

Chair Read, Vice Chair Whisnant, Vice Chair Gallegos, and committee members: my name is Rob Fullmer, I am a classified worker at Portland State University where I have provided expertise on information technology issues to students, faculty, and staff in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences for more than a decade.

In the 2013-2015 bargaining cycle I was the SEIU Local 503 bargaining delegate for PSU and was responsible for reviewing the worker surveys we use to better understand the concerns of our members. The top issue for PSU classified employees from the survey was workload. This led me look at the data in the PSU fact book, which goes back almost two decades, to see if staffing and enrollment trends could reveal anything about why classified staff reported feeling so much pressure.

It did, as both student and faculty ratios to classified staff have increased significantly over that time. In contrast, the ratio of administrators to students has increased over that same period. I presented the attached chart during the 2013 session while testifying in favor of HB 2152, a bill that was passed which required universities to for the first time report on their current staffing, and it is just as relevant today. Others will provide details about how over the short period for which we now have reporting there has been practically no improvement to these ratios and at some universities they have in fact gotten worse.

I serve on the HECC and am well aware of the governance changes that have taken place over the last several years that have been intended to provide universities more autonomy in the hopes of getting better, more cost effective outcomes for the people of Oregon. I agree that legislation that stipulates to universities what the proper ratios are for line workers to supervisors is not consistent with that increased autonomy.

However, Oregon universities have clearly trended towards hiring more and more expensive administrators while keeping the number of classified staff that report to that growing number of supervisors relatively flat, despite increases in enrollment and the number of faculty. At the same time, the legislature has struggled to understand why costs have kept going up at rates that appear to be higher than what can be accounted for from inflation and the fixed costs paid for benefits.

I believe an important part of that answer is these hiring trends. If you are expecting university administrators or the institutional boards to change them, it is likely to be a very long wait. Please help guide them towards greater efficiency, as you have done successfully for state agencies, by passing HB 3049.

Rob Fullmer
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