

Date: March 22, 2023

To: Senate Committee on Education  
From: Grant D. Smith, Western Oregon University  
RE: Support for SB 416 and Pay Equity

Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Weber, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Grant D. Smith, Ph.D. and I am writing to express **support for Senate Bill 416**, which will help bridge the widening gap between the pay for part-time and full-time faculty members in our higher education system and bring better equity, stronger retention, and increase overall outcomes for students.

- *Part-time and adjunct faculty are currently paid much less on a per-course basis than full-time faculty*
- *Institutions of higher education are increasingly reliant on contingent faculty, turning college and university education into a "gig economy"*
- *Ensuring pay equity will allow faculty to work long-term at institutions, and be a consistent source of mentorship over the years for students, increasing student outcomes*

As an introductory Earth Science instructor at either Oregon State University or Western Oregon University since 2008, I can say that adjuncts, such as myself, are usually the first instructors that students encounter at university. The path towards success in higher education starts with us. When Covid-19 forced classes to go online at the drop of a hat, it was myself and other adjunct professors that were tasked with transforming those courses in a matter of weeks. Did we receive any compensation for completely changing how a core course was delivered? No, we just received employment... at a lower rate than tenured colleagues that taught classes with a quarter of the students. Universities are increasingly reliant on adjunct faculty because we are seen as a "good deal". Our compensation is less, our level of employment varies on a 3 month basis (per term), and we are seen as increasingly disposable if the budget is tight, yet a masters degree or doctoral degree is required to be qualified for the job. At least let us be fairly compensated.

This bill adds a pay ratio between full time and part time faculty that is a first step towards improvements to our higher education system that will benefit students, faculty, and the community.

This is why I urge your yes vote on SB 416. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,  
Grant D. Smith, Ph.D.