



American Association of University Professors

Academic Freedom for a Free Society

April 30, 2025

Joint Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Education
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

Re: SB 5525 - Support

Co-Chairs Sollman and Ruiz, and members of the Committee,

I am an Instructor of Management in the Lundquist College of Business at the University of Oregon, and I am proud to Chair the Politics Committee for my union, United Academics of UO. I also represent my union on AAUP Oregon's Legislative Committee. As a concerned public educator, and on behalf of the more than 6,300 faculty represented by the American Association of University Professors in Oregon, I urge you to support better higher education funding in Oregon's budget for the next biennium. Specifically, we call on you to appropriate \$450 million for the Oregon Opportunity Grant to expand financial aid, \$1.275 billion in the Public University Support Fund, and \$920 million in the Community College Support Fund to keep tuition affordable. Additionally, \$22 million for the Student Basic Needs Package - House Bills 3182 & 3183 - will provide essential housing and food assistance to help students stay enrolled and graduate.

This country has seen a decades-long decline in higher education investment, which has led to skyrocketing student debt, plummeting student enrollment, and stagnating wages for university workers. We feel these national trends even more keenly here in Oregon due to our state's insufficient support for higher education. Of the 14 states in the Western US in 2023, we invested less in our public university and community college students than all but Montana, Colorado, and Arizona. This leaves our students choosing not to enroll because they simply cannot afford to come, while faculty and staff leave our institutions because they simply cannot afford to stay.

As a state, we can no longer ignore this problem. Every dollar spent today on Oregon's students is an investment in our state's present and future. By appropriating \$1.275 billion for the PUSF, \$920 million for the CCSF, and \$450 million for the OOG in the next biennium, our public institutions have the opportunity to chart a path out of this national crisis and facilitate student access and success in higher education. Furthermore, food and housing insecurity prevents too many of our students from being able to complete their education, so I urge you to appropriate \$22 million to fund the Student Basic Needs Package.

Thank you for supporting the students, staff, and faculty at Oregon's public universities and community colleges.

Dan Howard
Chair, UAUO Politics Committee
Instructor, Lundquist College of Business
University of Oregon