

Thank you, Chair Wagner, Vice Chair Knopp and members of the committee. My name is Emily Simnitt, and my pronouns are she/hers. This week marks my 7th year teaching writing, public speaking, and community literacy at the University of Oregon in Eugene. – where I love to live! I'm thrilled and honored to be nominated to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission to serve as representative of 4-year colleges. I returned to higher education after a 12-year career in journalism and public information to grow and support equitable access to the critical literacy skills necessary to address the challenges facing us today – learning to critically read, write, listen, and deliberate across difference have only grown in importance for our students and for Oregon. Learners— all of us — thrive when we feel like we belong. We feel a sense of belonging when we can use our strengths to contribute. If confirmed, I commit to recognize and build on the strengths of *all* Oregonians so they can succeed in post-secondary learning. Thank you for your consideration.