

To: Higher Education Coordinating Commission; Ben Cannon, Executive Director

From: Interinstitutional Faculty Senate (IFS); Donna Lane, Ph.D., IFS President

RE: Prioritizing Postsecondary Funding and Partnership

In response to your recent message “Prioritizing Postsecondary Funding and Partnership,” we are motivated by our agreement with your statement that “...success over a lifetime requires Oregonians to continue their learning from preschool through family-wage careers, and that higher education is a proven catalyst for economic mobility.”

In our roles as faculty members involved daily with student education throughout Oregon’s public universities, our efforts to serve the educational needs of the public are wide-ranging, both intellectually and geographically.

We are preparing our future workforce to address the cutting edge of technological and social change by training and motivating professionals to serve in rural areas and by challenging *all* our students to be ethical citizens who give back to their communities. We believe that providing higher education to Oregon’s citizens is primary toward being able to guarantee a higher quality of life in our state.

Toward that end, we believe that it is crucial for our public universities to serve students who have grown up here, as they are most likely to remain in Oregon and use their talents to assist us increase our economy, care for the sick and needy (particularly in rural areas), and build a strong, vibrant civic culture.

We are deeply concerned that increases in tuition will prevent many Oregonians, particularly those from working-class families, from being able to access higher education. Moreover, we fear that such increases will have a disproportionate impact on low-income and historically under-represented students. We respectfully request that you continue to urge the legislature to fund higher education in Oregon at a level that will eliminate the need for such increases and will preserve the widest possible access to education for our students.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna Lane, Ph.D.
President, Interinstitutional Faculty Senate
Professor of Business
Southern Oregon University
Monday, May 20, 2019