



PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY

American Association of University Professors

Promoting Quality Higher Education – An Investment in Oregon’s Future

SB-270/HB-2149

18 April 2013

PSU-AAUP supports 2 faculty, 1 staff, and 2 students for participation on institutional boards, inclusive of voting rights.

Inclusive, participatory governance moves the state of Oregon and the PSU campus in the right direction.

Participatory institutional boards at the campus level promise invigorated and genuinely responsive governance. Including faculty, students, and staff keeps decision making close to the classroom, which is the heart of higher education. Meaningful and direct participation by stakeholders mitigates the effects of administrative bloat widely noted in universities and colleges both nationally and closer to home.

In March, the American Association of University Professors released its investigation of the imbroglio between the University of Virginia’s Board of Visitors and President Theresa Sullivan that led to her removal and reinstatement last summer. AAUP found that the root of the situation was a “failure by those charged with institutional oversight to understand the institution over which they preside,” making this case a poster child for the “manifest wisdom” of faculty participation in governance.

Oregon’s public universities have historically done more with less, adding some 23,000 students since 1999 while state funding significantly declined. Maintaining high student achievement, crafting a nationally recognized curriculum, and winning record-level grants and support for research in the face of record low public investment is an enormous credit to **Portland State faculty, staff, and students. Their full participatory membership, including voting rights,** on an institutional board moves that wisdom and experience into this new and untested body.

The bills require “clear evidence of support for an institutional board by the university community.” With an institutional governing board that is authentically close to campus and reflective of genuine shared governance, faculty, students, and staff can begin to embrace the idea of change with hope.

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