



PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY

American Association of University Professors

Promoting Quality Higher Education - An Investment in Oregon's Future

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Testimony of Patricia A. Schechter, Professor of History and Legislative Committee Chair, PSU-AAUP

SUPPORT - HB 3237

REQUIRE GRADUATE STUDENT EMPLOYEES ON GOVERNING BOARDS OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN OREGON

REQUIRE ALL DOCUMENTS OR MATERIALS SUBMITTED TO GOVERNING BOARDS OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES BE DISTRIBUTED TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

Chair Read and members of the House Committee on Higher Education, Innovation and Workforce Development:

Thank you for hearing this testimony today. I speak in vociferous support of HB 3237, requiring graduate student employees to have a voting seat on governing boards of public universities. My organization also heartily endorses the board communication component of this bill. Together, these elements of the bill make for accountability, inclusiveness, and balance on institutional governing boards.

Graduate students are part of the leading edge of knowledge creation and teaching on our campuses. Their comparatively smaller number among the total Oregon student body belies their importance as instructors and researchers. Grad students face in two directions: toward the undergraduate experience and toward faculty in the field and in the lab. Their perspective can keep education decision-making doubly "close to the classroom."

In Oregon, only undergraduate resident tuition is regulated. As a result, graduate tuition has risen faster than undergraduate, helping to make graduate tuition a key driver of student debt. PSU's governing board just voted to increase undergraduate in-state tuition \$7 per credit and out of state graduate tuition \$17 per credit. Student and faculty protest over the planned increases is currently on the front page of our campus newspaper. And as the recent strike of graduate students at the University of Oregon indicates, graduate student labor has become increasingly fraught in the overall budget squeeze. The graduate student perspective on daily operations as well as the more aspirational side of higher education is critical to good decision making. Graduate student employees deserve a voting seat on governing boards of public universities in Oregon.

As of this writing, communication with the PSU governing board is only possible via their campus webpage and a generic email address. There is no other well-publicized manner to reach board members individually or collectively before meetings. The communication requirements of HB 3237 help insure that the board is accountable and accessible as a duly appointed public body.

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