

Testimony before the House Higher Education Committee – on H.B 2152 – 2/15/13 - Rob Fullmer, SEIU Local 503 Contact: Rob.Fullmer@gmail.com

Good morning – my name is Rob Fullmer and I am a member of the Service Employees International Union - Local 503. SEIU represents about 4,000 classified workers who support students and faculty in the Oregon University System. We work in food and custodial services, facilities and grounds maintenance; financial and academic offices, IT and campus libraries. I am a steward and PSU’s bargaining delegate, and have represented our chapter in the ongoing financial restructuring at PSU.

Professionally, I work as one of two IT staff in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences serving the IT support and planning needs of over six hundred faculty and staff in the College, a capacity in which I’ve served since 2005. I’ve spent my career in higher education because I believe in the mission; I view preparing our youth to be able to make contributions to our society as a fundamental responsibility.

I am here today to provide testimony in support of H.B. 2152 – regarding the annual review of staffing ratios in public universities and community colleges. More transparency around how our institutions are investing the resources provided to them to operate will help ensure they can be kept focused on spending those resources in ways that will most benefit students.

First, I want to thank OUS for the information they voluntarily disclosed on manager to staff ratios. Unfortunately, the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (or IPEDS) metrics they used for this analysis yielded data that is at best misleading. From table 1, Staffing Ratios, you can see with the IPEDS categories only 36 managers are listed for all of the University of Oregon, and only 52 for all of Portland State University. Such efficiency would be truly remarkable; unfortunately all it reveals is how poorly the IPEDS categories fit with this kind of analysis.

TABLE 1: STAFFING RATIOS

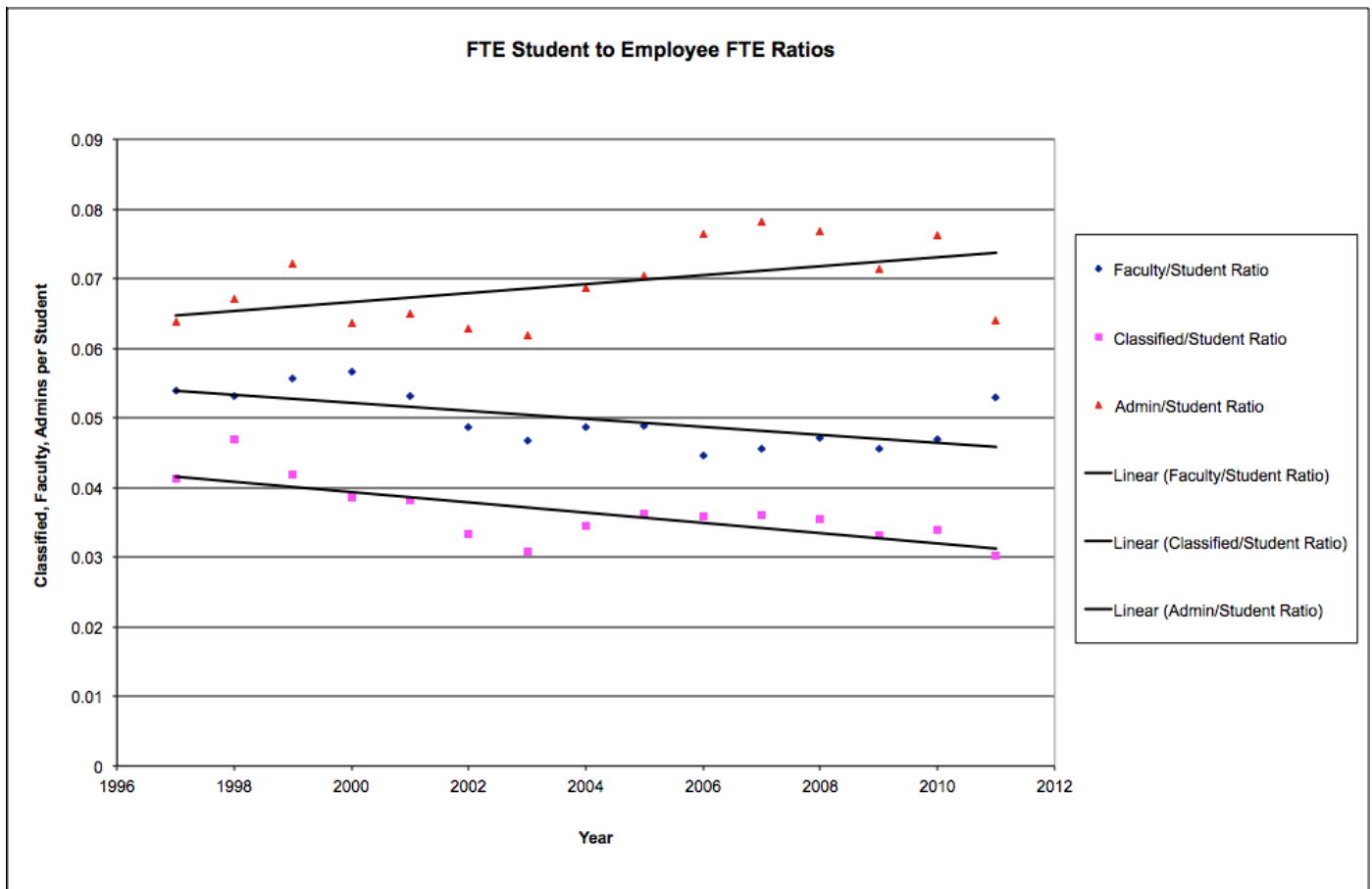
2011-12 Headcount								
	Faculty	Exec/Admin /Mgmt	Profess'l Non-faculty	Tech/ Paraprof'l	Secty/ Clerical	Skilled Craft	Service/ Maint	Total
EOU	134	7	98	24	63	35	25	386
OIT	157	31	74	16	57	9	34	378
OSU	2,181	283	1,193	425	489	105	166	4,842
PSU	1,750	52	808	162	323	49	40	3,184
SOU	353	23	207	42	88	16	41	770
UO	1,855	36	1,201	313	670	151	414	4,640
WOU	471	16	191	31	88	19	69	885
CO	-	23	37	8	15	-	-	83
OUS Total	6,901	471	3,809	1,021	1,793	384	789	15,168

