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## OREGON PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES RESPOND TO 2023-25 CO-CHAIRS BUDGET FRAMEWORK

**Salem, Ore.** – Following the release by the co-chairs of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means of their 2023-25 Budget Framework, Oregon’s public university presidents today stressed that the proposed public university funding and financial aid levels would result in significant lost opportunities for Oregon’s students and workforce.

Oregon currently ranks 45<sup>th</sup> in the nation for per-student state funding of public universities and invests less than half the national average in financial aid per public university student. University leaders encourage legislative support for current and future students by passing a stabilizing Public University Support Fund (PUSF) budget of \$1.05 billion and investing an additional \$200 million in the Oregon Opportunity Grant. Funding the PUSF at \$1.05 billion is a wise investment because public universities are critical to the Oregon economy and even more vital to our future economy.

“It has never been more urgent to invest in Oregon’s students,” said Nagi Naganathan, President of the Oregon Institute of Technology and Chair of the Oregon Council of Presidents. “Our students, both current and future, have been hit hard by the pandemic. They require more wraparound and behavioral health services, stronger academic advising, greater financial aid, and more support than ever on their path toward a degree.

“Oregon already ranks near the bottom of the nation for state funding of its public universities. As historically underserved and underrepresented students make up an increasing portion of our student bodies, we cannot afford to make cuts to the people and services that support our students. We have to do better for our students.”

Without sustainable funding for Oregon’s public university system, Oregon’s students—particularly those from traditionally underserved and BIPOC communities—will be deprived of opportunities to access essential student services, including financial aid, academic support, career development, and support for other basic needs.

"Investments in higher education are investments in Oregon students and the future of the state," said Naganathan. "Oregon's public universities are well-positioned to create the diverse, modern workforce the state needs to fill shortages in key sectors and remain competitive with other west coast states. We encourage the legislature to act on these issues now by stabilizing funding for public universities and student aid."

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