

Testimony in favor of Funding Oregon Community Colleges at full CSL

Thank you Co-Chairs and members of the committee. My name is Ross Tomlin and I am the President of Tillamook Bay Community College. Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today.

Oregon's community colleges need a state appropriation of \$702 million for the 21-23 biennium. That funding level would barely maintain our current service level.

Community colleges are very nimble and can react quickly to local needs of both employers and jobseekers. Truck Driving is an example at TBCC where trucking companies came to us in desperate need for drivers. We responded within 6 months with a new Non-credit training certificate. In 2.5 years, we have graduated over 40 students who have all had job offers upon graduation with just one month of training.

Community colleges serve more systemically marginalized students than any other sector of higher ed. We serve students regardless of education and skill level. We are very proud to help them achieve a better life, which is even more important now with so many students experiencing food and housing insecurity. TBCC has developed a food pantry and provides emergency funds for students every term. This has helped most to stay in school and graduate.

In Tillamook County, like in most rural areas, we are the only higher ed opportunity, especially for Career-Technical training. We are a lifeline for these students that would otherwise not be able to receive any post-secondary training that literally changes their lives. We want to be able to continue serving as many students as possible to help them succeed and achieve their goals. We plan to grow more Career-Technical programs to serve our communities over the coming few years, especially in the healthcare area, if we are able to maintain funding at our current service level.

I urge you to please fund Oregon's Community Colleges with a state appropriation of \$702 million for the 21-23 biennium. Thank you.