October 7, 2013

AAUP Opposes "Pay It Forward" Tuition Plan

The American Association of University Professors has signed on to a statement opposing the proposed “Pay It Forward” tuition plan, in which students would not pay up front for a public college education, but instead pay a percentage of their income for about twenty-five years following graduation. The program is being explored in Oregon, where the state legislature recently passed a bill that would begin to study such a proposal in detail.

The AAUP, which joined with the American Federation of Teachers, the National Education Association, the AFL-CIO, and other groups in issuing the statement, argues that “Pay It Forward” would not address the real causes of higher costs, and could end up costing students more. For example, it would not do anything to reverse the trend of state divestment in higher education. Students who currently get federal and state financial aid may end up paying thousands of dollars more in the long run than they do now. And colleges would have a strong incentive to promote academic programs likely to lead to high paying jobs, at the expense of less lucrative majors and departments.