

I'm writing to you today to urge you to support HB 3007/SB 551, Part-Time Faculty Health Care.

As our colleges and universities continue to move away from using full-time faculty and become more reliant on part-time faculty, it has become increasingly difficult for experienced instructors to stay in the field. I know you believe health care for all is critical, and this would support a group of 1,700 hard-working public employees.

Many part-time faculty members are forced to scrape together a string of teaching positions at multiple institutions just to make ends meet. Too often, part-time faculty are working the equivalent of 1.5 instructional positions in order to cover the high costs of paying for housing, health care, and all of life's other necessities. When instructors are forced to spend so much time and resources straddled between institutions, students can't receive the access and support from their instructors that they need to succeed.

I'm sure you know that student and faculty outcomes are improved when part-time faculty receive the pay and benefits they deserve. Part-time faculty have the same qualifications and have the same skills as faculty members who are hired into a full-time position, but they are paid a fraction of what their full-time peers earn, and they don't receive benefits. I would hope that you, as a physician, will agree that it is time that the state support our part-time faculty with this basic need.

AAUP's Part-Time Faculty Health Care bills (HB 3007/SB 551) are a chance to accomplish two goals at once: they help to support the livelihoods and health of our part-time workforce, which in turn strengthens higher education throughout the state for our students. I urge you to support that effort.

As a state, we are at a turning point with higher education policy and support. Modernizing our community colleges and universities to keep pace with the kind of changes taking place in California and Washington remains critical as Oregon responds to the advanced educational and workforce training needs of our society. I hope our state government rises to this challenge.

As California invests in greater job security and benefits for instructors and lecturers throughout their higher education system, while restricting tuition hikes, Oregon risks getting mired in a self-defeating spiral of hiking tuition to cover costs, resulting in declining student access. The appeal of Oregon universities declines because they are no longer a relative bargain. Meanwhile, administrators make poor human resource decisions as a way to curtail costs. Job conditions remain under constant stress, salaries and benefits for most remain far below their peers in neighboring states or in the private sector. These conditions compound other symptoms of a poorly funded higher ed sector, negatively impacting quality for our students. Is this the direction we want for Oregon? We need to fund the PUSF at a minimum of \$900 million to prevent things from getting worse.

Thank you for your consideration and your efforts in supporting important reforms in higher ed.
Jason Schindler