

I have worked alongside student staff at the University of Oregon for over 10 years, and in that time, I have seen and heard of their struggles, not the least of which are affordable housing, textbooks costs, food insecurity, burdens on their mental health, and basic needs and services. They work long hours and often have multiple jobs while also keeping on top of their studies. They must still take out loans to finish their education. They can't break even, let alone get ahead. Without adequate funding universities can't recruit and retain quality faculty and staff, and students will face higher class sizes and reduced services. Thriving universities employ many in their community and offer services that not only the campus community but the broader community can benefit from. They are boon to economies and educate future leaders of the nation.

It is vital that we ensure that more students, especially marginalized, underrepresented and underserved students, can access and complete higher education without crushing debt, which will lead to a stronger workforce and economy. Investing in higher education means investing in student success, workforce development, and the future of Oregon. Such investment will pay dividends for the continued growth of Oregon. We need legislators to prioritize stable and sustainable funding, as it will lessen the burden on our students and improve retention and graduation rates. It will allow students to focus on developing their skills and deciding their futures. In uncertain times like this it is imperative we invest in our best resource—ourselves, our children, and our students.

Increased investments made to the following funds and bills will provide for our Higher Education needs and the sustainable future of Oregon:

- The Public University Support Fund (PUSF) – additional \$275 million to bring overall funding to \$1.275 billion
- The Community College Support Fund (CCSF) – additional \$120 million increase, to bring overall funding to \$920 million
- The Oregon Opportunity Grant (OOG) – additional \$150 million increase, to bring overall funding to \$458 million.

- Community College Part-Time Faculty Pay Parity: HB 2669-1 – would appropriate \$40 million and require community colleges to pay part-time faculty at least 85% of what the community college pays full-time faculty.
- Student Basic Needs and Workforce Stabilization Act: HB 3182 & 3183
  - Benefit Navigators: \$10 million
  - Affordable Student Housing: \$6.5 million
  - Textbook Affordability: \$5.2 million