



**To: Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education**  
**Date: April 6, 2015**  
**RE: \$550 million funding level for Oregon community colleges**

Good morning, Chair Monroe, Chair Komp, and members of the committee.

For the record, my name is Hanna Vaandering and I serve as president of the Oregon Education Association. OEA represents 42,000 professional educators including community college faculty and staff at campuses across Oregon.

I want to acknowledge and thank the Ways and Means Co-chairs and this committee for setting a funding “floor” for community colleges at \$535 million. However we know that this level of funding will not restore the cuts community colleges have experienced for nearly a decade now.

In order to help turn the corner from the Great Recession, community colleges require an investment from the state at \$550 million.

I believe we can all say with confidence that Oregon community colleges are a smart investment. They provide affordable, accessible education to Oregonians from all walks of life. Whether helping a young person earn a GED to build a better future, securing a two year degree or certificate, facilitating the achievement of a four year college degree, or re-training workers for the jobs of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century economy, community colleges do it all. They truly are a *community* resource.

There is no better way to strengthen Oregon’s economy than to invest in education. It is time to make the difficult decisions in order to avoid massive increases to student tuition, layoffs to faculty, closures of vital programs, or the increasing over-reliance on part time faculty.

Our community college students need you to keep working to find the additional funds necessary to invest in Oregonians. Oregon students are counting on you, and the future strength of the economy is counting on you. Please fund Oregon community colleges at \$550 million and keep our state moving toward more opportunity and prosperity for everyone.