

Legislative Update

OSU LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Unity of Purpose among All Seven Public Universities

Oregon's seven public universities were successful during the 2015 legislative session in achieving an unprecedented increase in funding largely as a result of unified advocacy. During the 2017 session, these universities will continue to work together to address the challenges presented by structural costs that outpace Oregon's projected revenue growth and disruptive program changes or mandates.

\$100 Million Increase in University Support

As outlined by the seven university presidents in April 2016, Oregon's public universities are seeking at least a \$100 million increase (for a total of \$765 million) in operating funds for the 2017-19 biennium. Despite increasing revenues, the Governor's Recommended Budget (GRB) "flat-funds" university support at 2015-17 levels. This level of funding creates significant upward pressure on tuition and harmful programmatic reductions that will threaten student access and success.

Increased Capital Funding

OSU supports all of the projects recommended to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission by the seven university presidents. The GRB reduces or eliminates key projects. OSU will continue to explore and advocate for pathways that would fully fund its projects in a manner that would not result in reductions to other university projects. OSU projects include:

- \$69.5M for the continued expansion of OSU-Cascades [\$20M in the GRB];
- \$9M for a Quality Food & Beverage building [fully funded in the GRB];
- \$29M for capital renewal for Cordley (\$15M), Fairbanks (\$11M), and Gilkey (\$3M) [GRB removes Fairbanks from this list]; and
- A share of \$65M for capital renewal and repair for all seven public universities [GRB provides \$45M].

OSU Statewide Public Services – Agricultural Research Station, Extension and Forest Research Laboratory

Despite increasing revenues, the GRB also flat-funds the OSU statewides. OSU supports a \$9.4M increase in funding in order to maintain a continued service level for these vital programs, which serve the needs of Oregon family farmers, low income families, and Oregon's natural resources enterprises in all 36 counties of the state.

Establishment of a "Fighting Fund" for Oregon's Research Universities

Oregon's public universities support the investment of \$20M in carry-over funds from previous biennia to establish matching funds that will enable universities to better compete for federal grants. The Fighting Fund would match federal research grants awarded to Oregon universities when they compete for grants that enable research and economic development in Oregon.

Priority Funding for State Need-Based Financial Aid

The GRB includes a \$30M increase in the Oregon Promise program (“free community college”) instead of fully funding the Oregon Opportunity Grant program, which provides need-based financial aid for low income university and community college students. Oregon’s public universities and the Oregon Student Association support fully funding the Opportunity Grant program before expanding the Oregon Promise program – which is not a need-based program.

Sports Lottery Scholarships

The GRB eliminates all \$8 million in lottery funding, which, under Oregon statutes, has provided scholarships for athletes and graduate students at all seven universities.

Additional Legislative Initiatives

- Marine Energy Grant (\$2-4 Million): Funding would provide the necessary state match for a \$40M federal grant recently awarded to OSU.
- Measure 100 technical fix: Measure 100 prohibits the trade of a covered animal species part or product, intending to target endangered species, some of which are used in OSU educational courses or under study by OSU scientists. We are seeking a change that would provide flexibility for university educators and researchers utilizing covered animal species parts or products for education and research purposes.
- Priority Registration for veterans: Increased access for veteran students.
- Extension of Open Education resources: Continued funding for free textbooks.
- Post-Doc employment status: Enable an alternative retirement program for certain recently graduated post-doctoral students.