



May 26th, 2020

Governor Kate Brown
900 Court Street, NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Governor Brown,

The COVID-19 crisis has impacted the lives of every Oregonian, but has significantly affected the lives of Oregon's college students. As the student body presidents of the Associated Students of Oregon State University (ASOSU) and the Associated Students of Cascades Campus (ASCC), we are writing to share how OSU students are doing during this unprecedented time, and highlight the highest areas of student need that the state may be able to help address.

Although many communities are facing extreme hardship during the COVID-19 crisis, the impact and struggles for students are amplified due to the personal and financial cost of higher education. Students are hit by this crisis in multiple ways; we have been laid off from our part- and full-time jobs, suffer from food and housing insecurity, may have trouble accessing healthcare and mental health services, and those of us graduating are entering into the workforce at the most unstable economic time we have seen in our lifetimes.

We will remain resilient, but this is challenging. The CARES act has alleviated some financial hardship for students that are eligible, and the OSU Beavers Care fundraising effort supports the many students who do not meet the restrictive CARES funding requirements. Overall, it is challenging to know what is available and how to access it, all while taking full course loads remotely, working from home if possible, and managing the hardships in personal lives. We remain hopeful for in-person learning soon, which motivates social distancing and staying home.

International students are left worrying about what is going on back home. Student parents now have to juggle their children's education alongside their own. DACA recipients have been left out of federal funding, just like full campus students. Food insecure students have lost access to more consistent food options. Housing insecurity and costs have increased as students still must pay rent for places they do not currently live in, and many have lost the jobs that paid rent before.

Residence halls are nearly empty as first year students went home and are missing a large part of their first year experience. Commencement has been postponed, which is something to look forward to, but was yet another thing that we did not get to celebrate. The Human Services Resource Center, which contains the Corvallis campus food pantry, has been working creatively in overdrive to supply students in need with nutritious food. Our professors have worked hard to



shift their courses online very quickly, but this experience is very different and we miss our campuses in Bend and Corvallis. The Cultural Resource Centers at the Corvallis campus cannot put on their many events this term that see so many participants and help students find their communities.

Public higher education is important to all of us, but may become more unattainable for students if the state decides to cut higher education and/or student financial aid budgets. We are struggling, and the most vulnerable of us are not going to make it through this without help. Higher education funding cannot be cut at this time, or we risk major downstream negative effects that Oregon families and the economy will not be able to recover from. There are many difficult decisions that you will have to make during this crisis, so it is our responsibility to inform you that cuts to higher education will amplify the negative impact significantly to current and future students at OSU and across the state.

Sincerely,

Rachel Josephson, ASOSU President 2019-2020

Brian Chavez, ASCC President 2019-2020