

## Oregon Public University Council

Post Office Box 751 503-725-4411  
Portland, OR 97207



April 1, 2015

Dear legislator:

We are writing to you today with the words of inventor Alexander Graham Bell in mind: “Great discoveries and improvements invariably involve the cooperation of many minds.”

That sentiment is the foundation for a well-rounded education, and it also is a truism that underscores Oregon’s multifaceted system of post secondary education. Our collective future and the opportunities that will arise from an educated workforce will rely not on a single high-quality entity, but many.

Like never before, Oregon’s public universities and community colleges are aligned to advocate the imperative of improved funding for higher education, across the spectrum. Restoring funding after this decade of disinvestment is the right thing to do for students and, ultimately, it is the right thing to do for Oregon’s future.

That’s why we, the presidents of Oregon’s seven public universities, are taking this unprecedented step and writing to you to express our full support for a budget appropriation of at least \$550 million sought by Oregon’s community colleges for the 2015-17 biennium. Similarly, community colleges are unanimous in their support of the \$755 million budget request for Oregon public universities.

The lines are growing increasingly blurry between Oregon’s higher education institutions. At Portland State University, more than 40% of the graduating seniors originate at Portland Community College. Thousands of students who started class at Oregon’s universities are working toward professional certificates and degrees at Oregon’s 17 community colleges.

Oregon’s colleges serve different populations, but the bottom line is the same: No matter where students attend classes and job-training programs, Oregon will benefit if colleges and universities have the educational capacity to teach them well, help them remain in school, and help them advance toward careers while accruing as little debt as possible.

Oregon’s 40-40-20 goals rely on new thinking when it comes to college-level education in Oregon. We believe that a more educated workforce is critical, and we understand that improving and restoring our education system will “invariably involve the cooperation of many minds” – and also, critically, a restoration of funding.

Eastern Oregon University  
President Jay Kenton

Oregon State University  
President Ed Ray

Southern Oregon University  
President Roy H. Saigo

Western Oregon University  
President Mark Weiss

Oregon Institute of Technology  
President Chris Maples

Portland State University  
President Wim Wiewel

University of Oregon  
President Scott Coltrane

We ask for your support of the request for at least \$550 million by Oregon's community colleges.

Sincerely,

University Presidents



Jay Kenton  
Eastern Oregon University



Roy Saigo  
Southern Oregon University



Chris Maples  
Oregon Institute of  
Technology



Scott Coltrane  
University of Oregon



Edward Ray  
Oregon State University



Mark Weiss  
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