Budget Oral Testimony Template – Option 4

*Note: Please keep testimonies to under 2 minutes long.*

Good morning, Co-Chairs Frederick and McLain, and members of the committee. My name is [YOUR NAME], and I am here as a board member of [YOUR COLLEGE]. I am here today to urge you to support increased funding for the Oregon Opportunity Grant, specifically for community college students. The Oregon Opportunity Grant is the state's largest source of need-based financial aid for students, and community colleges serve the most low-income students of any sector of higher education.

Currently, funding for student aid has failed to keep pace with the soaring costs of food and housing across Oregon. Even before the pandemic and the inflation that followed, Oregon Community College students reported high rates of food and housing insecurity, as well as homelessness. These challenges were only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, making it even more difficult for low-income students to access the education they need to succeed.

As such, we recommend that $400 million be the minimum investment for the Oregon Opportunity Grant for the 2023-2025 biennium. This investment would make a significant difference for low-income students across the state, nearly doubling the number of students who can benefit from the current award levels. This would help ensure that more students have access to the financial support they need to pursue their educational goals and achieve success.

Colleges have been doing what they can to support students who have very basic needs unmet. [BRIEFLY INSERT EXAMPLE OF WHAT YOUR COLLEGE IS DOING TO SUPPORT STUDENTS] But colleges can’t continue to provide these services at these levels without your support.

It is critical that we invest in our students, particularly those who face significant financial barriers to accessing higher education. Community colleges play a vital role in providing affordable, accessible education to Oregonians, and we must ensure that all students have the support they need to thrive. Please support increased funding for the Oregon Opportunity Grant and help ensure that all students have the opportunity to achieve their full potential. Thank you for your time.