



May 1, 2019

Senator Fred Girod  
Representative Paul Holvey  
Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction  
Joint Ways & Means Committee  
900 Court St. NE, Room H-178  
Salem OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairs Girod and Holvey, and members of the committee,

We appreciate this opportunity to provide input to the Subcommittee on Capital Construction as you consider the many worthy projects that require state funding. As members of the Central Oregon community, we want to thank legislators for past investments in OSU-Cascades that have contributed to the fastest growing region and economy in the State. The university has spent your investments wisely and efficiently, and the returns have been significant. Yet, like the rest of the state, we also face growing challenges. **We urge your support for the Student Success Center at OSU-Cascades** to enable the campus to continue to grow and serve students.

Over the last decade, the legislature has approved appropriations and made investments in the OSU-Cascades campus. **These dollars have been leveraged by the community to build a vibrant 4-year university that is serving a steadily increasing number of students.** Here are a few highlights of how OSU-Cascades has efficiently used the appropriations and produced positive outcomes:

- **Enrollment is growing and the University is serving underrepresented populations:** OSU-Cascades is the fastest growing among Oregon's public universities, and is the only 4-year institution within commuting distance for the region's place-bound students. Sixty-four percent of the students come from Central Oregon, a third are first generation, and nearly half are eligible for Pell grants. Research has shown that proximity to a nearby university is critical for underserved populations to access higher education, and OSU-Cascades is providing that access, thanks to the state's investments.
- **State funds have leveraged additional support from Central Oregon:** Philanthropic donors who care about the region's future have contributed \$15 million to match state bonds. This is amazing for a young university that has very few alumni. It is a testament to the importance of OSU-Cascades to businesses and the many community members who contributed. OSU-Cascades students themselves are paying-it-forward with an additional \$5 million match; in 2016 they voted to increase their fees to help fund the Student Success Center. These students knew when voting that they were unlikely to personally benefit from the building, but they knew the importance of this building to future generations of students.
- **The university has spent state funds wisely:** Since the inception of OSU-Cascades in 2001, the state has invested \$70 million in capital expenditures to grow the university. With those funds, OSU-Cascades has acquired one academic building, acquired 128 acres of land, built a new campus including infrastructure, and will be completing a third academic building to open in Fall 2021. The campus is designed to be net zero energy in the future, space utilization is being maximized, and

two brownfield sites are being converted to university use. Most other universities already have land and infrastructure available to them at no extra cost. Your \$70 million has gone incredibly far.

**As you know, Central Oregon is a net positive contributor to the state coffers.** Our burgeoning economy, which ranks among the nation's fastest growing, is contributing significantly in personal income tax revenues to Oregon's general fund. These revenues do not stay in Central Oregon, they flow across the state through Oregon's general fund expenditures.

**A four-year college degree does more to change the economic future for underrepresented families than any other investment.** In this moment, when the state faces a strong yet flattening growth curve and seemingly intractable cost pressures, we urge you to put resources where they matter most—by investing in youth through higher education opportunities.

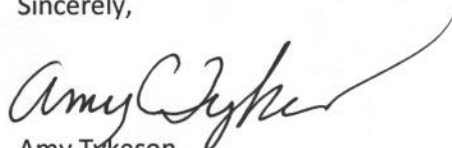
**The Student Success Center at OSU-Cascades will help students graduate on-time and connect with employment:** The Student Success Center will be the hub in the wheel of student support services at OSU-Cascades. It will provide a central location for advising, veterans services, mental and physical health counseling, disability access, and career services. It will also be the hub of student life activities, such as clubs and student government, that are so important to engage students in the university and the community.


We join with students in urging the legislature to approve the bonding needed to construct the Student Success Center at OSU-Cascades in the 2019-21 biennium.

We appreciate the challenges you face in making difficult decisions about how to invest limited resources against the backdrop of increasing need. Similarly, as our communities and businesses grow, we are presented with changing economic, demographic, and technological conditions, requiring tough decisions to meet complex needs. The due care and consideration these decisions require are fundamental to the state's future. We urge you to invest in expanding access to higher education in Central Oregon.

Your investments in this region accrue to the entire state of Oregon and we are proud to do our part. Thank you for your service to our great state.

Sincerely,

  
Amy Tykeson  
Now 4 OSU-Cascades, Co-Founder

  
Janie Teater  
Now 4 OSU-Cascades, Co-Founder