

Co-Chairs Frederick, McLain, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Shirley Hancock and I live in Portland. I am a proud graduate of the University of Oregon School of Journalism. My degree from the UO led to a fulfilling and meaningful career in print and broadcast journalism. That's why I respectfully request that you support robust investments in public higher education, including funding the Public University Support Fund at \$900 million, and the Oregon Opportunity Grant at \$200 million.

I received a degree in journalism from the UO, with a focus on newspaper and broadcast reporting in 1980. After graduating, I spent over 25 years in the television news business, most of that at the CBS affiliate in Portland, anchoring and reporting. In this role I helped keep Oregonians informed about their schools, communities, state government and more. Now, I help people find their voice as a PR consultant, writer and speaking coach. The real-world work experiences and mentorship I was able to receive at the University of Oregon launched my career and allowed me to contribute to our state. A well-informed community is a thriving community, and the UO's School of Journalism graduates excellent reporters, broadcast journalists, and other professionals who inform and educate the people of our state.

Funding for Oregon's public universities creates opportunities, like those I benefitted from, for all Oregon students, and it is more critical now than ever. The pandemic has exacerbated existing inequities for BIPOC, lower-income, and rural students. It is critical that colleges and universities have adequate resources to address these disparities and ensure that all students have access to opportunity.

Access to opportunity doesn't end with funding for public universities. It's also important that our state makes meaningful investments in student financial aid programs. The Oregon Opportunity Grant is Oregon's only state-funded, need-based grant program for college students. Approximately 40,000 students receive Opportunity Grants each year, yet funding limitations have meant that the grant is not available to thousands more students who demonstrate significant financial need. Funding for the Oregon Opportunity Grant should be increased in order to provide a realistic possibility of college affordability for Oregon's lower- and middle-income students.

Thank you for serving our community. As a journalist, I have followed your work closely for decades, and I know you will be forced to make tough budget decisions this session. I hope you will prioritize funding for public education so that all students have opportunities to succeed, thrive, and give back to our state.

Sincerely,  
Shirley Hancock  
Portland, Oregon