OSU Faculty Talks 'Power Tactics' to Get Pay Raises

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Collective bargaining by the three major universities of Oregon was cited as a possible means of getting faculty salary raises at a meeting in Corvallis Feb. 18 sponsored by OSEA's OSU Faculty Chapter 72.

"We are going to have to coordinate our efforts and approach the chancellor and State Board of Higher Education and say that we mean business," said panelist Floyd McFarland, professor of economics at Oregon State University.

The special meeting was held to consider ways of focusing the legislature's attention on OSU's slipping salary scale.

"They are going to have to do a little better by us or we are going to be forced to use collective bargaining. Maybe we should close the place (OSU) down for a day and go to Salem and Picket," McFarland added.

One of the panelists, Dr. Harold Haak, professor of public administration at San Diego State College, told the 125 faculty members that they had curtailed enrollment last term as a means of stretching their budget money. One OSU department has considered this alternative as a method of keeping class numbers down and professors' total numbers of students within bounds. According to David King, professor of history, "We have a power we have not utilized."

OSEA staff members attending the meeting indicated that the salary recommendations submitted to the governor by the chancellor have little likelihood of approval. They advised the group to use all its efforts to hold the line on the governor's salary recommendations for higher education.

The recommendations would have the effect of maintaining Oregon's position of number 16 on the 19-institution comparison list of other universities across the country in 1969. In 1970 the gradual raising of Oregon's salaries would begin and continue until it reached the target position of No. 10 in 1975.

Another professor suggested that the presently used method of bargaining for salaries based on the 19-university list be scrapped. He said that faculty salaries should be compared with professionals in industry rather than with other universities.

A mass appearance at the legislature's Ways and Means Committee hearing on the higher education budget in March or April was named as another possible means of attention-focusing.

A strong campaign of letter writing to senators and representatives was cited as another method. However, one professor said that he had a letter in his file that said not to contact the legislature. This is despite the law passed by the 1967 Legislature which removed political restrictions from state employees.

Haak strongly recommended the "development of a structure of senates." He said that in California, "each college has a senate and there is also a statewide senate." The external organizations of California State Employees Association, Association of California State College Professors and American Association of University Professors are used as lobbying arms of the senate. He added that through this system of senates "we (the faculty) control management."

Thomas C. Enright, OSEA's executive secretary, said that even though it has not yet held hearings, the Ways and Means Committee already has reached tentative conclusions, and that "we are a little late. Our suggestion would be that instead of talking about salaries for this session, we ought to be talking now about two years from now. But OSU alone is not going to do it."

One professor said that the way he saw it, Oregonians wanted quantity, not quality—that this was the way they wanted to spend their limited number of dollars.

Another professor said, "Salaries should be used to upgrade the system. We should get that story over to the people of the state. If we don't, we are going to get more and more mediocrity."

Other panelists were OSEA staff member Everett B. Stiles and Insurance Director Lester B. Strickler, who is professor of business administration, OSU.

Solons Told of State's Lag in Contributing to Health Insurance

The overwhelming majority of business firms in Oregon pay a portion of the insurance premiums for their employees.

The federal government contributes to the medical-hospital insurance premiums for its employees.

The majority of Oregon's cities, counties and school districts pay either the total or a major share of employee's medical-hospital insurance premiums.

It is time for the State of Oregon to begin such a fringe benefit for its employees.

That was the gist of OSEA's testimony to the House Financial Affairs Committee Mar. 3 as it began hearings on HB 1351, a bill that provides for a state contribution to premiums of employee group insurance plans.

The bill, drafted by OSEA, is sponsored by the Marion County legislative delegation of Reps. L. B. Day, Wallace P. Carson Jr., Morris K. Crothers and Jack Anunsen, and Sens. Cornelius C. Bateson and Robert L. Elfstrom.

Speaking in support of the bill, Rep. Day told the committee that health insurance should be provided for state employees. "We improved the retirement system last session; now its time to look at health insurance," he said.

Day noted that the bill provides for an employer contribution to "group medical, dental, surgical, hospital and related services," but said he thinks such a contribution should be "restricted to health insurance."

OSEA spokesmen told the committee that all of the Western States except Arizona and Oregon pay at least a portion of employee's group insurance premiums..

They said 88 cities in Oregon now pay either the total or a major portion of medical-hospital premiums for employees. Among them are major cities such as Portland, Eugene, Salem, Medford and Corvallis, and smaller cities such as Redmond, Lebanon, Forest Grove and Gresham.

The OSEA representatives pointed out that 23 of Oregon's 36 counties pay a percentage of employee's medical-hospital insurance premiums.

They include such populous counties as Multnomah, Lane, Marion and Jackson, and less-populous counties such as Malheur, Lake, Jefferson and Crook.

"A survey of 29 major firms in Oregon and Southwest Washington performed by OSEA revealed 25 of the companies paid at least a portion of the employee's insurance premiums," association spokesmen said, and added that 14 of the 29 also pay a substantial portion of the dependent's coverage.

When asked about the cost of such a fringe benefit, OSEA representatives said a $7.50 monthly contribution would cost the state about $2,000,000 per year if all 30,000 state employees participated in such a plan.

They said studies have shown, however, that only about 65 to 75 per cent of the state's work force would take advantage of the fringe benefit.

If the bill receives favorable consideration from the House State and Federal Affairs Committee, it must then go to the Ways and Means Committee for funding.

Earlier last month, Ways and Means Committee Co-Chairman Stafford Hansell (R-Hermiston) said there is some "sentiment" on the committee to pay for employee health insurance. He indicated it might be "phased in" during the second year of the biennium.

Academic Pay Said Too Low

Methods of increasing academic salaries in the coming biennium was the main order of business at the Feb. 22 meeting of OSEA's Academic and Unclassified Committee.

Dr. George H. Arscott, director, said the competitive position of academic salaries in Oregon has steadily declined over the years. Oregon ranks 16th on the list of 19 comparable institutions with which it is compared for academic salaries.

To make cuts in academic salary requests would take Oregon out of competition for top educators and make it difficult to retain the professors it now has, he said.

The committee, representing faculties throughout the state, will conduct a letter-writing campaign to bring the salary situation to the attention of the 1969 Legislature.

OSEA Loses 108 Members Last Month

For the third straight month, OSEA has lost more members than it gained.

The membership report of Mar. 3 puts the net loss at 108 members. The association enrolled 340, but lost 448.

Total membership as of that date was 15,799, which is 208 less than the all-time high of 16,007 reached just before the General Council last November.

The largest net loss was registered by two districts. District One lost 55 members and District Six lost 50.

Other districts recording net losses were District Four with 7, District Eight with 3 and District Two with 1.

Only two districts gained members. They were District Seven with 7 and District Five with 1.

Districts Three and Nine remained even.

The three chapters which recorded the largest net losses were Webfoot Chapter 49 in Eugene which lost 19 members, Corvallis Chapter 29 which lost 10 and Success Chapter 30 in Portland which lost 9.

The biggest net gain among the chapters was registered by The Dalles Chapter 9. It gained 12 members.

The gain-loss figures for five of OSEA's largest chapters pretty much tell the story. Salem Chapter 1 gained 11 and lost 8. Corvallis Chapter 29 gained 19 and lost 29. Fairview Chapter 57 gained 34 and lost 37. EOSH Chapter 52 gained 26 and lost 22. And OSU Faculty Chapter 72 gained 13 and lost 14.