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February 22, 2023

Dear Representatives McLain, Gamba, Hudson, Levy, and Ruiz and Senators Findley and Woods:

On behalf of the Oregon State University (OSU) College of Education, I submit this letter of support for HB 2609 that would remove authority from the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission (TSPC) to charge and collect fees from Educator Preparation Providers (EPPs) in Oregon. I detail below why such fees would be deleterious not only to the EPPs in Oregon but, ultimately, to pre-service teachers, our schools, and the overall state of Oregon.

As detailed in their own presentation to the Ways and Means Subcommittee, TSPC has received multiple legislative mandates in the past six years that have required their attention and scaling up of staffing to accommodate. I understand that they and the Department of Education have been as nimble as possible to accommodate these mandates with few accompanying resources to implement them. They are to be applauded for doing the best they can with the sparse resources they have been provided.

What I wish to underscore, however, is that EPPs in Oregon have also had to implement these same mandates without any additional resources to do so. For example, [on Slide 26 of their presentation](#), TSPC laid out four such mandates that are directly passed along to EPPs and, ultimately, to future teachers. Each of these mandates – ranging from the edTPA to national accreditation requirements – have not been funded and have required EPPs to find ways to cover these costs or pass along these costs to the future teachers in our programs. Here at OSU, we see the costs of implementing these various mandates far exceeding the tuition and fee revenues brought in by student enrollment. Of all of our programs, in fact, teacher education programs are among the costliest due predominantly to these external mandates. In recent tabulations for our national accreditor, the costs to implement such policy mandates was \$474,887. To offset some of these costs, we implemented a modest student fee that contributes only \$104,000 of those costs. We are loathe to ask more of our students who already struggle to afford higher education and who must go for a year or more without income during their student teaching.

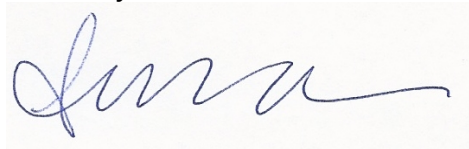
I will be honest in saying that we have – at more than one occasion – wondered if we can continue producing teachers at the same rate we once did given these ever-expanding demands and accompanying costs to implement them. As OSU was the state’s largest producer of new teachers from 2018-2020, such a loss would be catastrophic for Oregon at a time when teacher shortages are so acute.

In other words, the creation of yet another set of fees by TSPC on our already fee-beleaguered programs and students would be counterproductive to the aims of the legislature and the state of Oregon in recruiting and retaining more highly qualified teachers. Moreover, when more than half of our students are first-generation and have high financial need, we also are not able or willing to pass along these costs to our students in the form of fees. Indeed, such a proposed fee flies in the face of the state mandate to produce more underrepresented teachers, especially when we know these are the very students who would ultimately carry the financial burden.

Instead, I would beseech policymakers to consider how to better fund TSPC through state funding. The work they do is important and valuable and they have been strong partners to us in our joint goals. I understand that their needs are diverse and expensive, and they deserve to have the necessary funding to support the work they have been mandated to fulfill.

Thank you for your consideration of these points. Please know you may reach me with any further questions or concerns at [susan.k.gardner@oregonstate.edu](mailto:susan.k.gardner@oregonstate.edu) or by phone at (541) 737-5555.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Susan", on a light-colored rectangular background.

Susan K. Gardner, Ph.D.  
Dean of the College of Education