

Chair Hudson, Vice Chair Fragala, Vice Chair Harbick, and members of the House Higher Education Committee,

My name is Steve Wolfe, and I'm a full-time Geography instructor and President of the Faculty Association at Chemeketa Community College. I am submitting written testimony in support of HB 2669, which would require community colleges to pay part-time faculty at the same rate, on a per-hour basis, as the community college pays full-time faculty to prepare for and teach a course.

I grew up in Oregon and attended Central Oregon Community College in Bend right after high school. I had excellent instructors who were passionate about their subjects and who were dedicated to teaching. Whether they were full-time or part-time, they all had subject matter expertise and were enthusiastic teachers. Because of my experience there as a student, I decided I wanted to teach at a community college. After earning my bachelor's and master's degrees in Geography, I began teaching part-time at Chemeketa while at the same time working on my doctorate at Oregon State. The teaching was rewarding, but the part-time pay was low. In fact, I made more money as a graduate instructor teaching just one class at OSU than I did teaching half-time at Chemeketa. I also briefly taught part-time at Linn-Benton Community College in Albany to help make ends meet.

After teaching part-time for four years at Chemeketa I was fortunate to be hired full-time. I've now been a full-time community college instructor at Chemeketa for over 25 years. Although there was some increase in responsibilities as a full-time faculty member, the majority of my work was still focused on teaching, including preparing lesson plans, gathering materials, grading papers, and meeting outside of class with students. The biggest difference was pay and benefits. As a part-time faculty member, I had few benefits and my pay was about half as much per course as it was for full-time faculty.

During the 2023-24 academic year, Chemeketa part-time faculty were only paid 65% as much as full-time faculty per credit hour. Although that is better than the statewide average of 58% for that year, it is still not enough. Many part-time faculty are what we call "freeway flyers," driving from one college to another teaching wherever they can pick up classes to earn enough money to just get by. Pay parity will allow part-time faculty to focus on teaching instead of juggling multiple jobs, which will create a more stable and supportive environment for students as well as a more stable faculty workforce, reducing turnover and dissatisfaction.

Part-time faculty have the same qualifications and expertise, teach the same students in the same courses, but get paid substantially less for the same work. I urge the committee to pass HB 2669 and rectify the pay disparity between part-time and full-time faculty so that my part-time colleagues can help our students succeed without worrying about their livelihoods. Thank you for your time. I hope you will support HB 2669.