University of Oregon
2015 Legislative Agenda

Increased Public Investment in Oregon Universities and Community Colleges

Rising Tides Lift All Boats
The University of Oregon, our alumni, and supporters are excited to move beyond conversations of how our higher education system is structured and start talking about increasing state investments in educating Oregon students.

In 2013, the Oregon Legislature and Governor Kitzhaber focused on restoring funding for K-12 education to pre-recession (2007) levels. The time has come to make the same reinvestment in our community colleges and universities.

That reinvestment equals $695,000,000 for Oregon’s universities. This funding level, combined with continued investments in tuition relief, amounts to a total funding request for Oregon’s universities of $755,000,000.

This $755,000,000 investment would turn the tide on a decade of cuts for our public universities and allow campuses to make critical investments in financial aid, student support, and academic offerings. This funding level would ensure that more Oregonians learn the valuable, practical, essential skills they need to join the middle class and pursue the lives they want to lead.

Investing in Outcomes for Oregon Students
The Higher Education Coordinating Commission is working with Oregon universities to shift how the state allocates dollars to campuses. The commission aims to align funding allocations with specific outcomes including access for traditionally underrepresented populations, higher graduation rates for Oregon students, and awarding degrees in fields critical to Oregon’s economic growth.

The University of Oregon has identified four areas of investment that could be made with increased appropriations from the Legislature. Each of these programs or initiatives is designed to improve access for Oregonians, ensure students have the resources and support needed to graduate on time, and improve the academic experience of students.

Four Key Investments in Student Success
PathwayOregon: The University of Oregon’s critically acclaimed PathwayOregon program ensures that high achieving Federal Pell Grant eligible Oregonians have their University of Oregon tuition and fees fully paid through a combination of federal, state, and UO funds. The program currently serves 1,724 Oregon resident students at an annual institutional remission cost of $3,448,000. The program also includes intensive advising and other support services. Students in the program, all of them Pell-eligible...
and many from underrepresented racial or ethnic groups, graduate at equal or higher rates than the general UO student population.

The University of Oregon proposes to amend the academic eligibility requirements for PathwayOregon, to dramatically increase the number of students enrolled in the program. With an increase in state support, the program is estimated to grow from 1,724 students to 2,312 students, allowing nearly 600 more Oregon students per year to receive the financial aid and advising support offer by PathwayOregon.

**Graduate Assistance Grant Program:** Many undergraduate Oregon students, especially students from middle-income families, exhaust their federal loan eligibility before they graduate—often forcing them to withdraw from the university without having earned a degree.

The University of Oregon Graduation Assistance Grant program would provide grants to first-time, full-time Oregon students who have exhausted their federal loan eligibility. The funding would be provided to juniors and seniors who are in good academic standing, to allow them to stay on track towards graduation. The grants will serve students with lower- to middle-incomes, but who are not eligible for Federal Pell Grants. For these students, progress toward graduation can be halted by a lack of available funds when federal loans are exhausted. The program will ensure that many of those students are successful in earning their degrees. The grants would be awarded and administered by the Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships at the University of Oregon.

UO has set a goal to award approximately 400 grants of $10,000 each per year. Two FTE of administrative staff would be required for financial aid analysis and student support. Even if 40% - 60% of the Oregon students who would otherwise drop out are able to finish their education due to support from this grant, that would equal 100 to 150 more graduates each year. That would improve our four-year resident graduation rates by 4.5 to 7 percentage points.

**Retention and Completion Initiative:** The UO Retention and Completion Initiative is a multi-pronged, integrated, plan for institution-wide enhancements in student engagement and support services. Our success with PathwayOregon has demonstrated what can be achieved with a robust commitment to a students’ financial security coupled with intense academic advising and learning support. To build on this success we propose launching the new comprehensive Retention and Completion Initiative. Our initiative tackles advising, learning support, and enrichment via six interrelated programs. We estimate this program could increase in our overall support capacity by as much as eightfold.

**Expand Tenure Track Faculty:** One of the primary reasons a promising undergraduate student attends a comprehensive research university like the University of Oregon is the opportunity to work directly with research faculty at the cutting edge of science, the arts, and the professions. This synergy of research and education creates a quality of education with far-reaching implications for the students and the faculty, as well as innovation and discovery to the benefit of the state and society.

Tenured faculty and those working toward tenure provide student advising, thesis and research guidance, and mentoring. They engage with students in extra-curricular student projects and spark
interest in research and discovery. These faculty members are responsible for program, curriculum, and course development. Having an adequate corps of tenure-track faculty is critical to maintaining and advancing a high quality educational experience for students.

The University of Oregon Tenured Faculty Initiative would increase tenured track faculty ranks by 120. Given the current needs of the state, this initiative would have a strong emphasis on STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) related fields. Half of these new faculty, 60 members, would be funded by state investment. Upon completion this initiative would improve the ratio of students to tenure-related faculty at University of Oregon to approximately 29.3 to one.

