



PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY

American Association of University Professors

Promoting Quality Higher Education – An Investment in Oregon's Future

June 3, 2021

Senate Committee on Rules
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

RE: SB 854

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

For the record, my name is Ramin Farahmandpur. I am a Professor in the College of Education at Portland State University. I am also PSU-AAUP's Vice President for Legislative and Political Action. On behalf of the more than 1,000 members of the American Association of University Professors chapter at Portland State University, I urge you to vote in support of SB 854.

Since their inception in 2014, the power to make key university policy decisions has been concentrated into the hands of the board of trustees, a majority of whom are not faculty members. Consider the role and the charge of the PSU board of trustees as described by the board itself:

The Portland State University Board of Trustees...is charged with managing the affairs of the University. By law, the Board is the final University authority and has full control of the University and its property. The Board is responsible for managing the affairs of the University by exercising and carrying out all of the powers, rights and duties that are expressly conferred upon the Board by law, or that are implied by law or are incident to such powers, rights and duties. The Board may perform any acts that in the judgment of the Board are required, necessary or appropriate to accomplish the rights and responsibilities granted to the Board and the University by law.

PSU-AAUP supports Senate Bill 854 because the existing form of top-down university governance model described above is undemocratic and antithetical to the mission of public higher education. SB 854 makes the boards more accountable to students, faculty, and other academic workers. The bill also extends representation of faculty, staff, and student on university president search committees. Finally, we welcome the bill's call for "comprehensive evaluation of university presidents," particularly at this critical time when several of Oregon's public universities have experienced leadership crises.

I implore you to vote in support of SB 854.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

Ramin Farahmandpur

Professor

Department of Educational Leadership & Policy

College of Education

Portland State University

Vice President for Legislative and Political Action, PSU-AAUP