Mr. Chairman, Members of the Board:

Thank you for this opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Douglas Crow and I am the Vice President of the PSU Faculty Association.

PSUFA President Kelly Cowan sends his regrets that he could not be here today. He said that at the last two meetings, he had hoped he would have a chance to meet you, but unavoidable circumstances have come up each time. However, he hopes he will be able to speak with you in the near future. Today, he has provided a brief statement describing what PSUFA is, who we represent, and what we stand for.

PSUFA was founded in 1978 and was one of the very first unions in the country to represent part-time faculty. We are affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO, and our statewide coalition, AFT-Oregon. At PSU, we represent nearly 800 teaching and research faculty who work half-time or less. We are also commonly known as Adjunct Faculty, or simply “Adjuncts.” For nearly 40 years, the Association has worked to establish the rights of part-time faculty to fair treatment and working conditions, as well as job security, and academic freedom.

My members teach nearly 40% of the student credit hours at PSU, but we often feel invisible. We teach for a fraction of the salary of our full-time colleagues, we receive few, if any, of the same benefits, and there is often little acknowledgment or respect from the University for the important role we provide. Because so few people seem aware of the contribution Adjuncts make, we recently held an event where the theme was: “Imagine if we were NOT HERE.” If we were not here, there is no way that PSU could function! The services we provide are essential for making this university run. PSU is not unique in this respect, as Adjuncts now make up more than half the faculty at universities nationwide.

My members are highly qualified professionals. Many of them have PhD’s or other terminal degrees. Others have Masters Degrees, as well as significant work experience in their fields. Adjuncts are typically people who can bring a mix of academic knowledge and real world experience into the classroom. Students often tell us they find this combination to be extremely beneficial. We feel that we should be hired because of the unique knowledge and experience that we bring to our students, and not just because the university considers us to be a lower cost and more disposable workforce than full-time faculty.
We appreciate this opportunity to speak with you today and hope to be able to talk regularly with you and voice our concerns, as well as constructive input. We often do not have other avenues to express our viewpoints on campus. Many departments do not include Adjuncts in department meetings and we do not have voting representation in the Faculty Senate. We hope that the Board will continue to have time for brief statements by each of the employee unions at future meetings. That input is essential to provide information about what is happening throughout the university and the issues that need to be addressed.

We are also part of a campus coalition called Together 4 PSU, which represents Faculty, Staff, and Students. We would be happy to have representatives from this coalition attend future Board Meeting and provide you with updates on the important issues our coalition addressing. At the current time, our coalition members have expressed considerable concern about the tuition increase that is now being proposed. As part-time faculty, we share the concern that many tuition increases go to pay for administrative processes which do not directly result in putting more teachers in the classroom or improving overall academic quality. In fact, many of our students are already struggling to balance work and school responsibilities, and higher tuition may drive more of them away from the university education they need to further their careers. We hope you will carefully consider the viewpoints of key campus stakeholders as you make this important decision.

Thank you, again for your time, and we look forward to the opportunity to speak with you again in the future.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Kelly Cowan
President
Portland State University Faculty Association
AFT Local 3571 - PSUFA