



*From the
Vice-President*



John Adams once called the vice-presidency of the US "the most insignificant office that ever the invention of man contrived or his imagination conceived." The same might be said for being vice-chair of AOF! Since, however, I am retired (from the faculty of EOU), now living in Portland, and wanted to remain active in the organization, I took on this not-very-onerous office with the idea of using it to represent AOF in a variety of contexts that might be helpful to my still-hardworking colleagues. I've testified several times before various committees in Salem on bills important to faculty interests and attended a number of fund-raisers for various legislative candidates. Just this past weekend, I traveled to Eugene to attend the "Higher Education Summit" organized by SEIU (the Service Employees International Union) that represents classified staff on all of our campuses. The idea was to gather faculty, staff, and students to see how we could all work together in a more coordinated manner on goals important to each group individually and to all collectively. Faculty from SOU, PSU, UO, OSU, and WOU

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Legislative Report

The 2016 "short legislative session" flew by like a pineapple express, but not for lack of important policy issues. In fact, the 2016 session was the fullest/busiest short session to date in terms of policy issues considered. As reported by the media, the session was dominated by debates over increasing the minimum wage, affordable housing/inclusionary zoning, and a clean energy transition bill. That is not to say however, that there was no action regarding higher education. There were a surprising number of higher education-related bills, albeit of much smaller stature than in the 2015 long session. The 2016 session saw passage of several pieces of legislation supported by AOF including bills to increase voter access at universities (SB 1586), to protect student health records (SB 1558), to consider setting up a student loan refinancing program to help combat the student loan debt crisis (HB 4021), and a bill to address issues around unemployment benefits at universities (SB 1534). A bill to increase the success rate of Oregon students utilizing the Oregon promise by bolstering support services for said students also passed (HB 4076). The Higher Education

Coordinating Commission (HECC) workgroups that were established following the passage of SB 113 in the 2015 session (adjunct-part time health care and administrative bloat) met several times throughout the Fall/Winter and will again convene in May to discuss the issue of faculty/staff-to-administrative position ratios in order to seek possible solutions to the serious issue of administrative bloat at Oregon universities. These workgroups have been discussing approaches to provide better and more accurate information and coordination on possible solutions in a future session. AOF is continuing to engage on these issues and will keep a close eye on them as we move toward the 2017 session.

PERS and PEBB are shaping up to be major issues in the 2017 session as reports of increasing shortfalls in the PERS unfunded liability continue, while increases in health care costs have been projected to be larger than expected, possibly increasing by 5-10% in 2016. As a member of the PERS Coalition, AOF is actively working with labor and other

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attended as well as staff from many institutions, representatives from AAUP and OEA, and a number of students representing both undergraduate and graduate student organizations, in particular OSA, the Oregon Student Association. Together, we discussed and settled on a mission statement that will help focus our efforts, and we talked at length about issues of concern to all three groups: inequities between tenure-track and non-tenure track faculty, concerns about maintaining quality in an outcomes-based budgeting environment, faculty/staff/student voices on the various governing boards, student loan debt and tuition increases, and the importance of supporting and passing the business tax measure being put on the ballot by "A Better Oregon." It was a useful session, and, of course, long past due. For too long, there has been little coordination among faculty, staff, and students in pressing forward with our goals in the state legislature and, indeed, in the state as a whole. Will this summit lead to that long-needed coordination? I certainly hope so, and AOF will play a very important role in that effort!

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Legislative Report (Continued)

partners to prepare for the looming battle and debate to come. This will not be an easy or short struggle and will require a strong and united voice to protect hard-earned retirement security from powers that seek to diminish it. It seems as though the 2016 legislature adjourned "sine die" just days ago, yet we are already looking

towards and beginning discussions around the upcoming session in 2017. As we quickly approach the end of the academic calendar year and head towards the new legislative session, AOF will continue to advocate effectively for you and the issues you care about.

Chris Parta
Parta Oregon
AOF Lobbyist

Campus Report

Kemble Yates, Southern Oregon University

Southern is relatively quiet and productive in its first year under the leadership of the new Board of Trustees and in the second year of President Roy Saigo's tenure. The fund balance is projected to be over 11% by the end of June, 2016. Enrollments are flat in Fall 2015 vs. Fall 2014, but up 3.8% versus budgeted projections. Several of the athletic teams have done well: the football team lost in the national title game, both the women's and men's cross country teams finished in the top 20 in the national rankings, the wrestling team took 10th at nationals, the women's volleyball team finished ranked 13th in the nation, and both the women's and the men's basketball teams made it to the national playoffs with the women losing in the national title game. The Board of Trustees began a search for a permanent President in the fall, and that process continues. The faculty union (APSOU) has settled on a new collective bargaining agreement (CBA) with the university, expanding the length of the contract to 3 years. The contract provides minimum raises of 2%, 2.75%, and 3.5% for 2015-16, 2016-17, and 2017-18, respectively. Most faculty will also receive annual 1% or 2% year-in-rank adjustments as well. Some additional details of the new CBA include: strengthened academic freedom language, an increase in overload compensation, some clarifications and improvements to workload policies, and modest increases to faculty professional development funds. Some highlights from the Faculty Senate include a revamp of faculty professional activity reports and the creation of faculty teaching and service awards. And after several years of a faculty hiring freeze, a few searches were approved and are in process for Fall, 2016.

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 by monthly payroll deduction or annual check.

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

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Thanks to the hard work of our lobbyist, Chris Parta, AOF has become far more visible than it ever was in the halls of Salem. Chris is also working with other Higher Ed lobbyists to see to it that the work we began in Eugene leads to tangible results. I encourage all of you reading this report to invite your colleagues who are not members of AOF to join. We are only as strong as the number of faculty who support us!

Greg Monahan
Eastern Oregon University (retired)

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

Jacqueline Arante, Portland State University | arantej@pdx.edu

Alan Bakalinsky, *President*, Oregon State University | alan.bakalinsky@oregonstate.edu

Joe Lowndes, University of Oregon | jlowndes@uoregon.edu

Greg Monahan, *Vice-President*, Eastern Oregon University | gmonahan@eou.edu

DeAnna Timmermann, Eastern Oregon University | dtimmerm@eou.edu

Christian Vukasovich, Oregon Institute of Technology | Christian.Vukasovich@oit.edu

Kemble Yates, *Secretary/Treasurer*, Southern Oregon University | kyates@sou.edu