Fortunately, PECBA has a more appropriate set of guidelines to use, and it was those guidelines that were employed in H.B. 2020 (and in H.B. 4131) to effect significant cost savings in reducing management bloat in state agencies since they were passed in recent sessions. I'm not arguing higher education is the same as those state agencies to which H.B. 2020 applied - nor that the same 11:1 target ratio necessarily is appropriate for OUS. But we can't even begin to see what makes sense until we are able to get true metrics for what the real ratios are today.

Last January in legislative testimony Marc Nisenfeld, president of PSU's chapter of SEIU, cited the a study by the Goldwater Institute¹ entitled "Administrative Bloat at American Universities" which indicated that from 1993 to 2007, the ratio of administrators to students increased significantly at Oregon State University and the University of Oregon. As the bargaining delegate for PSU I spent several days reading member surveys in preparation for upcoming contract negotiations and I noticed a huge number of long time PSU workers bringing up workload stress issues.

It made me wonder what had changed over the years to make the workload stress issue so acute, so I used the data from the PSU Fact Book on the web to see what was the basis of this anxiety about increased workload. What I found was alarming, see figure 1, titled PSU Staffing Trends.

FIGURE 1: PSU STAFFING TRENDS



¹ "Administrative Bloat at American Universities: The Real Reason for High Costs in Higher Education." Goldwater Institute, Policy Report No. 239, August 17, 2010. This study documented similar problems at many US universities; the U. of O. and OSU were the only Oregon public institutions examined. The study is at <http://www.goldwaterinstitute.org/article/4941>.

The trends look bad for faculty and particularly so for staff, but they are headed in the other direction for administrators. Remember, this is using the University's own figures – admittedly for PSU-only – but this information will likely look similar for other campuses since we hear similar reports from employees in those other institutions. SEIU estimated OUS staffing ratios in our Holding OUS Accountable document in 2011. The figures from that document are in Table 2. Full-Time Staff, By Campus, OUS, FY 2010-11

TABLE 2: FULL-TIME STAFF, BY CAMPUS, OUS, FY 2010-11								
	EOU	OIT	OSU	PSU	SOU	UO	WOU	OUS
Administrative Staff	119	107	1,239	719	160	1,031	162	3,610
Classified Staff	120	108	1,215	587	188	1,436	209	3,871
Faculty	104	134	1,783	912	180	1,426	309	4,848
TOTALS	343	349	4,237	2,218	528	3,893	680	12,329
Ratio (C+F)/A	1.9	2.3	2.4	2.1	2.3	2.8	3.2	2.4

For the state to meet its 40-40-20 goal OUS will need to increase enrollment further over the years ahead, and there's no reason to think the trend we're seeing here will change without intervention. There is room for greater administrative efficiency in our universities, and requiring OUS to release realistic data on staffing ratios using a more appropriate metric - PECBA defined standards - is a critical first step towards that goal.

Thank you for your time today.