



Date: February 27, 2025

To: House Committee on Higher Education and Workforce Development

From: Amy Hofer, Statewide Open Education Program Director, Open Oregon Educational Resources

Re: Support for Student Basic Needs and Workforce Stabilization Act (HB 3182 + HB 3183)

Chair Hudson, Vice Chairs Fragala and Harbrick, and members of the Committee,

Open Oregon Educational Resources is our statewide textbook affordability program. We promote textbook affordability for community college and university students and facilitate widespread adoption of open, low-cost, high-quality materials. You can visit the openoregon.org website for more information showcasing ten years of program impact across the state.

The Student Basic Needs and Workforce Stabilization Act addresses a longstanding problem: textbooks cost so much that students can't afford to buy them. Research shows that unaffordable textbooks limit student success and increase student debt.¹ We also know that students with food or housing insecurity are more likely to skip buying required textbooks.²

Here are a few of the things that the statewide textbook affordability program does to address the problem.

- Oregon is a national leader in open education because of our well-developed community of practice.
- We regularly offer professional development and grant opportunities for faculty to support innovative course redesign with no-cost and low-cost course materials.
- And we offer policy support. We work with each community college and university to implement legislative requirements and assess their impacts.

¹ [Small Dollar Amounts Are Significant](#)

² [Fixing the Broken Textbook Market, Third Edition](#)

Since Oregon started investing in textbook affordability in 2015, we have seen measurable success, including \$25M in student savings from our grant program³ and a steep reduction in the cost of course materials for transfer degrees and general education requirements.⁴ Our evidence shows that support for affordable course materials is effective and high-impact because spending on textbook affordability has a multiplier effect such that each dollar in state funding spent continues to generate student savings year after year.

However, there is still much more that we want to do. The state investment in our program has been flat since 2019. With an ongoing program funding increase, we can:

- Expand our grant program at ~\$12 in student savings per \$1 spent. We will put out a call for grant proposals and fund new projects to adopt, adapt, and create open educational resources.
- Expand professional development for faculty at up to ~\$50 in student savings per \$1 spent. We will offer additional on-ramps for new participants to write peer reviews of open educational resources, attend our equity and open education faculty cohort, and participate in a one-week course redesign sprint.
- Develop Oregon-specific course materials for Common Course Numbering courses that are tailored to our new statewide learning outcomes. All of the materials will be available for free online or in print at low cost. They will come with course plans and assessments so that faculty can easily adopt or adapt them.

This ongoing program funding increase was recommended by the Joint Task Force on Student Success for Underrepresented Students in Higher Education. Financial aid rarely stretches to cover course materials, so funding for affordable textbooks is an essential component of a comprehensive statewide affordability strategy. I hope that you will each support Oregon's students by voting yes on this student needs package, and championing it through the Ways & Means budget process.

³ [Continuing Savings from Past OER Grants \(Third Report\)](#)

⁴ [Six Years of Community College Cost Savings: Impact of statewide funding for textbook affordability](#) and [Two Year Followup: Course material costs for four-year degrees at Oregon's universities](#)