

Community Colleges provide educational access for marginalized, at-risk students. It is essential that after the wildfires and job losses due to the pandemic, all Oregon Community Colleges be fully funded in order to provide the educational and wrap-around services needed to create a skilled workforce. Our college provides essential Career and Technical Training as well as training in the Health Care fields, a growing industry in our area. We also provide essential English language and civics education, as well as GED classes and support, so that students can pursue their college, career and community goals.

We need the full \$702 million to keep programs whole, and tuition under a 3.5% increase. In addition, Oregon colleges have played a leading role in helping students navigate the complicated process of applying for federal benefits like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and other forms of federal assistance that support basic needs. A recent study by the HOPE Laboratory of Temple University showed that 41 percent of community college respondents faced food insecurity over a 30-day period in the fall of 2019. 52 percent reported they had faced housing insecurity and 20 percent had experienced homelessness over the previous year. I have personally guided students who had Covid and missed work, to resources that would help provide for the family while they were also taking classes. Community colleges provide critical support in navigating systems and resources.

Our students often face numerous obstacles on their journey to greater self-sufficiency. They are courageous and hardworking, and deserve our assistance as they strive to reach their goals and become essential members of our workforce. No community can function and thrive if any member of the community is left behind. Please help our students, workers, and communities grow and succeed by fully funding community colleges, one of the strongest economic engines and binding forces of our area.