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March 18, 2021

Oregon House Education Committee
900 Court Street, NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: HB 2412, -2 Amendments

Chair Alonso Leon and Members of the House Education Committee,

I'm writing to urge your support and adoption of the -2 amendments to HB 2412. This amendment includes funding for five different college access programs that were funded in the Governor's Recommended Budget. These five programs provide valuable access and support for low-income, historically underserved, and/or first generation students to help them to achieve their post-secondary goals.

I am especially in support of the BUILD EXITO program, one of two undergraduate research programs. I currently serve a couple roles in this program: a super career mentor (to nearly a dozen transfer students from our U.S. territories in the Pacific) and the Community Partnership and Collaboration Lead. I was also its former Enrichment Activities Director. Most importantly, I was part of the team that helped develop the program.

BUILD EXITO is extremely valuable to our students and has a strong impact on their decisions in being part of the health related fields with a passion for research. Having witnessed seven cohorts go through the program, I am proud to see so many of our alum achieve their goals of careers in our health industry, and/or enter doctoral programs in health related fields. The program has been effective in providing structured learning opportunities, both personally and professionally. I am especially excited to continue our work in providing a three prong mentorship approach---research learning community, career, and peer mentorships. This unique approach provides scaffolded support for the students.

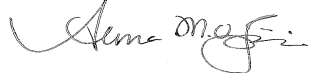
Since our aim is to diversify the industry and the research enterprise to address health inequities, continuous investment in our people to participate in the sector is important. As a woman of color tenured professor in social work, I can't emphasize enough the importance of such investment. I hope this can influence a stronger connection to the

workforce, where we can create more flourishing partnerships, as it'll help with sustainable economic growth in the region. I certainly think this is important as we face the pandemic, and ongoing need to think creatively in addressing local problems of health inequities among our minoritized communities. We need a robust workforce in the near future to be part of shaping change.

Lastly, as a product of a similar kind of access program during my undergraduate career, I intend to continue to be part of building up such programs, as I see them building strong communities in the near future. When we invest in our people in carrying forth roles and responsibilities of being healers (in their respective career paths) and tending to health and wellness for each child, youth, family through practice and research, we are STRONGER TOGETHER.

If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at atrinidad@pdx.edu or (503) 725-8510 (office).

Best regards,



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