

Oregon Legislature, Senate Committee on Education
Senate Bill 231 Testimony
March 26, 2025

Dear Senator Frederick, Senator Weber and Members of the Committee:

I write in support of SB 231 to appropriate \$1,526,167 to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission for distribution to the Oregon Campus Resilience Consortium (Consortium).

The Consortium will benefit all Oregon colleges and universities by providing a collective framework to prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters and crises.

The Consortium's benefits will include common trainings, sharing best practices, incident management teams, and mutual aid agreements. The best way to mitigate disasters and crises is to avoid them altogether or minimize their impact. The Consortium will provide valuable information and resources for Oregon's community colleges and public and private universities to better avoid and respond to all types of hazards.

When the unavoidable happens, post-secondary institutions must be ready to help each other. Critical incidents can be overwhelming for the campus at which they occur. It is difficult for the institution's employees to respond to an incident while also trying to keep minimum normal operations running. If funded, the Consortium will provide an incident management team with seasoned experts available to respond to any campus in the State and assist with local needs. We know from past experiences how important institutional resource sharing is during crisis events.

I have served as an incident commander at two different universities, including the University of Oregon, responding to power outages, the COVID-19 pandemic, other infectious disease outbreaks, wildfire-related events and other incidents. I am a member of the Disaster Resilient Universities (DRU) Advisory Committee and understand the DRU's value as a national network for colleges and universities to share best practices. The Consortium will provide that and more for all Oregon colleges and universities.

I currently serve as the Senior Association Vice Chancellor for Research Infrastructure & Operations at the University of California, San Francisco, although the views and opinions expressed here are my own.

I appreciate your consideration and urge passage of SB 231.

Sincerely,

Brian E. Smith