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Portland State Ordered to Reinstate Some Laid-Off Faculty

By [Emma Whitford](#)

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An independent arbitrator ordered Portland State University to reinstate 10 faculty members after determining the university violated its collective bargaining agreement with the Portland State University American Association of University Professors, [Oregon Public Broadcasting reported](#).

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The faculty senate in April voted no confidence in the administration's "Bridge to the Future" plan to address an \$18 million budget deficit, and the vote "underscores the fact that the university made its layoff decisions before it had sufficient evidence to support them. That is a violation of the collective bargaining agreement," the arbitrator wrote in her decision.

PSU-AAUP filed a labor grievance after the university laid off 17 non-tenure-track professors at the end of the 2024–25 academic year as part of its plan to close the deficit before the end of the spring term. The remaining seven employees declined to grieve their layoffs.

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"[The decision] forces the university to respect the concept of shared governance," union president Bill Knight told OPB. "It's a reminder to the university that they can't simply make arbitrary administrative decisions without involving the faculty."

The union contract requires university officials to follow a specific, lengthy process to lay

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programs—which the arbitrator determined they did not do. Portland State is considering an appeal.

The budget cuts were successful in closing the deficit, OPB reported. Recent financial documents show the university saved more than \$12.3 million—about 88 full-time faculty positions—in its academic affairs division. But more personnel cuts are likely. In September, the Portland State University Board of Trustees approved a plan to address a \$35 million shortfall over two years.

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