

**Senator Deb Patterson**

Oregon Senate, District 10  
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**May 2, 2025**

**Joint Committee on Capital Construction**

Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court St NE  
Salem, OR 97301

**RE: Support for Western Oregon University Capital Construction Priorities**

Dear Co-Chairs Nosse and Girod and Members of the Subcommittee,

As the State Senator for District 10, I write in full support of Western Oregon University's 2025-2027 capital construction requests. These projects are not only necessary for the university's continued excellence in education and service, but also essential to sustaining the economic and cultural vitality of rural Polk County and the surrounding region.

I respectfully urge your support for the following three priorities:

1. **Data Center**

WOU's data infrastructure is long overdue for modernization. The proposed **Data Center** is a critical infrastructure upgrade that will enhance the university's technological capabilities, improve data security, and ensure resilient and sustainable operations well into the future. The current data center is located in an old masonry structure that lacks sufficient HVAC, dust contract, and seismic safety features This investment is essential for supporting modern academic research, remote learning infrastructure, and operational efficiency. Additionally, the Data Center will serve as a regional asset, enhancing emergency preparedness and digital connectivity that benefits both the university and the city at large.

2. **Performing Arts Renewal (Rice Auditorium and Smith Hall)**

The performing arts are a cornerstone of Western Oregon University's identity and a vital cultural engine for Polk County. Rice Auditorium and Smith Hall serve as cultural centers for the region—hosting student performances, regional events, school group visits, and community concerts. These spaces connect our communities and drive local economic activity, drawing visitors to Monmouth from across the Willamette Valley. Renewing these facilities will expand access to the arts, increase educational opportunities, and improve accessibility and safety.

3. **Campus Recreation Turf Field Replacement**

The current recreation turf field is at the end of its usable life. A replacement will ensure continued access for students, intramural sports, and community recreation groups. This facility supports the physical and mental well-being of WOU students and reflects the university's commitment to holistic student development. Additionally, it plays a critical role in youth and community engagement in Polk County.

Each of these investments is a strategic step forward in meeting the needs of students today while preparing Western Oregon University for the challenges and opportunities of tomorrow. More than that, these projects provide a direct economic stimulus to rural Oregon—supporting jobs, local business, and regional development.

Thank you for your leadership, and for your continued support of Oregon's public universities and the rural communities they serve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deb Patterson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Senator Deb Patterson**  
Oregon Senate, District 10