



CCSF Budget Talking Points – updated 3/31/2021

Summary:

Our objective is to persuade legislators to support HB 2907 to fully fund community colleges at \$702 million. Key themes include upskilling/reskilling Oregon's workforce that was displaced due to the impacts of COVID-19, supporting systemically marginalized students, affordability, and innovation. One emphasis will be on how federal stimulus funds are short-term dollars to support innovative programs stemming from the pandemic, while colleges will still need long-term support from the state to continue to support students and Oregon's economic recovery in the coming years.

Key Points:

- 1. Community colleges are the affordable option for access to higher education in Oregon, particularly after the pandemic caused financial hardship for many Oregonians.**
 - In the 2019-2021 biennium, the Community College Support Fund (CCSF) received \$641 million. To fully fund current services, colleges would need a state appropriation of \$702 million for the 2021-2023 biennium. At that funding level colleges could keep tuition increases to an average of 3.5 percent per year statewide.
 - Every dollar cut from the Community College Support Fund must be made up by raising tuition or cutting programs and services, moving educational opportunities out of the reach of the Oregonians with the most need.
 - Community colleges were not able to offer most in-person courses such as Career and Technical Education (CTE), so colleges have already faced significant revenue declines and budget cuts.
 - Students need a minimum of \$200 million allocated by the Legislature for the Oregon Opportunity Grant to allow students to continue to access affordable education.

- 2. Community colleges are Oregon's economic recovery first responders.**
 - Community colleges are essential to responding to the recession brought on by COVID-19 and the wildfires of 2020, offering shorter-term programs directed at getting unemployed Oregonians retrained and back to work as quickly as possible.
 - Community colleges are nimble and can react quickly to local needs of both employers and job-seekers. *(Give an example of programs your college offers that are responding to local workforce needs.)*

- 3. Community colleges serve the communities that have been most affected by the pandemic.**
 - Community colleges serve more systemically marginalized students than any other sector of higher education.
 - Many of these students face barriers made worse by the pandemic and wildfires and the shift to virtual education, and the impact of these catastrophic events has prevented many from enrolling. An entire cohort of students could be left behind by this pandemic if we do not address the challenges they face.
 - Community colleges serve students regardless of education and skill level, providing a true educational safety net and primary access point to economic opportunity.

4. Wraparound services are becoming an essential safety net for vulnerable students.

- The pandemic and wildfires have exacerbated the challenges many students face, including food and housing insecurity, as well as joblessness.
- Oregon colleges have played a leading role in helping students navigate the complicated process of applying for federal benefits like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and other forms of federal assistance that support basic needs.
- Before the pandemic began, community college students already faced unacceptably high rates of food and housing insecurity. A recent study by the HOPE Laboratory of Temple University showed that 41 percent of community college respondents faced food insecurity over a 30-day period in the fall of 2019. 52 percent reported they had faced housing insecurity and 20 percent had experienced homelessness over the previous year.
- *(Give examples of how your college is addressing these needs, i.e., food pantry)*