

DATE: April 21, 2021

Subject: Community College funding

To: Sen. Betsy Johnson, Sen. Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, Rep. Dan Rayfield and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means

April is National Community College Month, and I want to make sure that you support the great work of Oregon's community colleges. I'm urging you to support \$702 million in funding for community colleges. Tuition and college debt are already unaffordable for too many families, particularly those impacted the most by the pandemic and wildfires.

Tuition and college debt are already unaffordable for too many families, particularly those impacted the most by the pandemic and wildfires, including Clackamas Community College students. Federal stimulus funds are short-term dollars to support innovative programs stemming from the pandemic, while colleges will still need long-term funding from the state to continue to support students and Oregon's economic recovery in the coming years.

In the 2019-2021 biennium, the Community College Support Fund received \$641 million. To fully fund current services, colleges need a state appropriation of \$702 million for the 2021-2023 biennium. Every dollar cut from the Community College Support Fund must be made up by raising tuition or cutting programs and services, moving educational opportunities out of the reach of the Oregonians with the most need.

We need community colleges now more than ever to jumpstart our economy and get Oregonians back to work in jobs with living wages. Community colleges are essential to responding to the recession brought on by COVID-19 and the wildfires of 2020, offering shorter-term programs directed at getting unemployed Oregonians retrained and back to work as quickly as possible.

Community colleges serve students regardless of education and skill level, providing a true educational safety net and primary access point to economic opportunity. Community colleges like CCC need adequate funding from the state to continue providing valuable education in high-demand industries. It makes sense for our students, it makes sense for businesses, and it makes sense for the economy. Please support \$702 million in funding for community colleges.

Please make community college funding a priority this legislative session. Thank you.

Sincerely,

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