

Greetings and Talofa to the members of the Ways and Means Budget Committee,

First off, I would like to point out that - students are tired, they are stressed, we are hurting and exhausted. Fun fact I am not from Oregon, but I'm from a US territory within the Pacific called American Samoa. Growing up, the history books manufactured here said America was the land of the free and full of opportunities! I've heard so many great things from college recruiters regarding the state of Oregon, which is why I decided to transfer in Fall 2017 to Portland State. Throughout my 3 years at PSU, I've seen various financial, socioeconomic, racial, and health disparities affect college students not just from PSU but students throughout the state of OR. State disinvestment from higher education is slowly making education inaccessible and unaffordable. Education should be a fundamental human right. But with increasing costs, a university degree will continue to be a privilege reserved for those who can afford it.

Today I am here testifying not as just another first-generation Asian Pacific Islander student leader, but as the student body president of Portland state university here to represent the 26k students who make up our PSU community who have been struggling to pay for school which including our student parents, international students, BIPOC students, first-generation college students, transfer students, student-athletes, commuter students, and so many more. Today we are asking that:

- **\$290 Million be allocated to the Oregon Opportunity Grant** so all students whose family income is from zero to \$100,000 a year can receive financial assistance towards the pursuit of their education
- **\$900 Million for Universities** and along with that working towards **more financial transparency and accountability** from our Universities
- **\$702 Million for community colleges**
- **and to fully fund HB 2590 and HB 2835**

With the ongoing effects of the pandemic, students will continue to struggle, and some have already dropped out. Please do not let the future of my generation be one of the casualties of the pandemic, but you all have the legislative power to make a difference, and that starts with making higher education more affordable. I thank you for your time, and please reach out if you have any further questions!