

Good Morning Co-Chair Komp, Co-Chair Monroe, and members of the committee,

My name is Ashley Anderson and I'm an undergraduate student at the University of Oregon. I'm also the Nontraditional Student Advocate for the Associated Students of the University of Oregon. I'm proud to say I'm also a native Oregonian, having lived in Salem for 20 years.

I was fortunate enough to start my college career at Chemeketa Community College where I received a full-tuition scholarship for graduating high school with a GPA of 3.5 or better. The Chemeketa Scholars Program provided me with two years of affordable and quality education.

Transferring to the University of Oregon was a smooth transition for me. However, my family was faced with paying extremely high tuition and housing costs.

Prioritizing post-secondary education doesn't equate to tuition rising at twice the rate of household incomes. I'm a firm advocate for allocating more funds to Oregon's community colleges, for OUS and for OHSU's educational programs to create a bigger and more diverse student population, and to ensure that Oregon can accomplish its 40-40-20 goals by 2025.

By making higher education more affordable to all students, Oregon will produce more leaders, which will lead to a more robust Oregon economy. We must remember how diverse Oregon's students are: students transferring from community colleges to four year institutions, first generation college students, students who are middle-aged have children, mortgages, & jobs, students returning to or starting college after a break, and students from every socio-economic background.

Don't short-change potential students from attaining their goal of higher education. Don't leave behind Oregonians who want to be highly trained and well educated. Don't make higher education in Oregon a financial burden for working families. Invest in Oregon's future; invest in Oregon's students.

I look forward to continuing this conversation about making higher education more affordable and attainable for students. And lastly, I'd like to thank the committee for this opportunity.