



OREGON
EDUCATION
ASSOCIATION

December 1, 2020

Contacts: Emily Wanous (OSA): 541-240-1432
Taylor Sarman (AFT): 541-910-5711

HIGHER EDUCATION COALITION RESPONDS TO GOVERNOR'S RECOMMENDED BUDGET

Organizations representing Oregon community college and university students, faculty, and staff applaud portions of Governor Kate Brown's Recommended Budget (GRB) for the 2021-23 biennium while cautioning more resources will be required to avoid major negative impacts.

The GRB includes important new investments in part-time faculty health insurance and programs enhancing success for underserved students, while protecting financial aid. Although the GRB matches the 2019-21 legislatively-approved budgets for the Community College Support Fund (CCSF) and Public University Support Fund (PUSF), not accounting for actual inflation would result in major tuition hikes and/or faculty and staff layoffs if not increased by the Legislature.

"Governor Brown's proposed investments in programs that close opportunity gaps by preparing all students for success deserve legislative support," said Emily Wanous, Oregon Student Association Legislative Director. "Students have been economically devastated by this pandemic, at a time when food and housing insecurity among our students had already reached alarming rates. We are counting on the Legislature to add more resources to the Oregon Opportunity Grant as well as the CCSF and PUSF. If not, the next two years will be filled with an increase in dropout rates, unacceptable increases in our tuition, and layoffs of our faculty and staff which we know will impact low-income students and low-wage workers the hardest."

"We applaud Governor Brown's commitment to funding part-time faculty health insurance for the first time ever. Part-time faculty are doing essential work, and they deserve affordable health insurance," said Jaime Rodriguez, AFT-Oregon President. "At the same time, we need greater state CCSF and PUSF funding next biennium to avoid devastating impacts to higher education faculty and staff who have demonstrated their adaptability and effectiveness for students."

A November [report](#) by the Lumina Foundation and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation concluded that "Not only would another round of higher education cuts hamper our economic resiliency, it would also increase inequality....Consider this a "rainy day" and tap into resources that can help meet shortfalls. Direct these resources to programs and supports that help the most vulnerable populations affected by COVID-19."

Oregon's Higher Education Coalition commend the Governor's commitment to equity, inclusion, and justice through intergenerational economic mobility. They also call on state legislative leaders to utilize state budget reserves, secure more federal aid, and increase revenue to avoid continued higher education cuts and ensure student success.