



*Joseph Kelly*

*From the Desk  
of REP. Gallegos*

From the Desk of  
Representative  
Mark Johnson

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## Oregon Students Seek Immediate Relief

We Ask That You Make An Investment In Oregon's Future And Dedicate \$2.5 Million To Community Colleges (HB 4076) And \$4.3 Million For Universities.

**To:** The Oregon House of Representatives

**From:** The Oregon Student Association -Representing 120,000 students across Oregon's public post-secondary education system.

**RE:** Higher Education Funding – 2016 Session

Nationally, student debt has reached over \$1.2 Trillion. This debt has accumulated as a result of both state and federal disinvestment in higher education. Last session, the Oregon Legislature began to make steps toward restoring the post-recession cuts to higher education. This investment helped to mitigate tuition increases and provided funding for Oregon's neediest students. With that being said, it is abundantly clear that the investments made last session are not enough to address the immediate concerns of access and affordability of higher education for our students. Oregonians are still facing high tuition increases, which translates into food insecurity, longer completion timelines, higher dropout rates, and student homelessness. Below are a few examples from students on our Board:

Nikki Aman, Student Volunteer Coordinator, discusses her concern over Linn Benton Community College's proposed 7% tuition increase:

“ A 7% Tuition increase would put myself and other low-income students at risk of continuing their educational journey... It is my opinion that LBCC is treating its most important stakeholders like customers of a business, rather than pupils with the purpose of learning. I come to you today, not just as a concerned student, but a representative of all the first generation, Oregon Opportunity Grant receiving students who can't be here because they are in class chasing their fading, soon to be priced-out dreams of higher education. We call upon your influence over state funding as well as your compassion for the strife of every student who has to choose between a textbook and an electric bill. The Board of Education and the fee committees have turned their backs on students and are of the opinion that we simply don't understand the fee process, rather than that we understand it and disagree with it.”

Torii Uyehara, OSA Board Chair, discusses the statewide impact on tuition increases:

“ I'm writing you today because I see my peers across the state struggling. I have known students with bright futures who had to cease pursuing higher education because the cost of tuition has risen more than 20% at most of our universities over the past five years and is set to go up even more next year, and we know that folks at community college have experienced similar increases. I'm writing to you because the average student that graduates has about \$30,000 of debt in Oregon. The cost of textbooks is out of control and students at SOU have reported spending in excess of \$300 on textbooks in a single term. Students are being priced out of attending SOU because the cost of rent is prohibitively high in Ashland and vacancy rates are so low in this state that even those who have lived here for many years struggle to find housing.”

While the challenges that face our state are many in number, the State of Oregon can do better for students in post-secondary in education. We can do better for students across the state by targeting our money in places that will help those most in need and create the greatest impact. We are asking that you mitigate our tuition increases and increase student support services for the 2016-2017 year.

**Oregon Student Association**

Contact: Lamar Wise, Legislative Director, 503-901-4448, [lamar@orstudents.org](mailto:lamar@orstudents.org)

According to the Institute for College Access & Success, **the average college student in Oregon graduates with \$26,106 in debt.** Also in Oregon, 62% of students graduate with the student loan debt, the highest proportion of student graduating with debt of any state on the West Coast.

## Proposed Tuition Increases at Oregon Universities

- **University of Oregon:** 4.8% increase for in-state undergrads, 4.5% increase for out-of-state undergrads.
- **Oregon State University:** 2.2% increase for in-state undergrads, 0% increase for out-of-state undergrads.
- **Portland State University:** 3.7% increase for in-state undergrads, 3.5% increase for non-Oregonians.
- **Southern Oregon University:** Considering a 2.7% increase for in-state undergrads.
- **Eastern Oregon University:** Considering a 2-4% tuition increase.
- **Western Oregon University:** Considering a 2-4% tuition increase.
- **Oregon Institute of Technology:** Recommending a 3% tuition increase for in-state undergraduates.

Source: Theen, Andrew. "Oregon universities considering tuition increases; UO eyes highest bump." The Oregonian/OregonLive. February 19, 2016 at 7:24 PM.

## STOP INCREASING STUDENT DEBT

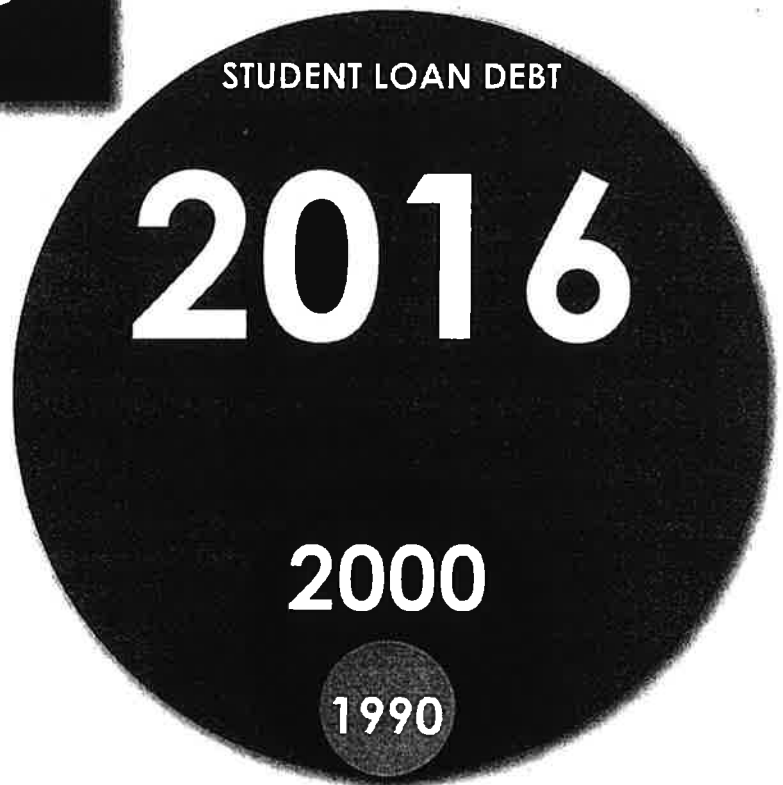


= **\$2,853.88**  
more in total  
student loan debt

each second

Total student loan debt in the United States is now increasing at a rate of approximately \$2,853.88 per second. The amount that students owe has more than **quintupled** between 2000 and 2016.

Source: FinAid.org



**WE ASK THAT YOU MAKE AN INVESTMENT IN OREGON'S FUTURE AND DEDICATE \$2.5 MILLION TO COMMUNITY COLLEGES WITH HB 4076 AND \$4.3 MILLION FOR UNIVERSITIES.**

Thank you!

**Oregon Student Association**

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