$755 Million for Universities

Stop the cuts: Oregon’s seven public universities are requesting $755 million to prevent additional cuts to student services, continue funding for the 2013-15 tuition buy-down and prevent large tuition increases. This is our top priority for the 2015 session.

Restore universities to the 2007 appropriation: We are requesting $693 million for student support, public service and the Engineering and Technology Industry Council (ETIC). This the same appropriation as the 2007-09 legislative approved budget. This appropriation will not account for inflation, the increased cost of PERS and PEBB or the 20,000 additional students who have enrolled since 2007 — nearly enough to fill another University of Oregon. By 2013-15, state investment dropped to $521 million, forcing universities to cut services to students and raise tuition by 41 percent over eight years. PSU typically receives approximately 20 percent of the total state funding for universities. The Ways and Means Co-Chairs’ have proposed a budget that includes $608 million for universities. This is a great start, but is insufficient to restore the cuts to Oregon universities or provide affordability for students.

Keep the 2013-15 affordability promise to students: In 2013, the Legislature committed $40 million dollars to prevent tuition increases for in-state undergraduate students. The Legislature must provide $62 million in 2015-17 to keep its 2013-15 promise. These funds will only carry forward the initial promise of lower tuition. They will not provide additional tuition relief for the 2016 and 2017 academic years. Support the co-chairs’ recommendation to continue funding for the 2013-15 tuition buy-down.

Scholarships for Women Athletes and Financially Needy Students

Provide more support for financially needy students: The Oregon Opportunity Grant is Oregon’s only state-funded, need-based program to help low- and middle-income Oregon residents achieve academic and career success. In 2013, the Legislature allocated $114 million—approximately 63,000 awards at $1,800 per award. This means less than one out of five students who are eligible receive a grant. During the 2011-12 academic year, 3,184 PSU students received an Opportunity Grant, but thousands more students who were eligible did not. PSU is requesting that the Legislature increase funding for this program to ensure: (1) grants remain at least $1,800 dollars and (2) more students receive a grant.

Restore scholarships for student athletes and graduate students: The Intercollegiate Athletic Fund provides scholarships to student athletes. PSU provides more than 120 student athlete scholarships, which primarily benefit women and minorities. This lottery funding is the primary way that campuses are able to meet Title IX requirements for women athletes. Data show that the average student-athlete has a better retention rate, GPA and graduation rate than students overall. Furthermore, these lottery dollars are the only state funds available for graduate student scholarships.
Save Neuberger Hall

Renovate PSU’s Neuberger Hall: Neuberger Hall is one of the most important and heavily used buildings on campus. It is also one of the most dilapidated. Neuberger is PSU’s “front door” for new students and is home to 37 classrooms, 18 labs, financial aid services, admissions, the registrar, the cashier, and veterans’ services. PSU’s Speech-Language Clinic provides speech and hearing services to the community and is currently inaccessible to people with mobility challenges. The renovation of Neuberger Hall has been a long-standing need for PSU, and is now our top capital priority. The current proposal for Neuberger Hall includes $10 million in campus support and $60 million in state bonds, which is included in the governor’s recommended capital budget. The renovation would address critical needs, such as accessibility, safety, and deferred maintenance. Failure to fund the renovation this biennium could result in the closure of Neuberger and cause a crisis at the University. PSU supports the governor’s recommendation for capital funding at all of Oregon’s public universities.

Stabilize PSU’s deferred maintenance backlog: PSU has $173 million in deferred maintenance—more than any other public university in Oregon. The amount has grown every year because of the limited capital renewal funds allocated to PSU from the state. Currently, PSU’s maintenance needs are $78 per square foot, up from $60 per square foot in 2008. PSU is asking for $5.3 million per year, or $10.6 million per biennium, to keep its deferred maintenance backlog from growing further. This funding level should be possible if the Legislature accepts (or improves on) the $71 million the governor included in the capital budget for deferred maintenance.

Research, Innovation, Entrepreneurs, and Start-Ups

Reauthorize the University Venture Development Fund: In 2005, the Legislature authorized a revolving fund to provide support for Oregon entrepreneurs as they commercialized scientific research. This program has been widely successful and has raised $7 million from private investors to support start-ups and entrepreneurs. The reauthorization of this fund is part of the Legislature’s review of tax credits.

Support SB 44/HB 2569

High-demand/high-cost degrees: Engineering and computer science graduates are in high demand by Oregon’s companies. To ensure that universities are able to meet these critical demands, the Legislature has supported additional funding for these students. PSU requests support of the co-chairs proposal for $24 million in ETIC funding.

Support HB 5025

Start-ups and innovation at Business Oregon: PSU supports the new focus at Business Oregon to grow Oregon start-ups. PSU requests $29.35 million for Oregon Inc. and support for the innovation and start-up package in the Business Oregon budget.

Support SB 5525

Research in rural Oregon: Oregon Statewide Programs housed at OSU have experienced devastating cuts during the recession. PSU supports OSU’s request for $16 million additional dollars for the Agricultural Experiment Station and branch stations, Oregon State University Extension Service, and the Forest Research Laboratory.

Support SB 657

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