



# The Association of Oregon Faculties

oregonfaculties.org / Fall 2014 Bulletin

## From the President



With the launch of this bulletin, the AOF board seeks to improve communication and to keep you better informed about on-going AOF efforts to protect faculty interests at Oregon's public universities. We welcome ideas, questions and involvement. Please make use of our website (<http://oregonfaculties.org>) and contact board members via email for further information. With the impending dissolution of the OUS in 2015, governance of higher education in Oregon will shift to individual institutional boards with oversight by the state Higher Education Coordinating Commission. The fallout from this enormous change is still unfolding as evidenced by on-going discussions concerning shared services that benefit all institutions and retention of the faculty tuition benefit. AOF will continue to speak for all faculty, and the board will seek to join forces with other entities that advance faculty interests. This bulletin will provide a regular legislative update from our lobbyist Chris Parta, and will also include a campus-specific perspective rotated among board members. Please accept my personal invitation to join us at board meetings to learn about legislation affecting higher education.

*Alan Bakalinsky*  
*Oregon State University*

## Lobbyist's Report

The November, mid-term elections saw a "red wave" sweep over much of the United States. Democrats lost control of the U.S. Senate by losing eight seats, and Republicans picked up another twelve seats in the House. That wave seemed to break around, and not roll through Oregon, however, as all of its national House seats remained in incumbent hands, and Senator Jeff Merkley won his first bid for re-election. Statewide, the Democrats fared very well, picking up two seats in the Senate with former Representative Sara Gelsler defeating Betsy Close in Corvallis and former state Representative Chuck Riley pulling off an upset in Hillsboro against incumbent Bruce Starr. In the House, Paul Evans (D) pulled an upset of his own by defeating Kathy Goss (R) to replace outgoing and longtime serving Republican Representative Vicki Berger in Salem. This resulted in a net gain of 1 seat for Democrats in the House (now 35-25). No less than 25% of the House is now made up of incoming freshman legislators, so there is no shortage of work for AOF in educating them on and advocating for our issues.

Higher education governance changes have continued to advance as the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC)

has been meeting regularly this year, and all of Oregon's public universities have opted to form independent institutional boards. The final nominees for boards at Eastern and OIT will be up for Senate approval during the December "legislative days" in Salem Dec. 8-10, filling all of the remaining positions for all seven of Oregon's public university boards. The HECC continues to develop a funding procedure to replace the "resource allocation model" and should have a draft for review sometime in December. The new model is scheduled to be implemented by July 1, 2015, and at this point looks like it will include some form of performance-based funding for at least a portion of universities' budgets.

The upcoming legislative session is likely to see continuing changes in higher education governance, the HECC, and various policies, including shared services. With all of the recent and impending changes in Oregon's higher education system, faculty voices are more important than ever, and AOF will continue to advocate effectively for you and your issues throughout the coming year.

*Chris Parta*  
*Parta Oregon*  
*AOF Lobbyist*

## Campus Report

*Kemble Yates, Southern Oregon University*

Southern Oregon University is off to a much better start in 2014-15 than the previous year. New President Roy Saigo has rolled up his sleeves and thrown himself into leading our university. After several years of declining enrollment and a projected further drop of 2.3% for this fall, Southern actually raised enrollment by nearly 1%. Also, the ending fund balance in June, 2014, came in at 3.5%, still scarily low but higher than the projected 1.9%.

SOU had arguably the most tumultuous year in its history in 2013-14. A year that began with optimism quickly went south when then-President Mary Cullinan announced in November, 2013, that financial conditions forced her to declare "Retrenchment," the process outlined in the faculty collective bargaining agreement by which academic programs can be reduced or eliminated, and faculty positions can be cut. Reduced enrollments and a declining projected fund balance were key factors in this decision. The final plan eliminated up to twelve faculty positions, and majors such as physics and French. Meanwhile, a major academic administrative restructure was announced, and went into place on April 1 (yes really!), while a difficult bargaining process and climate led to a contract with little to no raises and other concessions. Of course, throughout the year, the disintegration of the Oregon

University System and the eventual emergence of individual campus boards caused even more uncertainty. The final drama of the year occurred in the spring when the Faculty Senate initiated a no-confidence vote by the faculty on President Cullinan, Provost Jim Klein, and Vice-President of Administration and Finance Craig Morris. All received over 2/3 no confidence votes of those faculty voting. Since the threshold for recommending removal is 2/3 of all *eligible* faculty, however, President Cullinan narrowly avoided that threshold, but the Provost and Vice-President of Finance did not. A letter by the Senate President recommended the removal of these administrators. By year's end, President Cullinan had accepted the Presidency of Eastern Washington University, Provost Klein had retired, and VP Morris remained in his position. As the new SOU Board is being formed and a new legislative session begins, the faculty are cautiously optimistic about our university's future. We are committed to serving our region and the state of Oregon, and to providing a high quality and personal higher education to our students. We are also eager to stay connected to our colleagues at the other public higher educational campuses in the State of Oregon in the coming post-OUS world. AOF promises to play an increasingly important role in that effort.

The Association of Oregon Faculties (AOF, <http://oregonfaculties.org>) 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 are actively seeking a board member from Western Oregon University \***