

Submitter: michelle huss
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Higher Education
Measure: HB4162

Chair Lively, Vice Chair Ruiz, Vice Chair McIntire, and members of the House Higher Education Committee,

My name is Michelle Huss, and I am a faculty at Portland Community College, I am submitting written testimony in support of HB 4162: The Student Emergency Needs Package, which will make critical investments in basic needs programming and affordable textbooks for students across Oregon.

I began using Open Educational Resources about 6 years ago. I thought it was wonderful for students to not have to worry about the cost of textbooks, on top of tuition. However, I did not know how important OER's were until I started to hear from my students about them.

One of my student's, lived out of her car and never bought textbooks for any of her classes. She couldn't afford to buy them. When she needed to see the book, she went to the library and she often used them during the 2 hour reserve window and frantically tried to retain the information. Sometimes the library did not have the text on reserve and she would do poorly in the class without being able to read and reference it. She felt embarrassed about her situation and she did not share with her teachers. She did not want to share her situation with anyone and she felt that her last amount of pride would be lost if she admitted that she didn't have the money to purchase the book. She told me that she was doing so well in the class because she didn't have to live that way while she was my student. This student went on to finish my class and many others, that use OER's, and she is now a student at Portland State University. She will graduate in Spring with a degree in Economics. Removing the barrier of textbook costs helped her achieve her goals.

I had another student tell me that he specifically signed up for my class when he saw the \$0 for textbook symbol. He shared that he had a family and that it made it easier to sign up for a class that he knew he would have everything he needed already, without worrying about making decisions about which books he could buy for school.

These stories are not unique and I have heard similar ones from many students these past 6 years. Our students have pride and often do not share how much hardship they face to stay in school. I know OER's have lowered barriers for my students, even when they don't say anything. Please consider this my testimony and strong support of HB 4162.

Thank you for your consideration and I hope you will support HB 4162: The Student Emergency Needs Package,

Michelle Huss, Biology Faculty and Department Chair, Portland Community College,
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