

Support for HB 3121

Testimony for the Joint Committee On Ways and Means

April 18, 2023

Co-Chair Frederick, Co-Chair McLain, and members of the Joint Subcommittee On Education, for the record, my name is Amy Hofer, Statewide Open Education Program Director with Open Oregon Educational Resources.

Our program promotes textbook affordability for community college and university students, and facilitates widespread adoption of open, low-cost, high-quality materials. HB 3121, which passed the House Higher Education Committee, increases the continuing service level of our program budget in alignment with the Joint Task Force on Student Success Affordability Work Group recommendation.

Since Oregon started investing in textbook affordability in 2015, we have seen measurable success, including over \$17M in student savings from our grant program¹ and a steep reduction in the cost of course materials for transfer degrees and general education requirements.² Our evidence shows that support for affordable course materials is effective and high-impact because spending on textbook affordability has a multiplier effect such that each dollar in state funding spent continues to generate student savings year after year.

I have prepared a modular program budget that starts with the \$4.5 million increase recommended by the Joint Task Force, but can be adjusted to any level of increase and still provide student savings impacts. I urge you to carve out any funding increase for this program. Investment anywhere else would not have the same ongoing savings impact as an investment in our textbook affordability program.

¹ [Continuing Savings from Past OER Grants \(Second Report\)](#) and [Fall 2022 OER Grant Update](#)

² [Six Years of Community College Cost Savings: Impact of statewide funding for textbook affordability](#) and [Two Year Followup: Course material costs for four-year degrees at Oregon's universities](#)

A program funding increase offsets the harm caused by the CSL cuts to higher education that we're facing this year. From the student perspective, increased savings on course materials offset tuition hikes. From the faculty perspective, our programming provides statewide professional development that is being cut at the institutional level, ensuring that materials are not just affordable, but also high quality: relevant, aligned with course outcomes, accessible, and designed with an equity lens.

I hope that you will support Oregon's textbook affordability program by voting yes on a funding increase through HB 3121.