

April 10, 2019

Dear Co-Chair Rowland, Co-Chair Smith-Warner, Co-Vice Chair Knopf, Co-Vice Chair Smith, and members of the Committee:

In advance of the April 11 hearing, I am submitting written testimony. As an Oregon educator, and a parent of an elementary school child in Portland Public Schools, I commend your dedication to improving the quality of education offered in our state. To educate Oregon's future workforce, and to "grow" our next generation of taxpayers, funding our education system is essential.

More specifically, I want to note that the Oregon legislature has a unique opportunity to invest in Oregon students, as well as reform our tax system, but the current plan does the state's economy a great disservice: it leaves college students behind.

As you are likely aware, by next year, 65% of new jobs are expected to require education and training beyond high school. To provide Oregonians the opportunity they need to thrive and for businesses to help grow the economy, we need to support students from cradle to career. It is imperative that when our high school graduation rate increases - as it must - those graduates have community colleges to help them enter the workforce fully prepared to work in the new, high-tech Oregon economy.

Since the onset of Measure 5, Oregon students have seen tuition increases vastly outpace inflation while programs and services have been cut because state investment fell further behind. Student debt is higher than it has ever been, and this is a concern for us in college leadership. For students, the cost of **not** attending college means they have very little chance to ever enter the middle class.

At Portland Community College, I am the President of the Sylvania Campus, the oldest and largest of PCC's campuses. Due to the state funding shortage, we have had to turn students away from high-wage, high-tech programs, and we have also, unfortunately, needed to raise tuition. Programs like Radiography, where graduates earn approximately \$60,000/year to start, would be able to expand their enrollment if community colleges are fully funded. With continuing budget cuts, expansion of those high-wage programs is impossible (and in fact, the programs may even need to contract and serve fewer students). Recently, our Radiography program has achieved a 100% placement rate for employment, as well as a 100% pass rate on licensure/certification exams.

In summary, I urge you to support Governor Kate Brown's call for including post-secondary education in the spending proposal before this committee.

Sincerely,  
Lisa Avery

Sylvania Campus President  
Portland Community College