)—and establishing individual institutional boards is complicated, painstaking work. We are witnessing these efforts in the legislature, in the deliberations that the HECC has undertaken and at individual campuses. Throughout the tumult, AOF is working to protect faculty interests at all the public universities. In the recent legislative session, AOF actively supported bills that are beneficial to faculty including the recently-passed shared services bill, HB 2611, that will require universities to continue to participate in essential shared services. AOF also played a key role in assuring that the widely-utilized staff tuition benefit will be retained. I highlight this latter contribution because, frankly, the tuition benefit could easily have lapsed or been re-negotiated individually by each university in this post-OUS world. Through our initial inquiries, we learned that the HECC would not have authority to impose a continuation of the benefit without a legislative mandate. AOF worked diligently behind the scenes to find a mechanism to assure that the benefit would continue to be offered to faculty and staff. Last April 17th, all seven university presidents representing the "Oregon Public University Council" signed an agreement to honor the existing benefit in recognition of its on-going value and significance throughout the Oregon public university system. AOF will continue to play a positive and unique role in speaking out on behalf of all faculty at the public universities.

Alan Bakalinsky
Oregon State University

Legislative Report

Surprisingly, the change in the Governor's office caused very little disruption to legislative business as the Legislature continues its march towards adjournment. A number of key deadlines for policy bills have now passed. Only those bills that have made their way out of their original chamber and had a work session in the second chamber policy committees are still alive. The exceptions are bills in the Ways and Means, Rules, or Revenue committees. Of course, a good number of policy bills still reside within these "eternal" committees fueling plenty of action still to come. Of the total 2,785 bills and resolutions introduced this session, about half are now dead.

On the policy front, I am happy to report that on April 10th, AOF was able to secure a formal, signed document, agreed to by all seven university presidents, to continue the tuition benefit to faculty and staff, and transferable to their dependents—a benefit hard won by AOF fifteen years ago. Due to the recent break-up of the Oregon University System in favor of independent institutional boards, this policy was set to expire in 2015. This is a great win for AOF and faculty throughout the state! Another of AOF's legislative priorities, HB 2611-B, which requires that key shared services in the university system continue for at least another four years, had its final floor vote on June 9th and is on its way to the Governor's desk for signing. AOF has been working hard to secure these victories and continues to closely follow and engage in issues of importance to our membership in the 2015 legislative session.

Regarding fiscal matters, the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) has now officially adopted the new funding allocation model, the Student Success and Completion Model (SSCM) to replace the Resource Allocation Model (RAM). The SSCM includes a percentage of funds to be based on outcomes (e.g., graduation rates, service to certain student demographics) for at least a portion of universities' budgets. AOF continues to advocate for institutional quality as a key component of the new funding metrics and to safeguard faculty as having a voice in the annual reviews of all university institutional boards. The higher education budget is still being debated in the Ways and Means committee, but it now appears that with the recent positive revenue forecast, some additional funds may be added to the co-chairs' budget. Stay tuned for more on this subject as we enter the final month of session.

Both the House and Senate declared "sine die" (session closure) as "imminent" on Thursday, May 28th. While this does not mean that the legislative session will end in the next week or two, it is a procedural step that signals a move down the home stretch, with committees allowed to meet with as little as one hour's notice. With end-game deals being negotiated and budgets finalized, AOF will continue to advocate for you and your issues throughout the rest of session and the coming year.

Chris Parta
Parta Oregon
AOF Lobbyist

Are you a member of AOF? If so, thank you for your continued support!

***If you're not an AOF member, why not join today?** AOF actively lobbies for you in Salem, advocating for faculty interests as well as for your health care and retirement benefits. Membership is only \$90/year, payable through your monthly salary or all at once.*

For more information about AOF and how to join, please visit us at oregonfaculties.org.

Campus Report

DeAnna Timmermann, Eastern Oregon University

Summer is just around the corner—with its promise of less hectic schedules, few if any meetings, and a chance to step back, breathe deeply, and rejuvenate before beginning another academic year. The faculty at Eastern Oregon University truly need this chance to rejuvenate, as we have faced a particularly trying and difficult year. The third “Sustainability Plan” thrust upon us in the last five years was formally implemented in June 2014, and the aftermath of that plan still reverberates across campus. Twenty-six faculty members (tenured, tenure-track, and fixed-term) were served with termination notices last June. While several of the pink slips were eventually rescinded, nineteen faculty members will not be returning next year—over 15% of union-represented faculty, to put the numbers in perspective. In conjunction with the reduction in faculty, the constriction of several majors, and the elimination of a few minors, student enrollment over the past two years has spiraled downwards, with an 11% drop recorded both last year and this year. There is a realistic fear that next Fall’s enrollment numbers will drop even further, and faculty have been recruited to participate in a phone call campaign to personally contact potential students. On the heels of the latest Sustainability Plans, several upper-level administrators have departed, and we have ended this academic year with an Interim President, an Interim Provost, an Interim Vice-Provost, and Interim Deans for both of our Colleges. Our future direction is uncertain, as the inaugural EOU Board of Trustees will officially come into existence July 1, 2015, the same date that our newly-selected President, Mr. Tom Insko—an EOU alumnus and local businessman—takes office. With a new Board, a new President, and a new funding model set to be implemented this Fall, a rejuvenated faculty will be essential as the EOU community collectively sets foot on our newest path forward—hopefully a path towards stability, opportunity, and growth.

The Association of Oregon Faculties (AOF) is an association that represents and protects the interests of Oregon’s public university faculty and professional staff before the Oregon Legislature and various state agencies. Our primary goal is to increase the quality of our professional working environment.

AOF Board

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We currently seek a board member from Western Oregon University.