



# The Association of Oregon Faculties

oregonfaculties.org / Spring 2018 Bulletin

## From the Vice-President

First things first: The AOF board is **delighted** about and **fully supports** the union drives now happening at OSU and OIT! For too many years, we have worked to maximize the resources coming to the universities from the state legislature in Salem, only to see far too little going to faculty on the individual campuses. We hope earnestly that these last two union campaigns succeed, so that faculty at OSU and OIT will have the same legal voice on their campuses that faculty already enjoy at EOU, PSU, SOU, UO, and WOU! Unions give you the power to follow the money, to make sure administrations tell you where it is going and how it is being spent. And obviously, as the oldest state-wide faculty lobbying organization in Oregon, we at AOF want to see as much as possible go directly to Oregon's chronically underpaid faculty members and their classrooms!

This newsletter may actually introduce AOF to some of you. The organization was formed by faculty members throughout the state way back in the 70s to lobby the legislature on behalf of faculty pay and benefits. AOF was instrumental in creating the tuition benefit that has, over the years, allowed many spouses and children of faculty to attend Oregon's universities at a substantially reduced rate, and it worked to make sure that faculty members received voting seats on the new university boards established after 2013. In the past few years, AOF has been a leader in forming the Higher Education Coalition in Salem that draws together other groups such as the Oregon Student Association, AAUP-OR, AFT, OEA and SEIU to push the state to invest more in its universities and to pass laws that benefit our students.

This past legislative session, for example, AOF helped get bills passed that:

- insure DACA students will continue to enjoy in-state tuition
- force the universities to report the ratios of faculty to administrators, with an eye toward tightening that number and limiting the constant threat of administrative creep
- create Tuition Advisory Councils on each campus to ensure that tuition increases have a measure of campus support with student input
- work to support and stabilize the Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) to maintain its financial solvency

AOF also oversees a Political Action Committee (OFPAC) that directly supports the election and reelection of legislators who understand the importance of higher education (and higher education unions!) in general and faculty pay and rights in particular. If you would like to support these efforts, either by joining us or by contributing to OFPAC, click on <http://oregonfaculties.org/>. The more voices we have in Salem, the better off we will be and the better the chances that our universities and our students will thrive.

*Greg Monahan, retired, Eastern Oregon University*

## Legislative Report

Oregon held its 2018 legislative "short session" from February 5<sup>th</sup> – March 4<sup>th</sup>. As with most short sessions, the pace was frenetic, with over 300 bills introduced, and the extremely tight bill deadlines caused a majority of these bills to "die" quickly in the legislative process. In fact, policy bills needed to be passed out of their respective committees of origin within only nine business days or they died! Thus, only a handful of bills made it past the various bill deadlines. Thankfully, some good higher education-related bills made it over these hurdles.

*(Legislative Report, cont.)*

Higher education fared better than expected this session with the passage of several positive policy bills that the Association of Oregon Faculties supported and helped get across the finish line! HB 4141 was an Oregon Student Association-led effort and an AOF priority that passed. For the first time, each public university will be required to establish a tuition-setting advisory body to advise university presidents on recommendations to their governing boards regarding the setting of resident tuition and mandatory enrollment fees. The bill requires that at least two faculty be part of any advisory body as well. This was a clear move in the right direction and a somewhat unexpected win for a short session!

Other bills AOF supported included SB 1520 and SB 1563. SB 1520 was an omnibus bill from the Senate Education Committee that contained one section of particular interest to AOF. Section 12 was an update to the reporting policy around the issue of “administrative bloat” that we, and other higher education partners, have been working on for a number of years. The bill was the result of feedback received from the workgroup established by SB 113 (Dembrow 2015) to take another look at this issue. With the move away from a unified university system to creation of independent institutional boards, updates to the statute were needed and were inserted into this omnibus bill. Refinement of the reporting process will continue as HECC is now leading the data-gathering effort for this annually reported information.

