

Interinstitutional Faculty Senate

Representing all OUS Institutions

Senate Committee on Education and Workforce Development
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE, Room 453
Salem, Oregon 97301
Email: Kristalyn.cassell@state.or.us

RE: Senate Bill 270-1
In Committee Thursday March 21, 2013 1pm

Dear Senator Hass and Members of the Committee,

As the Interinstitutional Faculty Senate (IFS), we are the elected voice of faculty in public university education in Oregon, representing eight unique and diverse university campuses: Eastern Oregon University; Oregon Health & Science University; Oregon Institute of Technology; Oregon State University; Portland State University; Southern Oregon University; University of Oregon, and Western Oregon University.

SB270 proposes to establish institutional boards for University of Oregon and Portland State University. We oppose the new Amendment to SB 270 that specifies that, except for Presidents, board membership will not include employees of the university.

The IFS believes that representation of both students and faculty on any future institutional boards is vital to the future of our institutions, and for the future of higher education in Oregon. Faculty and students are important stakeholders in conversations and decisions regarding our universities, stakeholders who have dedicated years to the good of higher education. By virtue of their positions, faculty and students offer unique perspectives and knowledge of potential impacts of board decisions on the workings of their universities. While we understand concerns of potential conflict of interest, we also understand that this is an inherent issue on any board. All members of a board will be expected to recuse themselves from certain decisions, and to defer to General Counsel when conflicts are less clear. We would not expect any less of our faculty and students.

We believe that the expertise and experience of faculty and students are essential to the success of any new governance structure for our universities. This representation is consistent with the history of the faculty and student representation on the current Oregon State Board of Higher Education. As the elected voice of public university education in Oregon, the IFS urges state legislators to consider the inclusion of faculty and students on any future university institutional boards.

Thank you for your consideration.
Sincerely,

Interinstitutional Faculty Senate, Oregon