**Capital Construction Investments**

During each legislative session the Legislature and the Governor have the opportunity to issue state backed bonds to make capital investments in state institutions. The list of projects that receive funding is often defined by the Governor’s Recommended Budget (GRB) that will be released December 1st. The University of Oregon has four projects under consideration.

**Health and Safety Renovation of Klamath Hall for 21st Century Chemistry:** This proposal converts all of the lab space on the 3rd floor of Klamath Hall into state-of-the-art, synthetically-oriented, high-density hooded laboratories and concurrently builds/outfits a new 4th floor of Klamath Hall for faculty and student offices. The renovated space will also house conference rooms and a new 80-person classroom/seminar room to replace the loss of similar style space currently on the 3rd floor. The renovated labs will be state-of-the-art, more efficient, safer, and more conducive for modern research practices and needs. Additionally the labs will be modular in design, allowing more flexible and efficient assignment of bench space. This would increase the capacity and efficiency of the building.

The University of Oregon is requesting $6,250,000 in Article XI-G Bonds and $6,000,000 in Article Q Bonds to finance this project. Additionally the University is committing $6,250,000 in matching funds.

**The College and Careers Building:** The College and Careers Building project will enhance student recruitment, retention, graduation, and future success by merging core academic activities with advising for career opportunities.

The project would provide much needed classroom and office space in the campus core, a home for the University’s College of Arts and Sciences, and a home for the Career Center. Moving multiple units into this building would create new capacity for academic spaces that will be updated and renovated as part of the overall project.

The University of Oregon is requesting $17,000,000 in Article XI-G Bonds and committing $17,000,000 in gifts, grants and other sources of matching funds to finance this project.

**Chapman Hall Renovations - Seismic Upgrade and Deferred Maintenance:** The university has an urgent need to address critical deferred maintenance and seismic upgrade issues in Chapman Hall, the home of the
Clark Honors College and one of the campus highest ranking historic buildings. Founded in 1960, the UO’s Robert D. Clark Honors College is the oldest honors college in the U.S. This project will contribute to the university’s capacity to attract and retain high achieving students from Oregon, thereby making a major contribution to Oregon’s 40-40-20 Plan.

The project will completely renovate Chapman Hall. In this process, most of the building’s systems including windows, heating and ventilating systems, electrical systems, and plumbing systems will be replaced. The need for seismic remediation will be addressed, as well as a complete remodel of the general university classrooms in the building.

The University of Oregon is requesting $2,500,000 in Article XI-G Bonds, $5,500,000 in Article XI-Q Bonds and committing $2,500,000 in gifts and grants for matching funds to finance the project.

The Learning and Innovation Hub - School of Architecture and Allied Arts/Research Innovation Center: The A&AA/ORI Center will enhance student recruitment, retention, graduation, and future success by providing an epicenter for design thinking, collaborative innovation, social responsibility and world class applied research.

The A&AA/ORI Center will provide more than 50% of the university's needed classroom space at the intersection of the campus core and the community; a home for the Material Studies and Product Design Program; a home for the Regional Accelerator and Innovation Network (RAIN); the Tyler Invention Greenhouse – for interdisciplinary work in green chemistry and product creation; studio, laboratory and fabrication space for digital arts, metalsmithing, sculpture, ceramics, and photography; and a significant number of faculty offices for the support of students. Moving existing units into this building will release underutilized spaces on and off campus and will alleviate the need to lease off-campus space.

The University of Oregon is requesting $26,625,000 in Article XI-G Bonds and committing $26,625,000 in matching funds to finance the project.

State Backed Scholarships for Oregon Students

The University is pleased to support proposals that would increase state investment in the Oregon opportunity grant and direct more lottery proceeds to scholarships for women athletes.

Increased investments in the Oregon Opportunity Grant: The Higher Education Coordinating Commission has recommended a $65 million increase in state funding for the Oregon Opportunity Grant. The current state appropriation to this program is $117 million.

The Oregon Opportunity Grant is Oregon's largest state-funded need-based grant program for students planning to go to college. Nearly 32,000 students received awards in the 2012-13 academic year.

We anticipate Governor Kitzhaber to recommend some level of increased investment in this program and intend to support it as a way to improve access to Oregon’s universities.
Restoring Funding for Non-Revenue “Sports Action Lottery” Scholarships:

The Sports Action Lottery program dedicates one percent of lottery funds to fund intercollegiate athletics and graduate scholarships at all public universities. A total $8 million allocation cap was instituted during the 2013-15 biennium, with a $1 million cap for OSU and UO. Intercollegiate athletics receive 88% of the Sports Action Lottery funds; the balance is directed to non-athletic graduate scholarships. Of the athletic funds, 70% must be used for nonrevenue producing sports and at least 50% must be used for women’s athletics.

By eliminating the $8 million cap on the program, and capturing a true 1% of lottery funds Oregon’s universities are expected to collectively gain nearly $4 million that can be distributed to student-athlete scholars, primarily women, across the state.