

Chairs Lieber and Sanchez, Vice Chairs Girod, Gomberg & Smith, and members of the committee,

My name is Joe Rivera Soto, and I am an academic professional and instructor at Portland State University. I am writing in strong support of HB 2997, which will establish a designated grant fund within HECC to support college access and success programs for underserved students in Oregon.

Hundreds of PSU students rely on the support of TRIO Student Support Services at Portland State University alone. I am a TRIO alumnus and am now serving students in the same program that helped me complete my undergraduate degree and successfully prepare for graduate school.

Programs like TRIO have helped countless students navigate financial aid, succeed academically, and persist to graduation. Without sustainable funding, many students will lose critical resources that support their college journey.

I urge you to **support HB 2997** to ensure that these essential programs continue to serve students across Oregon. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Joe Rivera Soto, M.S.Ed.

Coordinator of Instruction and Advising

TRIO Student Support Services

Portland State University