

January 20, 2019

Chair Wagner, Vice Chair Thomsen and members of the committee,

For the record my name is David McDonald. I serve as the Associate Vice President for Public Affairs and Strategic Initiatives for Western Oregon University. My comments today regarding SB-3 are on behalf of Oregon's seven public universities.

We strongly agree with Senate President Courtney that college affordability in Oregon is a major and growing challenge. The under-funding of higher education has slowly and steadily moved Oregon to a crisis level that threatens our state's immediate and long-term future.

Oregon has under-funded higher education so severely that we now rank below the national and west coast averages on every meaningful measure of higher education funding. These measures include

- per-capita funding
- per FTE funding, and
- percentage of state appropriations provided to higher education.

The only logical way we have been able to continue to offer our students a quality education is by increasing their tuition. Not surprisingly, we are now well above the national average in terms of change in net tuition revenue and the percentage of our total revenue that is derived from tuition. Both of these measures illustrate the negative impact high tuition is having on our current students.

Governor Brown's GRB, which is \$120 Million below CSL, is unfortunately the latest step in the decades-long march down to the funding cellar. While we are heartened that the Governor has expressed a willingness to work with the universities and the legislature to provide a higher level of funding, the continuation of the Oregon march will cause significant harm to Oregonians across the state, especially our most vulnerable communities including rural Oregonians, low-income Oregonians, and Oregonians from diverse backgrounds. We need to reverse the disinvestment that is pushing all of us to the depths of crushing student debt, economic stagnation, and the expansion of a desperate cycle of despair and dependence upon government support and assistance.

Despite the continued inadequate funding for higher education your public universities have been expanding their services to better serve all Oregonians, regardless of where they reside. Some examples of these efforts include

- **EOU** offers 20 fully online degree programs and also has offices on a number of community colleges throughout the state.
- **OIT** offers 20 online degrees and has a dental hygiene clinic and program at Chemeketa Community College.
- **OSU** has degree partnership programs with all 17 Oregon community colleges and offers over 50 online degrees.
- **PSU** a wide array of degree and certificate undergraduate and graduate programs.
- **SOU** offers degree completion options in several academic areas. SOU also shares an instructional building with RCC in downtown Medford.
- **UO** Oregon Research School Network (ORSN) works with high schools in four regions of Oregon to provide support to schools in addressing their local instructional and student-success needs.
- **WOU** has created a network of partners that will allow it deliver a “Grow Your Own teacher” model in 15 counties, with over 100 school districts and 7 community colleges. This geographic footprint covers 75% of Oregon students. WOU has also started a degree completion program in Salem.

This bill does not address the fundamental and critical issue of funding higher education. Nor does it guarantee that Oregon will increase the number of students who earn a bachelor’s degree.

If affordability is a high policy priority, then focus and funding should go to support Oregon higher education and its students. This focus will help all Oregon students. The universities are committed to working with the community colleges and other partners to maximize degree opportunities across the state. We appreciate Senate President Courtney’s concern about affordability.

# Proposed WOU Teacher Workforce Pipeline Footprint 2019 (grouped by Educator Advancement Council proposals)

- Key Data Points**
- 400 new educators per year
  - 15 Counties
  - 104 school Districts
  - 7 community colleges
  - 7 ESD's
  - 432,000 students (74.5% of Oregon's K-12 Enrollment)

