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OSSHE to review faculty workload

By Colleen Pohlig
Emerald Associate Director

Oregon State System of Higher Education Chancellor Thomas Bartlett announced late last month that a system-wide review of faculty workload and productivity would begin at the eight OSSHE schools.

"We must address how we use our scarce resources and what we might do to redirect them," Bartlett said in a press release.

A special task force made up of representatives from all eight OSSHE campuses and a representative from the Interinstitutional Faculty Senate was formed to conduct the review.

Task force chairman Charles R.B. Wright, a University mathematics professor, said he believes the review was prompted by a "wave sweeping the country of professor-bashing."

"A big part of our task is to help legislators understand what it is professors do with their time, and, secondarily, that it's probably what they should be doing with their time," Wright said.

Wright said he believes the chancellor will use the information to "respond to concerns expressed by legislators' request for information, and to legislative initiatives that seem off the mark."

"The task force has an extraordinarily important and difficult charge," Bartlett said. "They are at the cutting edge of the national debate over one of our principal institutional and public issues: how faculty are



File photo
Chancellor Thomas Bartlett has ordered a review of faculty workload, efficiency and productivity at the eight Oregon state schools.

deployed.

"It is difficult because faculty do so many things," he said. "Teaching is one, but there is also research and public service, which not only enhance the classroom experience, but also the quality of life in Oregon and its economy."

The task force is charged with two major responsibilities, the first is to gather and review information on workload and productivity at OSSHE institutions and to compare this information with reports from other state schools.

The second responsibility is to look at how the state's schools use the available resources, such as technology, and then make some recommendations for changes in the

balance of faculty workload and the structure of state schools, Wright said.

"Each of us in offices, in labs, etc. all across the country ask ourselves, 'How should I allocate my time better?'" Wright said. "It's not a new idea."

The task force, which has met once so far, plans to periodically submit its findings and recommendations to the chancellor. Wright said he doesn't expect the group to exist past the end of the legislative session.

"We're under a great deal of pressure to get what the chancellor can use; he wants it yesterday," Wright said. "However, we're under less time pressure to see how we can do things differently."



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