

Senate Testimony Pay 'Equity Senate Bill 416  
Thursday March 23 2023

“They Should have Handled their Money Better.”

I am disposable. I was disposable just short of 20 years ago when I was hired to work at Clackamas Community College as a part-time faculty, and I am still disposable today. I had always been pretty sure this was how I was viewed -disposable- but three years ago (almost to the day) as President of the Clackamas Community College Part-time Faculty at the start of the pandemic, I sat at a table with the other Association Presidents and both College Vice Presidents as plans were discussed to help the other employees make the transition to remote or online work. We were left totally out of any of the plans, although we were looking at close to 50% of our Part-time Faculty losing their Spring classes and thus having no income. I asked about plans for the Part-time Faculty Association Faculty. I was told by our then Vice President of Finances and Operations that, “They (we Part-time Faculty) should have managed their [our] money better.” This secure six-figure income earner's belief was that somehow our pay allowed copious extra funds for saving for emergencies. If I had believed before that moment that we were faculty with deep employee ties to my college, that one statement pulled my head out of the sand. We were all fully disposable.

Myself, and most employed as Part-time Faculty nationwide, including my home state, Oregon, are the same. We are hired with “needs of the program” one term contracts which call us to perform all the same classroom functions as the full-time faculty member teaching in the room next door to ours who spends 85% of their time teaching (according to 2021 HB 3156 – although far less full time faculty time is spent in the classroom given the most recent bargaining data from my own Administration). We are directly hired to spend 100% of our time teaching. Our full purpose is teaching. As they do, we research best practices and new teaching techniques, we prep for classes ensuring our classes meet changing Student Learning Outcomes, design syllabus and create assignments, assessments, online course shells, create and/or find related content needed by many students, and provide letters of recommendation for many of our students. In spite of being by-contract hires, many of us form relationships with our students which last long beyond our own classroom. In essence, we perform the same prep and instructional functions but compensation does not, at all, demonstrate any consideration of pay equity.

My guess is many of you sitting here today will have heard all of this before, though perhaps not so brutally phrased. This same issue would have been researched and discussed – and testimonies presented – while you worked on HB 3156 \* in 2021, a bill which would have led to a legislation requiring “each Community College and Public University to pay part-time faculty members teaching courses offered for academic credit at least 75 percent of salary that would be paid to full-time faculty member with identical levels of education and experience during 2022-2023 academic year and at least 85 percent of salary that would be paid to been presented and researched full-time faculty member with identical levels of education and experience every academic year thereafter.” It did not pass. I am still a Part-time Faculty hired

term to term, disposable at any time, and very badly compensated. It is the very badly compensated section I am asking you to repair. Our colleges... simply won't.

My own story in many ways dovetails into my student's lives. They come to college with dreams that they will learn new things, gain skills, and somehow find a job that allows them to "put money aside" for retirement. They don't want to work for \$20 an hour at TacoBell, or less than \$15 in a store somewhere. They want their sacrifice of time, persistence, and often loan money to entitle them to a life where a job is ensured, or pay is at least equal to those doing the same job function. I have spent the past 19+ years of my own lifetime hoping for the same economic deal. The group on the House Education Committee that proposed 2021 HB 3156 recognized that we Part-time Faculty in Oregon while teaching these students, are not getting that economic boost from our required Master's degrees. Globalizing part-time faculty across Oregon colleges, "if we are only earning 30 to 45% of full-time faculty's 85% for doing the exact same teaching in a classroom, then pay-equity is not working at colleges Nor are our degrees performing their economic function of allowing us more than pin-money. A Victorian phrase meaning that women worked to purchase something pretty for themselves. That phrase should not still be meaningful in the 21st century. Yet that percentage of pay difference speaks in silence rather loudly.

As a disposable faculty, I have shared a lot of my own experiences here in a rather pathos directed appeal for part-time faculty to finally attain pay equity with full-time faculty for our actual teaching time. This Equity bill offers that promise. So, what the heck, one more personal experience. I had not been going to present testimony for this bill for three reasons: 1. You had the info in 2021 yet HB 3151 failed to pass. 2. After reviewing years of publicly available Audits of my own college, they suggest a lack of funds to back the bill without performing a massive change of values, and 3. Higher Education's social norms very much are holding us to unequal status. Yet here I am, and there you are reading this. I was recently asked during a local non-profit course on connecting our vision and economics to our goals to: "think about my 'future' and how choices we make early on in life impact us later." Then I was asked about retirement. Innocent question: "What is your retirement plan?" My immediate and unthinking response was "death." No college faculty should EVER have that response. I a, presenting this because I want better for my peers. Then I reminded myself that I do love teaching College level writing skills, so all was not lost. At least as a College teacher being old doesn't mark me out. But I have to face the fact that I chose to work as Part-time Faculty as a single parent without some other form of economic support, and failed to put any funds left over from normal expenses such as rent, electricity, etc into a fund somewhere for retirement. In short, one can't put imaginary money into an emergency or retirement fund.

In closing, I am asking that this bill in front of you, SB416 make it through all its various committees, and actually pass. Isn't it time for silence to speak positively? Isn't it time for pay-equity?

Thank you,

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