

Dear Chairs Steiner and Sanchez,

While we must care for the house less and the drug addicted we must also invest in in Oregon's economic future with robust investments in public higher education.

Shockingly, Oregon ranks #45 in per student spending in public higher education.

Our prepared youth with a strong desire to succeed deserve the support of an increase in the Public Universities Support Fund and the Oregon Opportunity Grants. I was once a low-income student at Portland State University. PSU is especially impacted because 42% of PSU students are low income. 70% of students at PSU are from Oregon and they remain in Oregon after graduation. These struggling students need a hand up after the economic downturns of the Pandemic and rough economic times.

For Oregon, much of our Science, Technology, Health Care, Public Health and Environmental Science need an educated workforce dedicated to this state. Here lies our economic future. PSU has built a hub of connections between OHSU Medical School, PSU-OHSU School of Public Health, Pre-Med Programs and Environmental Science in the Portland Area.

With renovation funds from our state legislature, the Vernier Science Building can grow a regional economic and STEM powerhouse for our future. The PSU community has partially funded this project and we ask the legislature to fund this new center for our economic futures.

While it is a difficult year with many challenges, I urge you to think about funding our future, not just solving today's problems. Build something that seeds growth in the years to come, even in difficult times.

Linda McKim-Bell

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