



American Association of University Professors

Academic Freedom for a Free Society

April 26, 2023

Senator Frederick and Representative McLain, Co-Chairs
Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

Re: House Bill 5025 - Support

Co-Chairs Frederick and McLain, and members of the Committee,

I am the Director of AAUP Oregon, and I was an Oregon State University instructor for more than a decade. On behalf of the more than 6,300 members of the American Association of University Professors in Oregon, our collective bargaining chapters at the University of Oregon, Portland State University, Oregon State University, and Oregon Institute of Technology, and our faculty members across Oregon, I urge you to support HB 5025.

Oregon's higher education institutions are in crisis, and the cause is clear. Our state is 45th in the nation for higher education funding, and as state support for higher education evaporated, university administrators embraced austerity measures, slashing staff and faculty positions and suppressing wages. Worse still, the burden of closing budgetary gaps has largely been pushed onto our students through increasing tuition costs. The results of these political and administrative decisions are ballooning student debt, declining enrollments, and increasing barriers to student success.

Rather than asking our students to pay more money than ever before for decreasing levels of services and support from our public institutions, we must take action now. Students, staff, and faculty at Oregon's public universities and community colleges can't afford for legislators to put this problem off until the next biennium. HB 5025 will furnish the HECC with stability funding for the Public University and Community College Support Funds, which will slow but not prevent program and service reductions in our institutions. Furthermore, increased appropriations for the Oregon Opportunity Grant and Oregon Promise Grant in the next biennium will help more of Oregon's students achieve their educational goals without burdening their financial futures with educational debt.

We urge you to support better higher education funding in Oregon's budget for the next biennium. Specifically, we call on you to appropriate \$1.05 billion for the Public University Support Fund, an additional \$25 million to provide crucial support to the Technical and Regional Universities and Portland State University, and \$400 million for the Oregon Opportunity Grant.

The road to recovery will be a long one for Oregon's public universities and community colleges, but we can begin that journey together by approving the HECC appropriations outlined in HB 5025. Thank you for your commitment to supporting higher education in Oregon.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Victor Reyes". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Victor Reyes
Director, AAUP Oregon