



# American Association of University Professors

*Academic Freedom for a Free Society*

May 3, 2023

Senator Steiner and Representative Sanchez, Co-Chairs  
Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means  
Oregon State Capitol  
Salem, OR 97301

Co-Chairs Steiner and Sanchez, Vice-Chairs Girod, Gomberg, and Smith, and members of the Committee,

I am a Senior Instructor of History at Oregon State University, and I am proud to serve as the President of AAUP Oregon. As a concerned educator and parent and on behalf of the more than 6,300 members of the American Association of University Professors in Oregon, I 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, \$855 million for the Community College 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.

For the last four decades, students, staff, and faculty at American public universities have been forced to endure the slow-collapse of their learning and working conditions. The cause of this decay is obvious: our state and nation has abandoned support for public higher education and shifted responsibility for funding these institutions on the people least prepared to bear that burden: our students and their families. Here in Oregon, we have been particularly miserly with our state's support for higher education. We have the dishonor of being 45<sup>th</sup> in the nation when it comes to investing in higher education for the next generation of working Oregonians. This has led to skyrocketing student debt, guttering salaries of higher ed staff and faculty, and an acute post-pandemic staffing struggle that has left students with less support and fewer resources to succeed. With this lack of support, students are choosing not to enroll because they are realizing they simply cannot afford to come, while faculty and staff are leaving the institution because they simply cannot afford to stay.

The state of Oregon must do better for our students, staff, and faculty. An investment of \$1.05 billion for the PUSF, \$855 million for the CCSF, and \$400 million for the OOG can slow the damage done to our university and community college system by years of legislative neglect. While Oregon's public institutions as a whole have been deeply affected by dwindling support from the state, Oregon's Technical and Regional Universities and Portland State University have faced particularly acute challenges. Therefore, I call on you to furnish \$25 million in stability funding to these vital and important institutions. With these funds, they can both address

individual challenges and work together collectively to find solutions to the larger problems facing these five universities.

Finally, I'd like to highlight a couple of bills that would improve the lives of Oregon's present and future educators. I ask that you support the part-time faculty healthcare fixes in HB 2611A and authorize access to SNAP benefits for graduate employees by supporting SB 609A. American universities rely on graduate employee and adjunct faculty labor, but these valuable employees struggle to make ends meet due to a lack of support from both their institutions and the state. This legislative session, we can change that, and I urge you to do so by support HB 2611A and SB 609A.

Thank you for your dedication to Oregon's university and community college students, staff, and faculty.

Steve Shay  
President, AAUP Oregon