



**March 13, 2023**

**Joint Committee on Education  
Co-Chairs Frederick and McLain**

900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

**Re: Please fully fund Oregon's public universities at \$1.05 billion**

**Co-Chairs Frederick, McLain, and Members of the Committee:**

On behalf of Hacienda Community Development Corp (Hacienda CDC), I urge you to support Oregon's students by investing in Oregon's public universities and fully fund the Public University Support Fund (PUSF) at \$1.05 billion and increasing the Oregon Opportunity Grant (OOG) by \$200 million.

Hacienda CDC is a Latino Community Development Corporation that strengthens families by providing affordable housing, homeownership support, economic advancement and educational opportunities. At Hacienda, we are committed to ensuring that everyone has affordable access to high-quality education, which is why we urge you to provide adequate funding for public higher education in Oregon, including increasing the Oregon Opportunity Grant.

We know that for many students the number one barrier to attending college is the cost. This is especially true for the communities we work with who are often low-income and first-generation college students. Many of the youth in our community have been recipients of the Oregon Opportunity Grant, which has given them an opportunity to attend and complete college. But simply receiving financial aid often isn't enough for many of these students. Once they step on campus, they need additional support, including on-campus contacts who can help connect them to food and housing sources, and other tools to ensure they are successful. It is critical that these programs – and the Oregon Opportunity Grant – are fully funded to support these students in our community.

While a 4-year degree and beyond is a critical step in opening opportunities for all students, especially those from BIPOC communities, many students see college as unaffordable. Often, students are balancing meeting their basic needs with obtaining a college degree to support their career goals. Oregon's public universities have been

stepping into the gap, doing more with less, and working to support students. But they need the state to step in to help give all students an opportunity for success.

Oregon ranks 45<sup>th</sup> in the country for per-student, state funding of public universities and invests less than half the national average in financial aid per public university student. As Oregon's students – particularly those within our community – continue to face lasting impacts from the pandemic, we must ensure that higher education is more attainable for every student.

A \$1.05 billion budget will allow public universities to continue offering education and services for students without increasing tuition beyond 5 percent at most universities.

Thank you for your service to our state and thank you for supporting Oregon's students and public higher education institutions.

**Sincerely,**



**Ernesto Fonseca, Ph.D.**

Chief Executive Officer  
Hacienda CDC