



# American Association of University Professors

*Academic Freedom for a Free Society*

May 28, 2015

Joint Committee on Ways and Means Sub-Committee on Education  
**Re: Senate Bill 81**

Dear Co-chairs Komp and Monroe and members of the sub-committee,

My name is Dr. José Padín. I am the elected President of the Oregon Conference of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). My work as elected President of the Oregon AAUP is volunteer service on behalf of our students and our universities. I am an Associate Professor of Sociology at Portland State University, and have been an educator in Oregon for 19 years.

On behalf of the Oregon Conference of the American Association of University Professors, our collective bargaining faculty chapters at University of Oregon and Portland State University, and our faculty members across Oregon, I would like once again to express our concerns about SB81.

While we believe that universal, free higher education is a public good and an aspiration to strive for, we believe that SB 81, attempting to move in that direction, has serious flaws and unintended consequences.

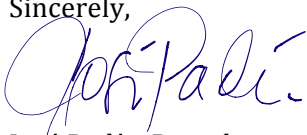
Our first concern is around the funding for SB81. If passed, SB 81 would waive tuition for any community college student who has been a state resident for a year and accepted all financial aid available to them and pays \$50 per course. Where does the money come from? Without a clear source of new funding, SB 81 would come at the expense of existing programs at community

colleges, colleges, and universities, or the cost of SB 81 would be passed on to other Oregon students, or both. We understand that there is a proposal to fund the tuition waiver with Oregon opportunity grant money. In doing this, you would be taking funds currently only available to low income students and making those funds available to middle and upper income students as well, if they chose to participate in this program. We do not believe this is the best use of public dollars. The Oregon Opportunity Grant is a vital part of many low-income students' financing. We believe that new programs need increased revenue to support them and that higher education should be more robustly funded overall.

Our second concern with SB 81 is that, as it is currently conceived, has unintended discriminatory consequences. In Oregon we have built a public higher education infrastructure over many decades, and community colleges are a vital part of that infrastructure, but we also have undergraduate programs of state, regional, and national repute at our four-year institutions. SB 81 disadvantages those students for whom the programs at our four-year universities might be the best option. Shouldn't we allow our students to use their tuition waiver at any public institution?

We support SB81 only if amended to provide that funds would be usable at any public Oregon post-secondary institution, and if it is fully funded, without taking funds from programs students already count on. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "José Padín".

José Padín, President  
AAUP-Oregon  
jose@aaup-oregon.org