



Office of the Board of Trustees
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February 15, 2017

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

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

Dear Chair Reardon and Members of the Committee:

As Chair of the Oregon State University Board of Trustees, I am writing in support of House Bill 2782 authorizing \$69.5 million in state bonds to support the expansion of OSU-Cascades.

OSU-Cascades is Oregon State University's branch campus in Central Oregon and is the only four-year university in that fast-growing region. With a population of 220,000 and a growing K-12 enrollment, the need for access to university education in Central Oregon has never been more critical. For rural, low-income, and first-generation students, having a university within commuting distance is often the difference between attending college or not.

Enrollment at OSU-Cascades is growing faster than any other public university. Over the past five years, OSU-Cascades has added 321 students, while all other universities combined added 503. Nearly all of the growth has been in Oregon residents (290 students), while only two other campuses increased the number of Oregon students served – OSU in Corvallis and Oregon Tech. This strong enrollment growth means that capacity at OSU-Cascades will be reached in 2020. Without funding in this biennium, a new building will not be in place by 2020.

The expansion of OSU-Cascades will also support economic development in this region and throughout the state. Bend had the fastest job growth in the country last year, according to the Milken Institute. The university is critical to providing the workforce for an economy that now includes high tech, biosciences, healthcare, and advanced manufacturing.

We understand that you must make difficult choices when investing scarce state resources. Investments in higher education have one of the best returns on investment for our state and one the State of Oregon needs for economic stability. I urge you to make this critical investment in Central Oregon and OSU-Cascades. Please support HB 2782. While OSU-Cascades needs to be a state priority, any capital funding for its expansion should not result in reductions to the capital allocations that all seven campuses jointly recommended.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patricia Reser". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Patricia Reser
Chair