

April 26th, 2023



Chair Lively, Vice-Chairs McIntire and Ruiz, and Members of the House Committee on Higher Education,

My name is Farallon Broughton, and I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Fisheries, Wildlife and Conservation Sciences at Oregon State University. I am currently the elected President of the Coalition of Graduate Employees, the labor union representing over 1,600 graduate teaching and research assistants at my university. I have worked as a graduate employee at OSU for the past six years.

During the time I have spent at OSU and during my years of labor organizing, Graduate Employees have consistently encountered a Board of Trustees system that is not transparent, that is not accessible to the community, and that continually makes unilateral decisions without involving critical stakeholders, such as the students who are here to learn and the teaching and research employees who go above and beyond to make the university function.

My labor union and my coworkers have tried again and again to engage with the OSU Board of Trustees on the issues affecting us, including the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, racial bias and campus policing, outrageous presidential hiring decisions, and more. Our efforts have met with a total lack of accountability and action on the part of the Board at every turn. It is clear to me and to the Graduate Employees I represent that we have no meaningful voice under the current university governance system, despite the value our labor provides to this public institution of higher education.

Senate Bill 273A delivers desperately needed improvements to the Board of Trustees system. It gives Graduate Employees like myself direct representation on the Board of Trustees, provides greater oversight and accountability measures, and creates pathways for real dialogue and meaningful involvement with labor unions, student and faculty governance bodies, and the broader community.

I strongly urge your Yes vote on Senate Bill 273A so that Oregon's public university boards are more accountable to the public, which they should serve. I also thank Senator Dembrow and all the legislators who have worked to shape this important bill.

Thank you,

Fara Broughton (they/them)
President, AFT-Oregon Local 6069
Coalition of Graduate Employees at Oregon State University