Dear Senator/Representative,

Recently, Oakland University launched a campaign to bring fairness and equity to higher education funding in Michigan. Out of the state’s 15 public universities, OU ranks dead last in funding per Fiscal-Year-Equated Student from the state, receiving $3,069 per student. By contrast, the highest funded universities receive nearly $9,000 per student. This funding disparity puts a large number of the state’s college students at a clear disadvantage.

To help close the gap, I’m writing to urge you to support a minimum funding floor of $4,500 for all students attending our public universities. Today, when a high school senior chooses to attend one public university, the state contributes, on average, nearly $6,000 or more to educate that student. If that same student comes to Oakland University, the funding drops to $3,000, saddling students and their parents with more costs. Bringing equity to higher education funding is a necessary step toward ensuring that all students can achieve the dream of a college education without the fear of burdensome debt.

I know as my elected official that you appreciate the critical role higher education plays in Michigan, creating a more qualified and skilled workforce, driving economic growth, improving the overall quality of life and providing opportunities for our future leaders. The legislature made a commitment to close the gap in K-12 funding and had the higher education floor set at $4,500 more than 20 years ago. The equity gap in K-12 is almost closed, but that promise to universities has not been kept.

Over 90% of OU graduates stay in Michigan, raising families, working and building businesses, resulting in one of the greatest returns on investment for Michigan taxpayers. These graduates go on to support and work for some of the largest employers and economic drivers in the state.

Equitable funding will further support Oakland University students, ensuring more need-based financial aid and scholarships, additional academic advisors, increased student employment, improved classroom technology and enhanced campus safety, all of which will improve the student experience and outcomes.

I’m looking forward to your support for Oakland University students and making sure that during budget deliberations a funding floor of $4,500 is implemented. I encourage you to find out more about the “Strive for 45” campaign at <https://www.oakland.edu/strive-for-45>.

Sincerely,