

SB 270

May 23, 2013 – Ways and Means Education Subcommittee

AFT-Oregon is proud to be engaged in the conversations around higher education accountability and innovation. At a time that we are seeking to reduce silos in the P-20 system and to increase coordination between universities, community colleges, and high schools we need to look at ways to strengthen connections between all education institutions.

There are several outstanding issues to consider on SB 270:

Representation: In order for University Governance Boards to work we must ensure adequate faculty representation on the board. Using the State Board of Higher Education as a model, if institutional boards are put in place we must make sure that they include representatives from the faculty, staff and students of the institution. It is vital that the voices of those on the frontlines of education, faculty in the classrooms, are brought to the table to share their unique insights.

Regional Universities: In 2010, AFT-Oregon drafted principles for Higher Education Restructuring in Oregon. Chief among these principles was to “sustain the Oregon University System as an integrated entity maintaining its blend of research and regional campuses to support students in rural and urban environments.” We must ensure that Oregon’s regional universities will fit into any new system of governance. We should not be concerned with just one single campus, but the system of higher education as a whole

Cost: Costs of creating individual boards paired with potential duplicative shared services could be potentially high. At a time when our state budget is in crisis, we must keep in mind any additional costs.

Tuition: The legislation grants boards up to 5% increases in student in-state tuition costs per year without having to obtain legislative approval. There is currently no language that controls graduate tuition increases or increases for out-of-state or graduate student tuition.

AFT-Oregon urges you to address these concerns before moving forward on the creation of Institutional Boards.