

Testimony to the Ways and Means Committee
Regarding Campus Public Service Programs
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Co-Chair Komp, Co-Chair Monroe, and members of the committee, my name is Lawrence Wallack and I am Dean of the College of Urban and Public Affairs at Portland State University. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the importance of campus public service programs – programs that link business, non-profits, and government to leverage resources for economic and social change. I want to provide you with just three examples of the exceptional public service programs at PSU and explain why these programs enhance our teaching, research, and service mission.

The National Education for Women Leadership Oregon program – NEW Leadership Oregon -- is a nationally recognized leadership training program. It creates opportunities for diverse women from all higher education institutions in Oregon to pursue careers in public service. Sunny Petit, director of the program, has been invited to the White House next month to meet with President Obama as part of an event of the White House Council on Women and Girls.

The Oregon Solutions program takes on complex community problems in a way that provides support for the economy, the community, and the environment through innovative collaborative approaches bringing together business, government, and non-profit organizations. It does this in dozens of places around the state including being a catalyst for the rebuilding of Vernonia, reducing flood risk in Tillamook, and balancing the needs of irrigation and the environment in the Umatilla basin. Oregon Solutions was recognized as one of the top 50 innovative government programs in the country by Harvard University's Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation.

The Institute for Portland Metropolitan Studies works to advance data driven regional economic development in Oregon and southwest Washington. The Institute's Greater Portland Pulse project is a public-private partnership that collects and applies community data to strengthen public policy decision-making and advance economic development.

These programs have many things in common but the most important is the value of collaborative community engagement. Community engagement is a distinguishing characteristic of 21st century universities and reflects shared leadership and partnership with the community. What we still call "public service" is fundamentally different now than it has been in the past.

When Robert Putnam the Harvard scholar who studies social capital and author of the book **Bowling Alone** spoke at PSU, he acknowledged our remarkable reputation for community engagement. He said that he wished that one day Harvard would become the Portland State University of the East Coast. He made

a lot of friends at PSU that day, but more importantly he understood that community engagement is the alchemy by which even the oldest and greatest universities can continually renew and enrich themselves.

Today, universities across this country understand that institutional excellence must include public service engagement with the community. This engagement initiates a collaborative, collective process to better understand problems, better design solutions, more robustly test these solutions, and more fully refine and apply the results.

Public service at Portland State University makes the university stronger, it makes the community stronger, and it makes our state stronger.

Public service programs add to the core mission of the university in many ways. For example, these programs:

1. Enhance the educational process
 - a. Brings knowledge and expertise from the community into the classrooms and other parts of the university
 - b. Provides new opportunities for students to gain deep practical experience and apply academic concepts
 - c. Provides opportunities for students to practice being engaged citizens as well as being knowledgeable students
 - d. Connects with potential students, especially traditionally underrepresented ones
2. Enhance research
 - a. Provides urgent, timely problems for study
 - b. Requires multidisciplinary research
 - c. Helps shape research around real world problems
 - d. Provides opportunities where solutions can be tested out in a living lab setting
 - e. Helps secure larger research grants
3. Enhance the status of the university and increases public support
 - a. Serves as entry point for many university private donors
 - b. Generates considerable extramural funding
 - c. Provides powerful examples of how the university makes a difference
 - d. Draws national recognition through award winning projects and national rankings focused on innovation and application

Thank you very much for the opportunity to provide comments. I am pleased to answer any questions.