

# THE OREGON IDEA

SUPPORTING STUDENTS, COMMUNITY COLLEGES, AND UNIVERSITIES TO BUILD A BETTER OREGON

Testimony of Ryan Robinson  
on behalf of The Oregon Idea  
re: OHSU Budget

Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education  
April 10, 2013

Co-Chairs Komp and Monroe and Committee members, I am Ryan Robinson, Executive Director of The Oregon Idea. The Oregon Idea is a coalition of business and community leaders, students and supporters of our public colleges and universities who have come together in support of the idea that investment in post-secondary education is essential to create a pathway to opportunity for our people and prosperity for our state.

In the discussions about the broad policy goals of 40-40-20, it is easy to overlook the importance of specialized programs such as OHSU's nursing and post-graduate programs in meeting the health care needs of the state. This is the particular concern of our organization, and it is why we urge you to reconsider a budget which freezes funding for these programs at current levels.

Our needs for health care professionals are urgent and will only increase in the decades ahead. Making necessary increased funding for OHSU's medical, dental and nursing schools in line with state resources and with your commitments to other sectors of the education budget.

OHSU's medical, dental and nursing programs are pipelines that deliver highly competent, healthy professionals for our state and provide our health care system with students who help to meet the health care needs of our rural communities and underserved populations while earning their degrees. These are the benefits of a public institution that takes responsibility for meeting the needs of underserved Oregonians through the Office of Rural Health and the Area Health Education Center.

Doing business is more expensive, so asking OHSU to operate for the next two years with the same \$56 million provided these programs during the last two years will force consequences. Tuition will further increase to try and patch budget differences, slots for Oregon residents will be reduced as the need for out-of-state tuition increases, and OHSU's contribution to the health care needs of rural communities and underserved populations will be reduced due to lack of resources.

Finally, we call your attention to Senate Bill 2, which proposes to establish a "Scholars for a Healthy Oregon" program to provide a more affordable pathway to its education programs for talented Oregon students and to incentivize graduates to devote a portion of their careers to meeting the needs of underserved Oregonians. The Oregon Idea strongly recommends this initiative as a creative combination of affordable access and community service.

In closing, The Oregon Idea respectfully requests that you provide \$67 million in General Funds for 2013-15 for OHSU's medical, dental and nursing schools and the related health education and rural health programs which are so critical to the health of our communities and the economy of our state.

Thank you.