

Submitter: Dee Fretwell  
On Behalf Of: Our students  
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means  
Measure: SB5506

Chair Steiner, Chair Sanchez, Vice-Chairs, and Members of the Committee-

My name is Dee Fretwell and I am incoming chair of the Business Department at Southern Oregon University at (TRUs Institution). I am testifying today in support of \$1.05 billion appropriation for higher education in Oregon, and importantly the \$15 million dollar support fund for Oregon's Regional Universities and requested in the Governor's Budget.

Southern Oregon University provides life changing education opportunities to our region and our rural communities.

Right now, Oregon's Regional Universities are suffering from catastrophic funding shortfalls, leading to further deep cuts to faculty and staff positions. These cuts threaten program offerings, cannibalize our institutions, and make our efforts to revitalize impossible. Students can't succeed when administrators cut faculty and staff positions and fail to invest in programs and services.

You, see the problem is this. Reduced funding at an already too-low threshold means squeezing the limited staff and faculty for all they have. The current pay rates are significantly lower than any professional. Overworked workforce will leave for other opportunities. Overworked and under-inspired faculty deliver poor messaging and uninspired curriculum. So students leave.

With additional funding, we can secure faculty and frontline service jobs at our institutions, increase service levels that promote student success, and promote sustainable growth for our institutions. Our students' success depends on strong funding right now, not on a rainy day fund.

Faculty at my institution, alongside fellow regional universities (EOU/OIT/SOU/WOU) are united in our commitment to Oregon's future. I urgently ask that Oregon commit \$15 million dollars to supporting our Regional Universities.

Many thanks,

Dee Fretwell  
Chair, Business Dept