

Feb. 12, 2016

Chair Girod, Chair Read, and Ways and Means Capital Construction Subcommittee Members:

I'm writing to you today on behalf of Clackamas Community College students, staff, faculty, our board, and community at large.

As you well know, there has been much discussion about what is and what is not appropriate for this 2016 legislative session. Passing a campus safety and security capital package to meet critical needs at all 17 community colleges should meet everyone's definition of appropriate for this short session: It is an urgent need that has been identified since the end of the 2015 session – and the potential consequences of inaction are too great.

When we, as board members, go out into the community to visit with city councils, school boards, Rotary Clubs and Chambers of Commerce, and even our own capital project citizen oversight committee, they all ask what we are doing to keep our students and the public safe. I would like to assure them we have the most modern, redundant emergency systems and infrastructures in place. But that, unfortunately, is not the case.

Like most community colleges in Oregon, CCC has aging infrastructure, which is neither seismically safe nor secure. Our communication systems are lacking in coverage and have no redundancies. CCC turns 50 years old this spring, and some of our buildings and infrastructure date back to the late 1960's. Many Oregon community colleges don't have the locking mechanisms, security cameras, communication systems, and other basic safety and security functions that are needed to protect students, staff, and campus visitors.

Umpqua Community College certainly has unique facility needs that can and should be addressed during this legislative session. But Oregon's other 16 community colleges are just as likely to be the victim of future attacks – perhaps even more likely. Now is the time to take action on targeted safety and security capital investments on every campus to prevent future incidents and improve chances of survival when incidents do occur.

After the tragedy at UCC, we received a lot of input from students and faculty. I'd like to share a few comments:

- Student: "I take night classes at Clairmont Hall. Oftentimes I don't feel safe at the campus."

- Instructor: “If there is an emergency on campus, there is no way to alert the faculty, staff, and students in the classrooms. This was obvious during the recent earthquake drill in that no one in classrooms knew it was happening.”
- Student: “The lecture rooms have no hiding places, nothing in the room to fight with, no place to go, no escape.”

We’ve heard from our students, our staff and faculty, and our community that they want change and they want it now. If we’ve learned anything from recent Oregon history, it is not a matter of whether something will happen, it is a matter of when.

The Oregon Community College Association is requesting \$19.32 million in state capital bonding to finance critical “shovel ready” safety and security projects. I know what difficult decisions you have to make when allocating money. For me, and the community I represent, there is no higher priority than basic safety. I hope you will support Oregon’s 17 community colleges – and the thousands of students, staff, and community members who use our facilities day – by ensuring their basic safety through approving these bonds so we can start addressing our campus safety and infrastructure needs.

Here is one last powerful student response I’d like to share: “If I had to put my life in the hands of my Lord and save my classmates I would. (I hope and pray that never happens.) I have been trained to do this. But all I want to do is go to school and learn my new profession in a peaceful place. I hope and pray that you seriously read my e-mail and look into the safety of our campus.”

Thank you for your time and consideration and your service to our state. Let’s make the community college safety and security capital funding package a point of enthusiastic, bipartisan agreement and action during this 2016 legislative session.

Sincerely,



Dave Hunt  
Clackamas Community College  
Board of Education