TALKING POINTS

Oregon Community College Association

2023-25 Budget Ask

Summary:

OCCA is asking legislators to support Higher Education Coordination Commission's request for Community College Support Fund at $855 million (a 20.1 percent increase) in ongoing funding and $50 million in one-time funding for the 2023-2025 biennium. While colleges would need a roughly 44 percent increase to fully maintain current services and capacity, the HECC recommendation provides a funding base from which colleges can continue to maintain many critical programs and services and continue to meet the changing demands of their students, communities and local economies.

Key Points:

- OCCA supports the HECC request of $855 million in ongoing funding and $50 million in onetime funding. At this funding level colleges will be able to maintain many critical programs and services, but reductions will still be necessary at many colleges.
- Community colleges serve students at all education and skill levels, educating students with the greatest barriers to attaining post-secondary education and training.
- Nationwide, open-access institutions like community colleges saw the greatest enrollment declines as the populations they serve also faced the greatest disruptions from the pandemic. Highly selective universities saw the least decline. This will lead to greater educational and economic inequities if colleges don't have the capacity to re-engage those learners.
- Pandemic shutdowns created significant declines in tuition revenue to colleges. Federal relief dollars helped make up for this gap, but those dollars are now gone, and colleges are facing a fiscal cliff.
- Even as enrollment declined demand for mental health and wrap-around services increased significantly.
- Today college enrollment is leveling off and has increased at 10 of the 17 colleges for fall term of 2022.
- Enrollment has been returning at many colleges in more expensive career and technical education (CTE) programs as well short-term career certificate programs. (Give examples of local programs seeing growth).
- The HECC's recommended investment level would help colleges maintain capacity in many programs as students return. Once a program is shut down for budgetary reasons, it is not easy to simply start them back up again.

TALKING POINTS

- As baby boomers retire, employers are having trouble finding trained works. Adults with some college but no certificate or degree are the largest group when looking at Oregonians by education levels. Community colleges are best positioned to serve these learners.

- Typically, community college enrollment runs counter-cyclical to unemployment. When unemployment is high, enrollment surges and low unemployment leads to an enrollment decline at colleges. If unemployment increases, colleges will need program capacity to help workers retrain and get back into the workforce.

- $855 million in ongoing funding will help colleges cover cost increases in the next biennium, while $50 million in one-time funding will help colleges continue to adapt to changing student needs and provide bridge funding for colleges as they make reductions. For example, when a college cuts a program, they try to teach-out the remaining students so cost savings are not immediate.

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