## Senate Bill 55
## Senate Committee on Education
## February 2, 2017

Chair Roblan, Vice Chair Linthicum, and Members of the Senate Education Committee,

It is a pleasure to be here today on behalf of Oregon's public universities to provide testimony on Senate Bill 55.

For the record, my name is Dana Richardson and I am the new Executive Director of the Council of Presidents. OCOP, as we call it, was formed to support statewide focus and partnership among Oregon's public universities. While it is not a governing body, it does foster coordination and collaboration among the public university presidents and other university officials to avoid unnecessary duplication of efforts and effectively share resources, best practices, and advocacy.

I'd like to begin my testimony by outlining general principles on affordability that the public universities and the community colleges have discussed and agreed upon. First, we believe that investments that support existing student academic and success programs as well as the Oregon Opportunity Grant should be highest priority as we head into this budgeting cycle. We also believe that state financial aid should target the students that have the most financial need. Given these principals, we would advocate that the Oregon Opportunity Grant be funded before an expanded OR Promise is funded.

While we understand that Senate Bill 55 puts forward what the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) considers a technical fix to administer OR Promise grants beyond the $10 million that was originally appropriated, deleting the language in subsection (6) of the statute removes the upper limit on the amount of money that may be invested in the program. This runs counter to the affordability principles noted earlier. Additionally, the public universities are concerned that the OR Promise program benefits students other than those who have the most financial need which also runs counter to the affordability principles.

We are certainly prepared to review and discuss the program parameters described by the HECC today and appreciate your time in listening to this testimony.