

To: Joint Ways & Means Subcommittee on Education
On: April 26th, 2023
Re: House Bill 5025

Members of the Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. For the record, my name is Katie Hulshizer and I have considered myself a member of the Portland State University community for the past seven years. I have been a classified staff member for nearly two years, following a four year period in which I was employed as a student worker during my undergraduate studies. I am here today because Oregon's higher education system is in crisis and we need the Legislature's support. The Co-Chairs' budget for Higher Education puts the Public University Support Fund, or PUSF, at just under \$950 million, which is \$55 million short of what Universities need to avoid deep cuts, layoffs, or tuition hikes.

I am proud to support my institution as the central HR and Operations Specialist for the College of Education, where I also currently study as a full-time graduate student in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy. My position is responsible for the recruitment, hiring, onboarding, and separation of faculty and staff; promotion and tenure review coordination; data systems and field placement office support; and collective bargaining agreement compliance. I was drawn to this role because it allows me to empower educators in the meaningful work that they do by providing cross-departmental support with University policies, procedures, and administrative functions, therefore indirectly contributing to best practices that have a positive impact on student academic success, sense of belonging, retention, and post-departure achievement.

As an alumni of PSU, I care deeply about this community and the work that students, staff, faculty, and community partners are doing in the interest of positive social, political, technological, and sustainable change for current and future generations. I grew up without the expectation that I would be able to experience higher education due to my socioeconomic background. I'm fortunate to have received federal financial aid that made it possible to achieve a bachelor's degree and to be the first in my family to enroll in a master's program with the aid of my staff tuition reduction benefit. I know from my experiences both as a student and university employee that higher education has the potential to change lives and communities and I firmly believe that education should be regarded as a right, not a privilege.

As you consider the budget for the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, I urge you to invest in improving access to higher education institutions, not putting them at risk of cuts or even closures – which will have disproportionate impacts on historically marginalized communities who need opportunities for socioeconomic mobility more than ever. You can do this by please:

- fully funding the PUSF at \$1.05B
- supporting the Governor's recommendation for Oregon's technical and regional universities to support operations in light of declining enrollment

- providing at least \$100M in additional funding for the Oregon Opportunity Grant; and
- supporting the Governor's recommendation to redirect allocations from our healthy and robust reserves to the services Oregonians need now.

We know that you have difficult decisions to make, but without an increased investment in higher education students, faculty, staff, and communities across our state will be harmed.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Katie Hulshizer