

My name is Rob Fullmer. For the past 30 years I have worked in higher education. The last 16 years I've supported students, faculty, and staff with their technology needs at Portland State University. I've also served to represent university and community college workers as a representative on the state's Higher Education Coordinating Committee, where I was an advocate for an affordable, quality education for Oregon's residents.

I am here today to tell you that higher education in Oregon is rapidly changing, at a pace faster than anything I've seen before in my career. These changes appear to be at least, in part, a result of crisis opportunism - that adage that leaders should never let a crisis go to waste by failing to leverage distraction and uncertainty to make large, systemic changes that would otherwise result in massive resistance.

Despite tens of millions of dollars in relief funding from the federal government, many of our higher education institutions are moving forward with systemic workforce reductions - the universities have already cut their front-line work-force by 5% - retrenchment and elimination of programs, and planning for a future with fewer students. If this future does come to pass, it's hard to see how Oregon ever achieves its 40-40-20 goal.

But it's also clear declining enrollments at our regional institutions, which includes PSU, has left them feeling vulnerable under their projections of long term trends. These universities serve primarily Oregonians, and they are worried. This is in part because of demographics, but it's also because past precedent has made it clear that there is a significant mismatch between what they and the HECC believe it takes to continue to provide current service levels and the figure the legislature arrives at each biennium. This is a trust and transparency problem that must be solved to protect students who see their tuition rates go up above the rate of inflation year after year.

I am making a few requests of you, as legislators:

- * Please fund the PSUF at \$900 million for the next two years. Most of our institutions have been spending down their reserves. One time money won't reverse these trends, only the sustained maintenance of effort by Oregon's legislature in higher education will help.

- * Look at how essential workers are being treated and compensated by our higher education institutions, which have discretion over the non-student one-time COVID funding from the federal government. Are the low-wage workers doing the cleaning and cooking for students, the people who show up in person and face risks to their health, getting hazard pay? If not, why not?

- * Support bills that strengthen higher education - the part-time faculty health care bill (SB 551/HB 3007) that provides part-time and adjunct faculty at community colleges and universities, who currently do not get institutional health care options or coverages, the bill that creates student navigators on campuses (HB 2835) - national data correlates basic need insecurities with lower graduation rates, lower test scores and class absences, and finally the student voices on campuses bill (HB 2590) - to ensure the needs of Rural students and the Colleges which serve them are met through a comprehensive review of higher education in all four corners of the state . Without the student voice bill, the needs of institutions

in close proximity to each other in the metro region will continue to drive the narrative around higher education needs.

Thank you.