



March 27, 2019

Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Education
Oregon State Legislature

Co-Chair Frederick, Co-Chair McLain, Members of the Committee,

This week you have heard powerful testimony from students describing the outreach, services, and support they have received from community colleges across the state in order to achieve success they did not previously believe was possible. Oregon's community colleges are ensuring that we achieve our collective goals for postsecondary education statewide. And, for the past year, a big part of their ability to pursue those goals has been thanks to the investment in student success from the Oregon legislature. In 2015, and again in 2017, the legislature approved \$3.1M for grants to colleges to support innovative, first generation student success initiatives. These funds were primarily deployed to nine colleges during the 2016-17 academic year, and then, again during the current 2018-19 academic year.

The services provided by this investment have been tremendous. However, students and colleges have experienced significant disruptions because the services were only offered for one year at a time, with considerable energy devoted to starting and ending services at the beginning and end of each year. Beginning in July, HECC has taken the important step of moving toward a continuous funding model that would provide funds to colleges over the entire biennium. This could allow colleges to provide continuity of services to students and the communities that they serve—building both increased capacity and for underrepresented communities, increased trust that crucial support will be available for first-generation and low-income students.

However, if HECC receives only the current \$3.1M for student success initiatives in the coming biennium, that will actually represent a 50% reduction in services at the nine grantee colleges (because now, that \$3.1M will be extended over a two-year period, rather than a single academic year). In order to continue current services, this investment would likely need to be increased to \$6M. And if the committee aims to include more (or all) of Oregon's community colleges in these investments, additional funds will be needed. Sincerely,

Nick Mathern
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