



# American Association of University Professors

*Academic Freedom for a Free Society*

1/28/25

Good morning, Chair Hudson, Vice-Chairs Fragala and Harbick, and thank you for the opportunity to speak.

My name is Keaton Miller, and I am an associate professor of economics at the University of Oregon. I am also the treasurer of the faculty union, United Academics, and a member of its bargaining team. Since the University of Oregon is a highly active research institution, United Academics represents and supports many different academic employees: traditional tenure track faculty who research and teach, career instructional specialists, career research faculty, temporary "Pro Tem" faculty, librarians, and postdoctoral researchers. It's a big group! We bargain pay and working conditions as a group and work with individual members throughout their career as they navigate the complicated world of academia.

Right now, the biggest concern for our members is bread-and-butter economics. Today, the median pay for our career instructional faculty is about \$64,000 per year. Roughly a third of our bargaining unit takes home less than \$50,000 per year. These wages may have been livable when these jobs were created before the pandemic, but they aren't any more. On the tenure-track side, pay is a bit better, but still far below our comparators. As a result, faculty across the university are leaving for greener pastures, and it is becoming harder and harder to fill the gaps.

A related concern is curricular. The global economy moves fast, and in order to compete, Oregon needs the most educated, qualified, and skilled workforce possible. Training that workforce requires faculty to connect with employers to understand needs, develop curricula to meet those needs, and deliver the best possible classroom experiences for our students. It takes time and energy to do this well even in ideal circumstances, and it's that much more difficult to execute when faculty are repeatedly hired and then poached by other institutions or the private sector.

Addressing these problems requires resources. Resources to recruit, reward, and retain our faculty, and to give them the time and space required to deliver on the promise of higher education for the state. And right now, our public institutions of higher education are woefully under-resourced. Oregon ranks near the bottom in the country in state

support for its public universities. We can't create the new knowledge that Oregon depends on, and deliver the education our students deserve, without the support of all of you.

Thank you.

Keaton Miller  
Treasurer and Bargaining Team Member, UAUCO