SB 1563, the “DACA bill,” was another installment in a series of policies passed over the past five years to ensure that Oregon’s students can attend college, even if they are not officially documented. It removed the requirement that students who are not citizens or lawful permanent residents apply for an official federal identification document in order to be eligible for an exemption from paying nonresident tuition at Oregon’s public universities. This will allow students who have made Oregon their home, to attend Oregon universities and pay in-state tuition.

There was an unusually high number of PERS-related bills introduced for a short session. Thankfully ALL of the bad ones died and did not make it through the legislative process. One bill, SB 1566, was a Governor Brown bill that came out of the work of the UAL (unfunded actuarial liability) Task Force that was set up during the 2017 session. Among other things, such as seeking to collect unpaid taxes and fines, the bill establishes an employer incentive fund and directs some moneys in the fund to the Public Employees Retirement Board for the purpose of matching portions of certain lump sum payments of employer contributions to PERS. The purpose is to incentivize investment in some side accounts that will over time reduce the PERS UAL. This is projected to save over \$400 million. It is expected that PERS will once again be a BIG topic of discussion in 2019 with many bills on the table, so stay tuned.

The 2018 short session ended well ahead of schedule this year on Saturday, March 3, as opposed to the constitutionally allowed March 11. Legislative leadership decided that it was better to shut down a week early rather than let rancor build that might complicate passage of final essential budget bills. However, Governor Brown has announced that she plans on holding a one day “special” session on May 21<sup>st</sup> during the May legislative days (scheduled for May 21-23) in order to modify the tax policy enacted in HB 1528 and to extend a particular tax break to certain small businesses that were left out of the legislation. It will be interesting to see if a special session will stick to its stated purpose and not wander into other areas of policy. Discipline will be needed by all.

As we approach the end of the academic year and continue to move toward the Fall 2018 elections and 2019 session, AOF will continue to advocate effectively for you and the issues you care about in the Oregon Legislature!

*Chris Parta, Parta Oregon Inc, AOF Lobbyist*

## Campus Report: Two Interviews at Oregon State University

*By Alan Bakalinsky*

- (1) Marisa Chappell is an Associate Professor of History and Director of Graduate Studies in the School of History, Philosophy and Religion and is also a member of the organizing committee of United Academics of OSU (<http://www.uaosu.org>). I spoke with her about the ongoing unionization campaign on campus:

### **Why do you think unionization is important at OSU?**

*Faculty need a more effective, organized, and empowered voice in order to participate fully in shared governance. Our Faculty Senate does important work overseeing the academic curriculum, but in other*

(Chappell interview, cont.)

*matters it is merely advisory. Through collective bargaining, the faculty can have a greater voice in a broad range of decisions that affect faculty and our students. Two examples may be helpful. When the administration asked Faculty Senators to vote to accept furloughs in 2009, the vote – conducted in public, in the presence of high-level administrators – was largely advisory and made without clear understanding of the situation. A union would have given faculty greater leverage to discuss and negotiate the issue. Similarly, a few years ago, when administration mandated vast reorganization of academic units, faculty across campus raised a number of concerns and objections, but we had no real voice in those decisions. Through collective bargaining, we can ensure that certain kinds of university policies and decisions are made in meaningful consultation with faculty.*

**If a majority of faculty agree to unionize, what changes can faculty expect in the classroom, in research, in benefits, in the function of the faculty senate, in dealings with the administration?**

*Once we win legal recognition, we will begin the process of building a democratic organization, in which the perspectives of faculty at all ranks and units are represented. We will likely use surveys, forums, and continued one-on-one conversations to decide what issues faculty members want to prioritize in bargaining a contract. The conversations we've been having over the last three years and the experiences of faculty unions elsewhere suggest several clusters of issues that we might work to address: job security and working conditions for non-tenure-track faculty, family leave policies, management of grant overhead and possible bridge funding for grant-funded research, and a more robust system of shared governance, for example.*

