

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

My name is Gonzalo Bustamante-Moya, and I am a PhD student at the Philosophy and the Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Departments, as well as a Graduate Employee, at the University of Oregon. I am submitting a written testimony in enthusiastic 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.

As we witness an overhaul of our political institutions nationwide and as our communities experience an intensification of precarity in light of the widening of privatization efforts in all spheres of existence, the indispensability of public goods has come even more vividly into view. Today more than ever, we individually and collectively recognize that public services, spaces, and long-standing institutions are fundamental axes of our democratic life and irreplaceable pillars for our collective flourishing.

Public universities are necessary common goods and, as such, should be accountable to the public they serve. University Foundations are an integral part of public universities and therefore should be accountable to the public too. Public universities are democratic and plural spaces that, consequently, must be democratically governed to secure their mission as community-based institutions. The same standard must be applied to University Foundations, institutions who benefit from the university as a democratic space but are not governed in the same spirit. It is Oregonians who sustain, benefit from, and work at the University of Oregon, so it should be Oregonians who get to hold the University of Oregon and the UO Foundation accountable.

This is particularly important because our public universities are one of the last remaining sites for multicultural exchanges and community-building. However, notwithstanding their essence as common goods, public universities in Oregon and all other states are facing profound struggles and visible contradictions. For example, as faculty, student, and staff workers demand living wages from their university administrations, the latter have refused to comply with the excuse of diminishing profits, reduced budgets, and incrementing costs. As this takes place, we nonetheless also see increasing prime student housing developments, incredibly high wages for university administrators, and multi-billion donations by enterprises and philanthropic actors.

As a PhD student and Graduate Employee at the University of Oregon, I have experienced this contradiction first hand, particularly as the classes I am hired to teach get bigger—diminishing my capacity to provide the quality education my students deserve—and the financial support I require to have a dignified life is reduced because of inflation and rising living costs. I decided to study philosophy because I love to think critically and because I believe that teaching young people how to engage in philosophical reflection and action is deeply important for a thriving

democratic society. The latter, however, is not possible in a university context ridden with precarity, mistrust, and a lack of accountability and democratic governance.

By supporting HB 3213, I believe we can promote more accountability and democratic governance in the public universities we so love, care for, and wish to protect. It is a measure that will provide a better sense of how our institutions are financially managed and that will allow the Oregon public to make sure that their shared institutions are acting with care and with their common good as the main and primary goal. HB 3213 is an opportunity for Oregonians to trust that their universities operate in their public interest and that the resources that they have privately received are not being used to uplift private or corporate profit but to promote the well-being of Oregon as a whole.

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