



American Association of University Professors

Academic Freedom for a Free Society

House Committee on Higher Education, Innovation and Workforce Development
House Bill 3237
April 1, 2015
Testimony of Dr. José Padín, President

Chair Read and members of the House Committee on Higher Education, Innovation and Workforce Development, my name is Dr. José Padín. I am the elected President of the Oregon Conference of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). My work as elected President of the Oregon AAUP is volunteer service on behalf of our students and our universities. I am an Associate Professor of Sociology at Portland State University, and have been an educator in Oregon for 19 years.

On behalf of the Oregon Conference of the American Association of University Professors, our collective bargaining faculty chapters at the University of Oregon and Portland State University, and our faculty members across Oregon, I am here to strongly support HB 3237.

Graduate students play a larger and larger role at our universities; many of them are employees as well as students and carry large responsibilities as teaching and research assistants. As the University of Oregon found last December when graduate teaching fellows went on strike, they are a critical part of our university system and the system will not function without them. Graduate student teachers are responsible for a large amount of the teaching and mentoring of undergraduates at our universities. In their dual role of students and teachers, graduate students have a unique experience and a privileged vantage point on matters of academic quality, running

the entire undergraduate-to-graduate spectrum. Therefore, because of their dual role as teachers and as students, graduate students are different from undergraduate students; their experiences and interests are different. Neither faculty nor a general student representative can speak for the thousands of graduate students who occupy this dual role of students and teachers. As faculty, we depend upon the work of the graduate students and believe that they need a voice on the independent boards. And yet, graduate student employees are the one constituency without a seat at the table for our new institutional boards. That has been a significant oversight and this oversight should be rectified. This is why, on behalf of our faculty members in Oregon, we support HB 3237.

We also strongly support the other provisions of the bill because they fine-tune and improve our independent boards. First, student representatives should have a vote on items before the board, just as other constituency representatives do. It is vitally important for our independent boards to give the voice of the student representatives equal status to register their perspective through the vote, especially at a time when student tuition accounts for 80% of university revenue.

Finally, we support HB 3237 because in our short experience with independent boards at PSU and UO, as faculty we have witnessed first-hand the shortcomings in and barriers to direct communication between members of the university community and our new boards. Provisions in this bill would make a crucial difference, fine-tuning this communication in a way that will allow independent boards to function more effectively.

Thank you very much.

For further information, contact:

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