



March 21, 2019

Ways and Means Committee
State Capitol Building
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Members of the Ways and Means Committee

I am writing to urge you to fully fund the Higher Education Coordination Commission (HECC) recommendation of \$647 million base budget for community colleges. Across Oregon, community colleges are the backbone of their communities. In large and small communities alike, Oregon's seventeen community colleges succeed in preparing a skilled workforce; providing a critical bridge between K-12 education and costly four-year universities.

As the CEO of a local business employing 93 individuals from throughout the Valley, I know first-hand the importance and need for a skilled workforce. Sourcing skilled employees is paramount to my organization's ability to offer best-in-class service to our members, to remain financially successful, and to actively engage with and contribute to our community. Linn Benton Community College provides essential education and job training critical to local employers such as myself.

Attempting to craft and balance the State's budget is not an enviable position. When considering what to fund, I want to encourage funding Oregon's community colleges, including LBCC, as they directly contribute to the economic vitality of our region. With over 18,000 people taking classes at LBCC each year pursuing 85 different degrees and certificates, your constituents are upskilled and/or gainfully employed and paying critical revenue to the state in the form of taxes.

If we truly want to continue our states economic growth, and provide all Oregonians a pathway to success, we must fully fund our community colleges and stop placing an ever-growing share of the financial burden onto students. I urge you make funding Oregon's community colleges and the people they serve, a top priority, and support the Higher Education Coordinating Commission recommendation of a \$647 million base budget.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Stacie Wyss-Schoenborn'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Stacie Wyss-Schoenborn
President/CEO
Central Willamette Credit Union