

Attn: Chair Steiner, Chair Sanchez, Vice-Chairs, and Members of the Committee-

My name is Rebecca McCannell and I am a Professor of Art at Western Oregon University. I am testifying today in support of \$1.05 billion appropriation for higher education in Oregon and, most importantly, the \$15 million dollar support fund for Oregon's Regional Universities requested in the Governor's Budget.

Western Oregon University provides life changing education opportunities to our region and our rural communities. **We are working hard to gain HSI status to help more of Oregon's first generation students attain a degree in higher education.** Western Oregon University's small, nurturing, safe and welcoming campus brings energy and educational opportunities to a rural part of the Willamette Valley and **we serve students who wouldn't be accepted at the larger public universities.**

Right now, Oregon's Regional Universities are suffering from catastrophic funding shortfalls, leading to further deep cuts to faculty and staff positions. These cuts threaten program offerings, cannibalize our institutions, and make our efforts to revitalize impossible. Students can't succeed when administrators cut faculty and staff positions and fail to invest in programs and services.

Personally, **my teaching load will increase 50% starting in Fall of 2023** (as compared with my pre-Covid work assignment). I've taught at WOU for nearly 28 years and I've never seen such drastic cuts to programs, faculty and staff.

With additional funding, we can secure faculty and frontline service jobs at our institutions, increase service levels that promote student success, and promote sustainable growth for our institutions. Our students' success depends on strong funding right now, not on a 'rainy day' fund.

Faculty at WOU, alongside fellow regional universities (EOU/OIT/SOU) are united in our commitment to Oregon's future. I urgently ask that Oregon commit \$15 million dollars to supporting our Regional Universities.

Sincerely,
Rebecca McCannell,
Professor of Art
Western Oregon University
mccannr@wou.edu