



American Association of University Professors

Academic Freedom for a Free Society

Representative Lively, Chair
Members of the House Committee on Higher Education
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

February 8, 2024

Re: House Bill 4163 - Support

Chair Lively, Vice-Chairs McIntire, Ruiz, and members of the Committee,

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 in advocacy chapters across Oregon, we urge you to support HB 4163.

Oregon's community colleges and public universities have faced a stark challenge since the pandemic: decreasing student enrollment. Nearly every institution in our state has experienced this challenge, and the situation will grow only more dire as our state faces an approaching demographic cliff.

There are many factors influencing this decline in enrollment, but barriers to accessibility and success have undoubtedly caused a portion of our prospective students to delay or even forgo higher education. The grant program outlined in HB 4163 will support our community colleges and public universities to proactively address these issues and build out systems to better prepare for the future.

By lowering barriers to accessibility and supporting success programs, this legislature's support for HB 4163 can create a virtuous cycle by increasing the number of Oregonians who are able to pursue their dreams while simultaneously supporting the continued stability of Oregon's community colleges and public universities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Victor Reyes
Executive Director, AAUP Oregon