**Can you describe how the "card check" process works?**

*A majority of OSU's teaching and research faculty must affirmatively designate United Academics of OSU (UAOSU) to represent them as their bargaining representative for the purpose of collective bargaining with the OSU administration. This is done by signing a union authorization card provided by UAOSU faculty activists. Faculty who choose not to sign a card are voting against the effort. Signed cards are sent to the Employment Relations Board (ERB) of the State of Oregon to be checked against a list of all faculty employees provided by the OSU administration. If a majority of faculty have signed cards, the ERB will then certify the bargaining unit and direct the university to negotiate a collective bargaining agreement with it.*

**What would you say to undecided faculty who for one reason or another are unsure that unionization is in their best interests?**

*This is an effort by your faculty colleagues to improve the working and learning conditions and build a stronger OSU. The popular imagination of unions in the United States is often restricted to particular historical moments and cases, especially manufacturing workers or longshoremen. A faculty union will not look like a longshoremen's union. The nature of our work is different, and our union will reflect that. Judging by the experience of our colleagues at the U of O (not to mention at the hundreds of other universities with unionized faculty, including several of our peer institutions) unionization has strengthened shared governance and yielded significant gains for non-tenure track faculty. United Academics at UO works collaboratively with the faculty senate and maintains a collegial—not antagonistic—relationship with university administration. Faculty know that negotiation is not a zero sum game and that ultimately, thoughtful compromise will best serve our shared purposes: to provide the best education possible to our students, to undertake high quality research, and to serve our local, state, national, and international communities.*

- (2) Jon Louis Dorbolo is Faculty Senate President at OSU. He teaches Philosophy, is Associate Director of Technology Across the Curriculum, and Principal Investigator of The Geometry of Learning, a research agenda studying learning space. I spoke with Jon about his role as Faculty Senate President:

**How did you come to be Faculty Senate President?**

*I've been part of Faculty Senate for decades, but being President is still a surprise. I am nearly three months into my presidential year, basically I am a freshman. I have institutional responsibilities to uphold and objectives for positive impact. I am lucky to have a close working relationship with the President Elect, Alix Gitelman (Statistics). Working collaboratively with her gives us a two-year window for achievement*

***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](http://oregonfaculties.org).*

*(Dorbolo interview, cont. from page 3)*

*and gives me optimism.*

### **What is OSU's Faculty Senate?**

*OSU has a shared governance agreement. This means that issues related to curriculum, academic regulations, and promotion and tenure are determined by the faculty collectively. Through the Senate, faculty participate in administrative committees and hiring decisions.*

### **What is the Faculty Senate's scope?**

*The OSU faculty have purview over three main areas: the curriculum, academic regulations, and promotion and tenure guidelines.*

*Curricular management is via the Curriculum Council, the Baccalaureate Core Committee, the Graduate Council, and the Budgets and Financial Planning Committee. These faculty groups review and approve all program proposals, course proposals, and curricular changes.*

*Academic regulations are the procedures and rules by which students pursue their academic programs including credit hours, grades, registration and withdrawal, academic integrity. The Academic Regulations Committee brings proposed changes in the academic regulations to the full Senate for determination by vote.*

*The Faculty Senate Promotion and Tenure Committee reviews University Promotion and Tenure Guidelines, proposed changes to which are put to the full Senate for vote. The P&T Committee provides leadership for campus-wide educational programs related to the promotion and tenure process.*

### **What are your priorities for the year?**

*OSU's Baccalaureate Core forms our general education requirements. It provides learners a curricular foundation for engagement in the academic enterprise and agency in the world. The conditions of general education are always in change and progressive institutions articulate with those conditions continually. I believe that OSU's Baccalaureate Core will be strengthened through rethinking the processes by which strategy, planning, and policy are made. We currently have a Baccalaureate Core Implementation and Leadership Workgroup active in developing proposals for process revision.*

