

## **HB 2152**

### **Testimony of David Rives**

#### **President, American Federation of Teachers-Oregon**

The American Federation of Teachers-Oregon represents 15,000 members across the state. Our members work in the private and public sectors in elementary and high schools, child care centers, community colleges and four-year colleges and institutions, and health care clinics and hospitals. AFT members work as classified employees, faculty, instructors, graduate teachers, early educators and in health care professions.

I am here today to talk to you about HB 2152, a bill that would require both the State Board of Higher Education and the Department of Community Colleges to study staffing to student ratios.

AFT-Oregon recognizes the diverse missions of post-secondary education, which differ in focus relevant to the individual institution: instruction, research, community service, workforce development, and developmental education. Certainly a major component of college and university is instruction and student services, and the focus on the 40/40/20 degree completion is part of this. We see many effects of students not being able to take or get into classes due to the lack of available courses, especially in these times of booming enrollment and continued disinvestment in our higher education system. To help improve our public universities and community colleges in Oregon we first need to know where they stand, and this includes knowing what the current staff to student ratios are at our institutions.

This is not the first time this body has addressed staff to student ratios. Let me remind you that this body passed legislation calling for the reporting of the ratio of full-time faculty to part-time faculty. In 2009, the Oregon Legislature put the principles of the Faculty and College Excellence (FACE) campaign into Oregon Law via HB 2257, pressing for more full-time faculty and pro-rata pay and benefits for contingent or adjunct faculty. The reporting on full-time faculty and adjunct faculty have helped to demonstrate the over-reliance of institutions on contingent faculty positions originally intended for temporary or occasional work. Research indicates that the poor working conditions for contingent faculty—little time devoted to duties outside of the classroom, including curriculum development, student conferences, advising, mentoring, and coaching of students—affect the quality of the education that students receive. These figures will help us as we continue to improve the completion rates for college and university students.

The Oregon Education Investment Board is setting up a longitudinal data system to track learners from early childhood through a lifetime of education. There is a huge need to compile data so we can find what patterns emerge and what evidence can be found for fostering student success and degree completion.

Our full-time faculty, part-time faculty and classified members are on the front lines of education and see the everyday impact that our instructional and other staff have on students, and knowing more about staffing ratios is a piece of this puzzle.

HB 2152 is the next step in reporting. Those who teach and support student services in our schools and colleges find that a transparent, collaborative process is a key to implementing changes in the education system, and HB 2152 takes the next step.

I hope you will join me in supporting HB 2152.

Thank you.