



Office of the President

February 14, 2025

House Higher Education Committee
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, OR 97302

RE: Support for HB 3182 and HB 3183 – The Student Basic Needs and Workforce Stabilization Act

Chair Hudson, Vice Chairs Fragala and Harbick, and Members of the House Higher Education Committee,

At Eastern Oregon University, we believe every student should have the opportunity to learn, grow, and contribute to their communities without the overwhelming burden of housing instability, food insecurity, or the high cost of educational materials. Unfortunately, for too many of our students, these basic needs barriers stand in the way of their success.

I strongly support **House Bill 3182 and House Bill 3183**, which take critical steps toward ensuring that all students, regardless of their background or financial situation, can access the fundamental resources they need to complete their education and enter the workforce prepared and confident.

In 2021, Oregon took a significant step forward by funding Benefits Navigators on each campus to help students connect with support services. However, guidance alone is insufficient—our students need tangible resources and assistance to meet their most pressing needs. **HB 3182** builds on this foundation by providing **\$10 million in grant funding** for direct student support, including food assistance, emergency housing, transportation help, and other essential services. It also funds the **Task Force on Student Housing**, a critical step in addressing the growing student housing crisis and developing long-term solutions for affordable, stable housing. Additionally, **\$6.5 million in funding for nonprofit housing initiatives** will ensure that programs like College Housing Northwest's Affordable Rents for College Students (ARCS) can continue helping students stay housed while completing their degrees.

Equally important, **HB 3183 invests in Open Educational Resources (OER), reducing textbook costs** and making higher education more financially accessible. The cost of textbooks should never be why a student falls behind, skips a class, or takes on additional debt. Expanding OER ensures that every student has access to high-quality learning materials, regardless of their financial situation.

At EOU, I see firsthand how students balance multiple jobs, support families, and make impossible choices between rent, groceries, and school. These bills don't just provide funding—they provide **hope**. They tell our students that their state sees them, values them, and believes in their ability to succeed.

I urge you to support **HB 3182 and HB 3183** and help us build a future where no student has to choose between their education and their basic needs. Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Oregon's students.

With appreciation,

Kelly A. Ryan, Ph.D.
President
Eastern Oregon University