

Oregon Council of Presidents



Oregon State
University

Western Oregon
UNIVERSITY

To: Joint Special Committee on Coronavirus Response
From: Dana Richardson, Oregon Council of Presidents Executive Director
Re: Public Universities Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic
Date: March 23, 2020

Oregon's public universities are united in their support for addressing the immediate public health and employment needs of the state. The co-chairs priorities – stabilizing individuals and families, addressing needs in health care, and supporting our community employers – are critical to reducing the impact of the novel coronavirus and ensuring Oregonians have access to basic needs like food, shelter and employment. **Immediate state investments must be unwaveringly focused on actions that support health care and the economy.**

Universities are partnering with the state and communities to vigorously support efforts to stop the spread of the novel coronavirus COVID-19. Classes have been shifted from face-to-face to remote modalities at every institution for the entire spring term; resident housing continues to support students in need; critical supports for students such as financial aid and advising are operating remotely; and to the greatest extent possible jobs are being protected and benefits are being extended to accommodate the challenges of illnesses and prolonged public school closures.

Off campuses, universities are answering the call in our communities.

- University faculty are working with media outlets and government agencies to provide data-driven information on nearly every topic related to COVID-19;
- University research departments are working with health care providers to share personal protective equipment and key materials to augment the testing and treatment for the disease;
- Contingency plans to redeploy university facilities as emergency health care centers are in place with county health departments; and,
- Dozens of students, faculty and staff are stepping up to provide volunteer services across our state.

As front-line health care workers grapple with Oregon's immediate devastation caused by the coronavirus pandemic, policymakers must begin to address the dire economic devastation. **Among those that will be hardest hit are Oregon's university-going students.** According to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, prior to economic impacts of COVID-19, 60 percent of Oregon undergraduate students are unable to meet expenses and over 22,000 students receive federal Pell grants, indicating that they are low income.

To help pay for their university education, these students worked in restaurants, coffee shops, gyms, and other small businesses. Many of these students are now unemployed. Additionally, thousands more may lose access to federal work-study jobs. If these vulnerable students are unable to afford tuition, they cannot attend school. If they cannot attend school, they cannot get the scholarships, grants and loans that help support both their

progress toward a degree and, more importantly, their basic needs. **The single best thing the state can do to support higher education in Oregon is to support the financial needs of our students.**

- Augment unemployment insurance benefits and streamline access to benefits,
- Expedite SNAP benefits and ensure access for job-less students,
- Provide temporary rental assistance for those unable to pay rent, and
- Facilitate access to health care.

Once these immediate critical needs are addressed, universities are facing significant losses in revenue as well as new and unexpected costs. Accompanying this letter is a list itemizing the higher education recovery needs resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. We are ready to provide more detail on our recovery needs when the time is right.

As the state pursues economic recovery in the coming months, we ask that you look to Oregon's higher education institutions as key components of our state's economic recovery, as they have been in previous financial downturns. Colleges and universities offer Oregonians the opportunity to retrain, to build new skills, and to improve their employability while industries and individual businesses rebuild. Likewise, investments in renovations of university facilities provide significant immediate jobs for displaced workers across multiple industries.

In the meantime, universities are working closely with national organizations and universities across the country to secure federal funding to help offset the unprecedented financial reductions that threaten Oregon's public universities and our students.

Thank you for your leadership during this difficult time.

Attachment

Cc: Governor Kate Brown
Speaker Tina Kotek
President Peter Courtney
Ways & Means Co-chairs: Senator Betsy Johnson, Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, Representative Dan Rayfield

OREGON HIGHER EDUCATION COVID-19 RECOVERY

Overview

Oregon's universities and community colleges are committed to serving students, employees and the state in the face of the global Coronavirus outbreak.

As institutions move into spring quarter and beyond, they face significant losses in revenue and new costs. Maintaining operational capacity and employment for education and research is critical for the state and will require external support and assistance.

The following specific recovery needs for Oregon higher education protect students, employees and our education infrastructure. Additionally, infrastructure options offer long term opportunities for economic stabilization.

Priority – Protect Students

- Augment unemployment insurance programs to provide financial stability to students.
- Keep universities and community colleges open, with remote delivery of course work, so students can stay on track with their degree program.
- Increase emergency financial aid for students facing increased costs, including for basic needs, and who may also face wage or employment losses.
- Support and strengthen campus-based programs that assist students with critical basic needs.
- Articulate clear policies for incoming high school graduates in Fall 2020 who may face disruptions in the end of the K-12 school year.

Priority – Preserve Institutional Capacity

- Tuition and fee revenue stop gap support:
 - Relief from tuition/fee losses from students dropping out and/or taking reduced loads under remote instruction model.
 - Relief from tuition/fee losses from declines in international student enrollment and potential decline in out-of-state enrollment.
 - Relief for fee-funded services, including room and board, that may need to be refunded or reduced due to remote teaching and learning.
- Support for increased institutional operating costs:
 - Technology support for students to engage effectively in remote learning.
 - One-time resources for the purchase of additional information technology to enable mass-shift to remote instruction delivery.

Priority – Protect Employees

- Allocate state resources to alleviate pressure on college and university budgets as it relates to maintenance of current employment levels.

Priority – Support Statewide Economic Growth

- Allocate state bonding to capital construction and renovation projects at public universities to directly infuse jobs and resources to local economies across the state.

The Potential Impact on Oregon Public Institutions of Higher Education due to Summary

Cost Categories	Potential Impact	
	Range	Context
Tuition/Fee Revenue - Reduced Enrollments	\$93 - 335 million	A 10% drop in tui
Auxiliary Revenue Impact - Reduced Activity	\$73 - 157 million	A 10% drop in au:
Additional Cost of Course Delivery and Student Support	\$12 - 43 million	A 1% increase in i
General Costs of Cleaning, Overtime for Personnel	\$3.6 million	Each \$10 in spend
Total Potential Fianancial Cost	\$183 - 539 million	

Notes/Assumptions

A limited impact assumes a return to normal operations either during or shortly after the spr
A larger impact assumes a longer impact time horizon that affects institutional finances for tl

instruction and academic support costs would be \$2.5 million just for the spring, \$8.9 million for the full year.

The Potential Impact on Oregon Public Institutions of Higher Education due to COVID-19
Summary

Cost Categories	Potential Impact	
	Range	Context
Tuition/Fee Revenue - Reduced Enrollments	\$93 - 335 million	A 10% drop in tuition/fee revenue would be \$31.2 million just for the spring, \$111.5 million for the full year
Auxiliary Revenue Impact - Reduced Activity	\$73 - 157 million	A 10% drop in auxiliary revenue would be \$14.6 million just for the spring, \$52.3 million for the full year
Additional Cost of Course Delivery and Student Support	\$12 - 43 million	A 1% increase in instruction and academic support costs would be \$2.5 million just for the spring, \$8.9 million for the full year.
General Costs of Cleaning, Overtime for Personnel	\$3.6 million	Each \$10 in spending per person on response costs is \$1.2 million total
Total Potential Financial Cost	\$183 - 539 million	

Notes/Assumptions

A limited impact assumes a return to normal operations either during or shortly after the spring term.

A larger impact assumes a longer impact time horizon that affects institutional finances for the entire year.