

February 23, 2017

House Committee on Higher Education and Workforce
Representative Jeff Reardon, Chair
900 Court Street NE, Room 431 Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Support for HB 2782 – Full Funding of OSU-Cascades Expansion

Chair Reardon and Members of the Committee:

My name is Chris Van Dyke. I am here today because I believe OSU-Cascades needs to expand in order to offer the additional degrees needed to serve our fast-growing local region. I am going to discuss one specific example.

I moved to Oregon in 1975 after graduating from law school. I made Bend my home close to ten years ago. I have worked as an attorney in Oregon as an Assistant Attorney General and later as the elected District Attorney for Marion Co. When I joined Nike and began my 18-year career there, I was hired as an attorney. After a career shift into marketing and product development, I was General Manager of Nike's outdoor product offerings, subsequently worked as VP of Marketing and Product development at Patagonia and was the co-founder and CEO of Nau, Inc. Most recently, following a generous gift from Hydro Flask, I have been retained by OSU-Cascades to help develop a new four-year, undergraduate degree program in outdoor product creation and management.

As a veteran of the outdoor industry, even I have been surprised by the size and economic significance of the outdoor recreation economy in Oregon. The most recent data put together by the Outdoor Industry Association indicates that, annually, outdoor recreation in Oregon generates \$12.8 billion dollars in consumer spending and \$955 million in local and state tax revenue. In Bend alone, the Oregon Outdoor Association reports that there are now dozens of new outdoor companies. For good reason, these numbers have generated a great deal of attention and action by Senator Wyden and others. Bend and Central Oregon are at the epicenter of this growing outdoor recreation economy and that reality was recently captured in an article in Forbes; *How the Outdoor Industry is Creating a Huge Boom in Bend*:

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/gretchenfox/2016/11/22/how-the-outdoor-industry-is-creating-a-huge-boom-in-bend/#5371988af153>

As part of my work to create the degree program at OSU-Cascades, I have spent the past two months traveling around Oregon and other western states interviewing outdoor industry leaders in order to get their advice on how the new curriculum should be structured. Among the interviewees were Yvon Chouinard, founder and CEO at Patagonia; Casey Sheahan, CEO at Keen; Peter Metcalf,

founder and CEO at Black Diamond. I have had similar interviews with senior management from over 35 companies including Nike, Columbia, Under Armour, and North Face. In Bend, I have had discussions with Ruffwear, Hydro Flask and a number of the new start-ups in the area.

Every industry leader I have spoken with expressed enthusiastic support for an outdoor product degree program, noting that such a degree meets important unfulfilled educational needs in the industry. Most importantly, every leader indicated that obtaining this degree would be a major consideration in hiring new employees and top industry recruiters confirmed these observations.

It was clear from my interviews that the new outdoor degree program at OSU-Cascades will be perfectly positioned to help provide not only a trained work force for these companies, but to also help fuel the growth in this important and growing business segment in Oregon. The outdoor products degree is just one example of how OSU-Cascades has positively responded to workforce needs in our region. Other examples are the Computer Science, Energy Systems Engineering, and Hospitality Management programs.

I am writing to you because I understand that the OSU-Cascades funding request for their second academic building is at risk, with only \$20 million of the \$69.5 million HECC-approved request making it into the Governor's budget. This is a critical time not only for the huge opportunity that an outdoor products degree at OSU-Cascades would create for the state of Oregon, but also for the local university to better serve the region. I urgently ask for your support to ensure the vital funding for OSU-Cascades in the next budget cycle. Please contact me if you have any questions. Thank you for your consideration.

Chris Van Dyke
Bend, OR