



PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY

American Association of University Professors

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

DATE: 3 February 2014

TO: House Higher Education and Workforce
Development Committee
Rep. Chris Harker, Chair
Rep. Jo Gallegos, Vice Chair
Rep. John Huffman, Vice Chair

Rep Vic Gilliam
Rep. Chris Gorsek
Rep. Mark Johnson
Rep. Barbara Smith Warner
Rep. Gene Whisnant

On January 31, 2014 the Executive Council of the American Association of University Professors at Portland State University adopted an **OPPOSE position on House Bill 4076**. We request that this letter be distributed to members of the House Committee on Higher Education and Workforce Development and that the committee not move the bill to Ways and Means at its February 5, 2014 hearing.

HB 4076 “directs Eastern Oregon University, Oregon Institute of Technology, Southern Oregon University, and Western Oregon University to develop pilot programs for fixed cost bachelor’s degrees.” **The phrase “fixed cost” is a euphemism that hides the collateral damage that will be done to Oregon’s own curricula, faculties, and student experience in order to maintain a price point.** This damage will derive from:

- o auctioning Oregon students’ education to the lowest bidder on the internet.
- o incentivizing lack of or uneven quality control over instructional and content standards for students.
- o erosion of accountability to students by potentially contracting out to low cost on line providers who employ professionally fragile, low-wage instructors like graduate assistants and adjuncts.
- o dilution of integrity of campus-based degrees by inviting out sourcing, in the bill’s words, to “other institutions in order to include courses taught on the Internet, at local high schools or at community colleges.”
- o the specious contention that achievement of 40-40-20 “requires the employment of innovative methodologies and creative strategies to develop multiple pathways for higher education attainment.” The achievement of 40-40-20 could as easily be read as a mandate for robust investment in public higher education in order to enhance the capacity of Oregon faculties to engage in work they love and are trained to do in place, right here at home.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any further questions.

Respectfully submitted.
Patricia A. Schechter
Chair, Legislative Committee, PSU-AAUP
Patricia.A.Schechter@gmail.com

PO Box 751
Portland, Oregon 97207-0751
Telephone: (503) 725-4414 Fax: (503) 725-8124
Email: aaup@psuaaup.net
<http://www.psuaaup.net>