

Dear Chair Wagner, Vice Chair Girod, and members of the Senate Rules committee,

For the record, my name is Katí Rodriguez Perez and I am a third year student at the University of Oregon double majoring in Indigenous, Race and Ethnic Studies and English. I am also a Policy Coordinator Intern at the Oregon Student Association. I am testifying in support of SB854.

This bill would make it easier for students, like myself, in connecting with the Board of Trustees and having the concerns of students, faculty and staff be heard AND listened to at their meetings. Currently at UO, only TWO of the 14 members on the Board of Trustees are BIPOC. It is so important that meetings held by the Board of Trustees become more accessible to university community members including faculty, staff and students as they are making vital financial decisions that do and will impact underrepresented students. The lack of representation within the Board of Trustees creates an extreme divide between them and faculty, staff and students as they are not able to fully comprehend the experiences of these community members. This bill would require the BOT to listen directly from community members allowing them to understand the perspectives of historically underrepresented and marginalized communities as many of the people on these boards are white and wealthy. This bill is just a start. The BOT still has a tremendous amount of work to be done to become equitable and accessible for all community members. Once this bill is set in place, we, as community members, will be able to build on the BOT model and strengthen the connection between the BOT and the community.

Thank you for your time and I ask for your support on SB854.