



# American Association of University Professors

*Academic Freedom for a Free Society*

February 18, 2021

Senator Dembrow, Chair  
Members of the Senate Committee on Education  
Oregon State Capitol  
Salem, OR 97301

## **Re: Senate Bill 712—Support**

Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Thomsen and members of the Committee,

On behalf of the more than 6300 members of the American Association of University Professors in Oregon, our collective bargaining chapters at the University of Oregon, Portland State University, Oregon State University, and Oregon Institute of Technology, and our faculty members across Oregon, I ask that you please support SB 712.

Senate Bill 712 would add a graduate student position to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) and convert five non-voting positions—community college undergraduate student, public university undergraduate student, community college faculty, public university faculty, and staff member—to voting positions. Providing a vote to existing commissioner positions will give equal voice to those commissioners most directly connected to the higher education system the HECC is charged with overseeing. As the HECC takes up important matters such as the approval of tuition increases, authorization of programmatic changes, and the establishment of transfer pathways, the fully realized voices of faculty, staff, and students are necessary. These voices will help the HECC arrive at decisions that are informed by those most directly impacted, improving the buy in of their represented constituencies.

The addition of a graduate student commissioner is also essential because graduate students occupy a unique position in our public universities. They are not only students, but also frontline teachers and researchers through their work as graduate teaching and research assistants. The creation of a graduate student commissioner will allow the HECC to make well informed decisions that are responsive to the experiences of graduate students.

Please pass SB 712 to give Oregon's students, faculty, and staff full voices on the Higher Education Coordinating Commission.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Dreiling', written in a cursive style.

Michael Dreiling  
President, AAUP-Oregon