



April 17, 2025

Dear Co-Chair Kate Lieber, Co-Chair Tawna Sanchez, and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means,

I am writing today as president of the PSU Foundation, the organization that raises private contributions to support the students, faculty and programs of Portland State University. I appreciate the opportunity to advocate for increasing the Public University Support Fund in the 2025-27 biennium to \$1.275 billion.

In my experience, when individuals and grant-making foundations invest in PSU—Oregon's urban access university – they do so because they view the university as a vital anchor for Portland and for Oregon. Overwhelmingly, they give to benefit aspiring students, supporting scholarships and student success.

But private contributions make up the frosting on the public university cake, not the cake itself. Only strong and steady public funding can protect the overall public university system that is so critical to our region. It is a system that ultimately drives economic growth, prepares a skilled workforce, contributes to stable communities, enhances democracy, and expands opportunity for all Oregonians.

With additional resources, Oregon's public universities can:

- Keep tuition affordable and prevent further financial strain on students who are already struggling with rising costs.
- Ensure student success by maintaining and expanding vital support services, such as academic advising, mental health resources, and career development programs.
- Sustain high-quality education by retaining top faculty, modernizing learning spaces, and strengthening programs that align with workforce needs.

I urge you to support this essential funding increase. Doing so is also an important signal to donors that our publicly supported educational institutions in Oregon remain strong and worthy of private investment.

Sarah Schwarz, President, PSU Foundation