

Co-Chairs Johnson, Steiner Hayward & Rayfield and Co-Vice Chairs Girod, Gomberg & Smith,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am Connie Green the interim president of Blue Mountain Community College. My address is 2411 NW Carden Ave., Pendleton OR 97801. This is my second opportunity to serve the Board, staff and faculty and community as interim.

I support your efforts to listen to constituents as you continue to guide a complex budgeting process for all of Oregon especially in times of Covid and economic disruption. I have been working with community colleges for the past 47 years and believe more strongly today than ever that everyone should have access to a viable and responsive community college.

To that goal:

1. Our Board, staff and faculty support HB 2907 to fully fund community colleges at \$702 million. In the 2019-2021 biennium, the Community College Support Fund (CCSF) received \$641 million. To fully fund current services, colleges would need a state appropriation of \$702 million for the 2021-2023 biennium. At that funding level colleges could keep tuition increases to an average of 3.5 percent per year statewide.
2. This continues to assist colleges to reskilling Oregon's workforce that was displaced due to the impacts of COVID-19. It also permits us to continue to offer transfer, career technical certificates and degrees. We do have federal stimulus funds that are short-term dollars. We are using half of those for students, tuition reductions and support from childcare to technology. We still need long-term support from the state to continue to support students and Oregon's economic recovery in the coming years.
3. Despite our funding challenges, the Blue Mountain Community College Board and staff are committed to our mission to provide responsive, high quality and innovative educational programs and services that promote personal and professional growth. This mission is designed to strengthen our communities. However, during COVID, this was difficult at times and we found disconnects in our systems and partners. We have stepped up to solve broken links and strengthen partnerships. We are focused on the right size – with a 1.9m reduction and a right direction- always students first and right growth – build a stronger connection with High Schools for early college; build a stronger connection to our business partners – a UAS non Credit certification ready to roll out this summer and within a year a certificate and degree program with our partners such as Delmar.
3. We also support the capital construction request for Farm II . This regional training center would allow Blue Mountain Community College to partner with our community partners: City of Pendleton, the Pendleton Round-Up, Happy Canyon, Umatilla County, Port of Umatilla, and InterMountain ESD to deliver regional workforce training opportunities, Career-Technical Education and build more options for our outstanding agriculture programs. It also provides a shared space for specialized competitions that support rodeo, livestock, and equine professionals. The City of Pendleton will provide the programming support for this activity and community events.

We are counting on your vision for the future of Oregon students. Thank you again for taking the time to provide the Saturday hearing. I urge your support of \$702 million for the Community College Support Fund.