

Pay Equity Testimony Oregon State Legislature  
March 23, 2023  
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Hello, I am MaryJean Williams, and I've been teaching Communication Studies in the greater Portland Area since 2006. I love what I do. I really appreciate that you are considering SB416, because pay equity is a crisis, and we Associate Faculty can't get it without your help. I'd like to share with you my story, and some of the barriers that we need your help to overcome.

I. My story

1. I took up this career when my family returned from the Navy. Like good Oregonians, we came home to raise our young. The boys were in elementary school, and it was important that my work dovetail with the needs of our young family.
2. I was 44 years old when I started this second career as a college instructor. I wanted to help grow communication skills in this beautiful place I call home.
3. And I reasonably believed I could grow in this career. I expected to work more and earn more as my boys grew and needed me less.
4. I taught at Clark College in Vancouver, PCC, PSU, and have been at Clackamas Community College for 8 years. This is my community, where I always wanted to be. I love my work.
5. I have served in many capacities beyond my classroom, including writing job descriptions, compiling open source textbooks, leading division-level assessment projects, serving on the Budget Advisory Committee, Negotiating teams, and chairing the Curriculum Committee. There are full-time faculty members at my college who have never done any of that necessary work.
6. *When I filled in for a full-time colleague on sabbatical doing equal work, my unequal wages were \$44,000 that year, and theirs were about \$73,000 plus family and retirement benefits.*
7. I continued teaching, and when full-time positions opened, I applied for them. My current success in the job and excellent student evaluations were apparently not part of the hiring criteria at my current employer.
8. The last full time faculty position I applied for went to a single, white man from North Carolina. When it was announced, my Department Chair enthused that he's 33 years old, and, "We think he'll bring some great energy to the department."
9. At my college, 55% of full time positions go to people from somewhere else. As a 23 year Oregonian, I continue to do the same work as them for less than half the compensation.
10. *The pay inequity hurts Oregonians, and it hurts women like me. We are more likely to work part time in order to do the life-saving work of caring for children, elders, and hardworking spouses. The least our public institutions can do is pay us a fair share when our work does result in a W-2 form.*

II. So why can't we just negotiate pay equity at the bargaining table?

1. We've been asking for equal pay for equal work for decades. But the system is stacked against us.
2. Remember the Pay Equity study that the Oregon Legislator required all public institutions to conduct a few years back?
  - a. At my college, faculty input on the study was ignored and the study they completed did not describe any faculty work. It described managerial responsibilities, clearly targeting administrative jobs instead of faculty jobs.
  - b. A few mid-level administrators got nice raises, and faculty were left again to the bargaining table.
3. We bring pay data to our negotiations, but our college will give no raises higher than at peer institutions.
  - a. As long as all public community colleges pay equally unfairly, progress toward pay equity is at a snail's pace.
  - b. In our most recent contract, the best we could get was 2% per year over the Cost of Living Index. At that rate, pay equity would take more than 25 more years, in other words, not during our professional lifetimes.
4. I hate to say this, but negotiations have been hurt by implicit gender bias too.
  - a. We have had woman-led negotiating teams for as long as we can remember. We believe this is because we are more likely to depend on Associate Faculty wages for our sole source of personal income.
  - b. And the gender bias at our college is often shocking. When one woman leader asked a male Administrator what she could do to help negotiations go more smoothly, he told her, "You could smile more across the table."

Conclusion: I am an energetic and skilled educator. I'm 60 years old now, and the last 20 years in higher ed have been characterized by half pay or less for equal work. I've worked hard and followed all the rules. I cared for my community, my family, and grew my degrees and qualifications along the way. Yet due to sexism and ageism, I am not likely to be hired into a full time position in the future. Associate Faculty is the only conduit for a teaching career for people like me. And the least Oregon can do is to make sure that we get paid a fair wage while we are at it. Please pass SB416, and watch Oregon thrive. Thank you!

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