



Oregon State Legislature
Join Committee on Ways and Means
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301
April 21, 2023

Co-Chairs Sanchez and Steiner and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for your service to the State of Oregon. I write to you today to share my concern about the numbers that I am hearing you have set aside for higher education in your budget this biennium. I know that you face some tough choices as you navigate this process once again. **I respectfully request that you make robust investments in public higher education, specifically the Public University Support Fund (PSUF) and the Oregon Opportunity Grant, \$1.05 billion and an additional \$200 million, respectively.**

As the new Dean of the College of Education for the University of Oregon and a mother of two, I am deeply concerned about the future of public higher education in Oregon, as we seem to come back around every biennium asking for investment in our students and not seeing the results we need to maintain our institutions.

At the UO I wear many hats. I am a professor who works with both undergraduate and graduate students. I am a scholar who researches complex questions relating to early childhood development. I served as the faculty member representative on UO's Board of Trustees for four years. And now, after serving as the interim Dean for more than a year and competing in a national search, I was named permanent Dean of the College of Education overseeing one of the highest ranked colleges of education in the country due to our highly effective research and translation of that research into effective models, methods, and measures that improve lives. Through each of these lenses I see the stark difference between higher education investments made by other states and those made here in Oregon (ours being much lower) and I worry about the long-term impact of that disparity on our children, our communities, and our future.

Being 45th in the nation for per student funding is something we should be ashamed of. And I have heard that there is a proposal for a 2.5% reduction in funding in your proposed budget. Oregon is facing critical workforce shortages especially for front line workers like educators and clinicians. To address these shortages, the state must prioritize creating a highly skilled workforce to support essential industries. Oregon's public universities are responding to industry needs despite limited state resources, creating a diverse pipeline of highly skilled workers to power our economy. Although Oregon's public university community is only asking for funding that keeps us 45th in nation, I urge you to look to the future and work to find solutions to this struggle that occurs every two years. For the 40,000 Oregon students that receive the Oregon Opportunity Grant, we must find the funds for the \$400 million being requested. And for the Oregon Tribal Grant Program, stabilizing

Office of the Dean

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that program with \$40 million will help fund undergraduate tuition, housing, books, and other costs for eligible, enrolled members of Oregon's Tribes.

This request is not made lightly. I spend my days thinking about how to best improve the lives of children. I know that education is a significant investment over a multi-year continuum. My hope is that you will recognize the value of the latter stages of that continuum and increase your budget to meet the needs of Oregon's public higher education community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Laura Lee McIntyre".

Laura Lee McIntyre
Dean & Castle-McIntosh-Knight Professor
College of Education