



UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

Co-Chairs Johnson, Steiner-Hayward, Rayfield and Members of the Committee:

My name is Dr. Elliot Berkman and I live in Eugene. I am President of the University Senate at the University of Oregon and a faculty member in the Department of Psychology. I request that you support robust investments in public higher education, including funding the Public University Support Fund at \$900 million and the Oregon Opportunity Grant at \$200 million.

In my position as both a Psychology instructor and a Senate leader, I see the importance of state support for higher education at the UO. Psychology is one of our most popular majors, so in my teaching I get to know a large number of incredible students. As you know, our students come from all over the state and are from rural and urban areas, families that have many resources and families that have few, and communities that send most people to college and communities that send almost no one. The University of Oregon is for all Oregonians: people new to our community and people who have been here for generations; people who study to become doctors, lawyers, writers, nurses, researchers, police officers, artists, musicians, and entrepreneurs; and people of all nationalities, abilities, sexualities, genders, ethnicities, races, and body types.

State support at the requested level is vital to keeping the University of Oregon a strong, vibrant, diverse, and impactful part of the Oregon experience. Funding for Oregon's public universities creates opportunities for all Oregon students, and it is more critical now than ever. The pandemic has exacerbated existing inequities for BIPOC, lower-income, and rural students. It is critical that colleges and universities have adequate resources to address these disparities and ensure that all students have access to opportunity.

Our public universities and colleges have played an important role in addressing the pandemic. Reduced funding would challenge UO's ability to continue providing the fast, efficient, and accurate research and testing required to ensure our state's equitable recovery.

The willingness of policymakers to commit resources to protect the state's fragile cradle-to-career public education system may determine whether the impact of COVID-19 is measured in years or in generations.

The budget needs of Oregon's education sector are a recipe for an equitable recovery.

Budget cuts to higher education would be particularly harmful during this critical time.

Thank you for serving our community. I know you will be forced to make tough budget decisions this session, and I hope you will prioritize funding for public education.

Sincerely,

Elliot Berkman
Professor of Psychology
Senate President
University of Oregon

UNIVERSITY SENATE

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