



The Associated Students of Oregon State University  
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Co-chairs Frederick, McLain and members of the Education Subcommittee of the Joint Committee on Ways & Means,

I am writing on behalf of the students at Oregon State University in regards to HB 5024. I know that this comes from one, but please let this serve as an example of the struggles that students are facing across the state when it comes to access to higher education.

Every year, students are faced with rising tuition costs. As has been made clear, there has been a shift in the state's support of higher education, where students pay for about 70 percent of the costs associated with school and the state about 30 percent. Every year, ASOSU hears from students that are struggling to make ends meet, who are face growing food insecurity and hunger, and who are without places to live or to sleep. We know this, because ASOSU as an organization provides services that are trying to counteract these very problems. Unfortunately, rising tuition costs simply have not made this possible.

As you know, the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) has submitted their recommended budget for Oregon's public universities. This includes a \$186 million increase in the Public University Support Fund (PUSF) for a total of \$923 million for the 2019-21 biennium. ASOSU adamantly supports this increase, as it not only reflects the increasing costs of higher education but the increasing difficulties our students continue to face.

To adopt the HECC's recommended budget is the single most important step you can take to create upward mobility for thousands of Oregonians. You can help curb tuition increases and reduce the continually staggering debt load that many students now face when they graduate with, or without, a degree. This investment will do more than just keep increases below 5 percent; it will also enable increased investments in student services, advising, and other key programs that will both increase retention and the time to graduation.

A budget that does not cover the very real state-mandated cost increases that all universities must pay will simply continue to shift the burden of a college education onto the shoulders of students who are least able to bear this burden.

In fact, all seven public universities have indicated that without an increase of at least \$120 million, for a total investment of \$867 million, universities will not be able to hold tuition below a 5 percent increase. OSU's Board of Trustees has indicated that they will do their best not to increase above 5 percent, but, without this funding, OSU could see substantial cuts to OSU programs, as well as faculty and student services. The quality of our education should not be jeopardized because we cannot afford it.

As students, we have faced a life-time of a broken revenue system in Oregon. Please consider an investment in public universities as an important step to break from this trend. Oregon can do better than continuing to shift the burden of a university education onto the shoulders of students and their families. Please increase the PUSF by \$186 million for the 2019-21 biennium.

Sincerely,

Justin Bennett, ASOSU President