*The Student Evaluation of Teaching (ESET) is a voluntary summative survey given to students at the end of each term. Contemporary educational research indicates the limits of summative evaluation as a measure of teaching quality and raises concerns about inherent bias in questions. The Advancement of Teaching Committee, chaired by Devon Quick, is reviewing the ESET content in order to make recommendations for improvement of the instrument.*

*Issues about academic speech have a high level of attention nation-wide. OSU has not encountered the problems with academic speech that other campuses have, yet it is wise to be self-reflective about such an essential matter. I am developing a format in order to conduct conversations about academic speech in the classroom. These sessions will include students, faculty, and administrators. The purpose of these sessions is both to explore issues of academic speech from various perspectives and to (if successful) provide a model for how intelligent discourse on controversial issues may productively take place.*



*(Dorbolo interview, cont. from page 4)*

*In collaboration with the student government I am advancing a joint resolution to endorse “Warning to Humanity” by Bill Ripple (Forestry) et al. published in BioScience. This article lays out the evidence of ecosystem decline over the last 25 years and has been signed by 20,000 scientists. Everyone should read that article thoughtfully.*

### **What about faculty unionization?**

*OSU faculty organizers are conducting a campaign in alignment with United Academics to create a faculty collective bargaining unit. We held a faculty forum in Spring 2018 for open discussion. An important question is how a faculty union and the Faculty Senate would relate. That question may not be answerable until a collective bargaining unit is formed. As President, my primary responsibility in this matter is to ensure that all faculty are treated fairly, including the opportunity to raise questions and voice their views. It is necessary to respect the organizing process and abide by the law.*

## Campus Report: Portland State University

### PSU Retirement Association Thriving

Have you been thinking lately about retirement and what activities might keep you actively engaged in the social, intellectual, and political life of the University? Or, have you simply wanted to take a hike in the mountains or talk with someone about a book you are reading? Maybe you have always wanted to learn to play Bridge!

All of this and more is available to members of the Retired Associates of Portland State University (RAPS). The Association meets twice a month and sponsors such activities as lectures by artists, political leaders, and media personalities; students and PSU professors share their talents and knowledge. In May, Professor Christopher Shortell will speak on Trump and the Media. Presentations have included such diverse topics as Oregon’s economy, Portland’s streetcar neighborhoods, and the U.S. Supreme Court. Annual events include the President’s Lunch for Retired Faculty and Staff, on-going development of student scholarships, and activities for the Book Group, Hiking Group, and Bridge Group.

Travel is high on the list for RAPS members. They are planning a wine country tour in May and an Italian tour in November. Both tours will benefit the RAPS scholarship program.

I recently asked Dawn White, current Co-President of RAPS, who joined in 2008, why she joined; she replied: “I believe one’s intellectual curiosity is sparked by being in a university environment. That interest in learning new things doesn’t vanish the day one retires. Belonging to an organization like RAPS helps keep the spark alive.”

When asked to describe RAPS’ most important project, she replied “Our most important project is surely the RAPS scholarship, which provides tuition support for a student whose studies focus on gerontology. RAPS scholarship recipients are planning to work in many fields, ranging from health to housing; their work will improve the lives of all of us as well as the lives of other older people.”

White’s enthusiasm for RAPS is contagious: “The organization puts on really interesting programs. We schedule monthly meetings that include speakers talking on a range of subjects – politics, history, science, popular culture, the arts, to name a few. We have members who come to every single program and others who come just to the ones they find especially intriguing. A couple times of year we have a purely social event – a holiday brunch in December and a picnic in August.”

Membership is open to all retired PSU personnel and their spouses, current PSU personnel aged 55 and over, retired personnel from other accredited colleges and universities, widows or widowers of members of any of the above groups. Membership cost is \$20/individual and \$30/couple. I’ve recently joined, and I hope you do, too!

*Jacqueline Arante, Portland State University*

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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