

Submitter: Sue Kunda
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Higher Education
Measure: HB3121

My name is Sue Kunda, and I am the Scholarly Communication Librarian at Western Oregon University. This letter is in support of HB 3121 with the -1 Amendment that will help make critical investments in Open Oregon Educational Resources (Open Oregon), Oregon's statewide textbook affordability program.

Five years ago, I was tapped as Western's point person for the state's OER efforts, which are led by Open Oregon. At the time, 0% of my position was devoted to OER. Today, I spend approximately 80% of my time leading and coordinating WOU's textbook affordability initiatives – most of which come courtesy of Open Oregon.

In 2019, eleven of our faculty completed Open Oregon's first course redesign sprint, which saved our students more than \$1000,000 in the first year. (When our budget committee and university president saw those numbers, they began funding an OER stipend program of our own. Unfortunately, our budget was recently cut in half – to \$7500 – and we will look to Open Oregon to help ameliorate the reduction.) In total WOU faculty have redesigned 36 courses during Open Oregon's annual "sprints", saving our students close to \$500,000. That's a pretty good return on a \$27,000 investment.

WOU faculty have also received other grants from Open Oregon. For example, a chemistry professor and her co-author developed and produced four chemistry texts, two of which are also being used by the Willamette Promise College in High School Program. Not only do those two titles save WOU students money, but they're also saving the state money. Exact figures on savings don't exist, but considering that the average commercial Chemistry textbook costs somewhere around \$150-\$200, and the Chemistry textbooks have been in use since 2017, it's safe to say that those Chemistry OER have saved WOU students and the state hundreds of thousands of dollars.

While most of Open Oregon's initiatives have directly impacted our students' pocketbooks (which we know contributes to their achievement in the classroom), other initiatives center student success in a more indirect manner. Twenty-nine WOU faculty have enrolled in the Equity and Open Education Cohort over the past two years, where they learned to "consider open educational practices with an equity lens, including universal design, cultural relevance, and diverse perspectives". Faculty then developed materials for at least one of their own courses. Next month, thanks to Open Oregon, WOU will also take part in training geared toward advancing digital accessibility on campus and removing barriers for our students with

disabilities.

I can assure you that your funding of OER through Open Oregon is well-spent. Every dollar is centered on student success, and the results are simply astonishing – not only on our campus but across the state.

I strongly urge you to support HB 3121 with the -1 Amendment.