

Testimony in Support of HB 4162

Kevin Moore, OER Coordinator, Mt. Hood Community College 2/8/2024

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

My name is Kevin Moore, the OER coordinator for Mt. Hood Community College. I am here today to speak 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.

At MHCC we serve more than 5,000 students, full time and part time annually, and more than 12,000 students enrolled in special programming and community education. Our district includes Gresham, east Portland, and eastern Multnomah County. Roughly 40% of our students receive Pell grants, a third receive Oregon Promise grants, and another 20% received government loans.

Many of our students face issues of houselessness and food insecurity due to persistent increases in the cost of housing and cost of living in general, while wages remain stubbornly stagnant. Unfortunately, the cost of education continues to trend dramatically upward. At MHCC we have striven to keep tuition and fees low, but the decades long textbook affordability crisis has been a mitigating factor in our efforts.

Fortunately, our Textbook Affordability program, begun in 2015, has made significant strides in saving students money on textbook costs. Much of this progress is attributable to the funding and programming our faculty enjoy through Open Oregon Education Resources.

State funded grants for professional development in OER and open education have saved \$3,022,502 in textbook costs for 16,501 MHCC students since 2015. More than 80 MHCC faculty have earned \$130,454 in grants and stipends for developing OER, writing peer reviews of OER in their fields, participating in Equity & Open Education training, and many other professional development activities. For every dollar spent, faculty participation programming conducted by Open Oregon Education Resources has saved each student \$23.17 – a significant return of investment.

And one that saves students money they can spend on rent, food, bills, their children, or even a little entertainment amidst their busy lives.

Thank you for your time, and I hope that I can count on your support of HB 4162: The Student Emergency Needs Package. Students cannot wait any longer!

Sincerely,
Kevin W. Moore