



American Association of University Professors

Academic Freedom for a Free Society

June 03, 2021

Chair Wagner
Members of the Senate Committee on Rules
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Senate Bill 854—Support

Chair Wagner, Vice Chair Girod, and members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Avinnash P. Tiwari, Instructor at the University of Oregon and Acting Director, Black Studies. Today, I ask that you **please support SB 854**.

Since I was a graduate student at the UO, I was confused. Even now as a faculty member for the past five years, I still am. I'm confused how a public-serving educational institution more closely resembles the corporate, private entities I hoped to never work for again. I knew my pay would never be significant. And as an instructor, it means I work a second and sometimes third job. But I would serve students, especially first-generation students like myself, whose education could mean the breaking of generational poverty and a chance to seriously get down to the work of understanding how one should live in this world. But our students are not the ones we serve. Rather, our institution serves itself, its continuation continually means raising tuition, putting students in severe debt, and ignoring their loud and consistent critiques of what the on-the-ground conditions are for students, experiences most of our Trustees have no experience with, or, unfortunately, simply don't value. Students, staff, and many faculty members are typically treated as revolving-door customers and laborers. It is no surprise students, staff, and most faculty do not have any power, or even voice, to speak on how *our* institution should operate, more specifically, what our values should be, much less to offer critique to those tasked with the duty of serving them. Let me reiterate this last point: Our Trustees, like faculty and staff, are not here to serve an institution. We are here to serve our students, and especially those students for whom a college education isn't a guarantee, or even in their scope of possibilities.

Please pass SB 854 as is as this will address a very broad set of current issues with governance.

However, if amendments are to be adopted, I would urge the adoption of the -1 amendment as it will be more instrumental in addressing the issues before us. I would also still support the bill with the -2 amendments, but please know we would need to re-visit this crucial and important legislation and drastically enhance our commitment to all students coming through our Universities. They deserve so much more, including a true centering of their educational needs over all else. Revising business-as-usual at the level of our Boards must happen or we will continue to exacerbate rather than ease multiple forms of social stratification existing in our State.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Avinnash P. Tiwari".

Vice-President for Political Action, AAUP-Oregon; Politics Chair, UAUO AAUP-AFT Local 3209
Instructor & Acting Director of the Black Studies Program, University of Oregon