

Submitter: Mason Lyons

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Higher Education and Workforce  
Development

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3213

Hello Chair Hudson, Vice Chair Fragala, Vice Chair Harbick, and members of the House Higher Education Committee.

My name is Mason Lyons, and I am a graduate research and teaching assistant at Oregon State University. I am here to speak in support of HB 3213, which will raise Oregon's open government and public records standards by ensuring that public university foundations are subject to the public records laws of this state.

During my time at Oregon State, I have been lucky to teach the next generation of problem solvers and scientists who will be crucial to our sustained existence and enjoyment of life as we know it. Through my 3 years of experience as a teaching assistant, I know personal interactions with students yield the most powerful teaching moments, and the quality of these depend strongly on how many teachers, specifically graduate teaching assistants, are available to students and the corresponding load or stress on the teachers. Lately, funding cuts to departments from the university have led to decreases in teaching assistant staffing while enrollment continues to increase. This not only decreases the available teachers, but also increases the stress we experience and further lowers the quality of our teaching. I have personally seen myself and fellow teachers make the terrible decision to either sacrifice the quality of their teaching or the quality of their self-care, which can only last for so long. In light of this primary function loss for the university, teachers look at where money is going considering increased enrollment should mean higher capital. When we are unable to clearly see how a public institution is spending tax-payer dollars, deep distrust is sown and any reputation is quickly ruined. If no explanation is given, it is only natural to assume malpractice therefore increased transparency is required to ensure responsible management of funds and maintenance of a university's primary obligation, teaching.

Thank you for your time, and I hope that I can count on your support of HB 3213.