

United Campus Workers AZ Defends Shared Governance by Opposing HB2735 and HB2178



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ARIZONA February 20, 2024 - United Campus Workers of Arizona opposes House Bill 2735 and House Bill 2178. These bills would effectively dismantle shared governance structures at public universities in Arizona. HB 2735 proposes a revision to ARS 15-1601 and 15-1626 to dramatically expand the role of the Arizona Board of Regents and the university presidents, fundamentally reducing the role of faculty in academic activities. HB 2178 proposes a new system of funding student organizations that threatens to defund student activities and student government bodies. Together, HB 2178 and HB 2735 are an overt attack on democracy at our public higher education institutions.

ABOR and the university presidents should not have unchecked power to make unilateral decisions regarding academic standards or which programs are cut or funded. These bills are moving in the wrong direction. The mismanagement of the University of Arizona budget and Arizona State University's questionable investments in artificial intelligence demonstrate the need for stronger, not weaker, shared governance on the student, staff, and faculty levels.

"It's an authoritarian push to centralize the powers of the university governance system into the hands of one individual - the President," says Jeremy Bernick, Graduate Student Body President at UA. The fundamental problems faced by higher education in Arizona are the lack of public funding and the exponential growth of administrative positions rather than faculty positions. This bill addresses neither and exacerbates both. "It's a clear attack on the call for transparency around the financial crisis and a reactionary conservative approach to how our university should be governed," Bernick added.

UCWAZ invites the community and the press to attend the February 22nd ABOR meeting; community members from all three public universities will rally outside the Memorial Union at the ASU Tempe campus at 12 p.m. and speak during the public comments of the ABOR meeting in Memorial Union room 220 at 1 p.m.

About United Campus Workers of Arizona (UCWAZ)

UCWAZ unites Arizona's diverse public university workforce—including part-time and full-time staff, faculty, and students—to address the critical issues we all face. Our mission is to champion and defend the interests and well-being of all university workers and to build social and economic justice in our workplaces. For more information on the United Campus Workers of Arizona visit www.ucwarizona.org