

To: Senator Lieber and Representative Sanchez
From: Interinstitutional Faculty Senate
RE: Letter of Support for HB 3011, HB 3129 and SB 604
DATE: May 22, 2025

The Interinstitutional Faculty Senate (IFS) represents all seven public institutions in the State of Oregon and Oregon Health Sciences University. We work collaboratively across our respective universities, and with their respective Faculty Senates, the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC), the Provosts' and Presidents' Council and other higher educational entities in an endeavor to promote excellence in higher education across the state.

In this capacity, we would like to express our support of three initiatives currently in the legislative session: HB 3011, HB 3129 and SB 604.

- The *Early Childhood Education Workforce Development Fund* (HB 3011) will expand funding to community colleges and public universities that offer on-the-job training for students enrolled in early care and education or related degree or certificate programs. This bill addresses an emerging crisis in Oregon's workforce and related access to employment opportunities across sectors.
- The *Higher Education Behavioral Health Workforce Expansion Fund* (HB 3129) will increase educational opportunities throughout the state to expand training, employment and retention of behavioral health professionals, which will benefit all our communities, rural and urban alike. Such investment will have long term impacts for educators in the state, as well as to the health of future generations of Oregonians.
- The *Strong Start Program Fund* (SB 604) would provide essential academic support and comprehensive services for first year and underrepresented students at the public universities, benefiting both the student body and institutions in general. Those funds would provide services that assist with community building, summer and academic programs, and wraparound support. Also, this bill establishes a formula to determine how HECC allocates these funds transparently.

Should these bills be enacted, we look forward to contributing, under HECC's leadership, on the advisory boards tasked with, among other things, developing distribution funding formulas and associated administrative rules. All IFS members see these initiatives addressing the educational needs of our state and making higher education stronger.