



THE OREGON STUDENT ASSOCIATION

635 NE Dekum St, Portland, OR, 97211

Phone: (503) 286-0477

www.orstudents.org

Dear Co-Chair Girod, Co-Chair Holvey and members of the committee,

As the Legislative Director of the Oregon Student Association, I am writing in support of investing \$12.9 million during the 2020 session to construct a Student Success Center on OSU-Cascades campus in Bend.

In 2017, OSU-Cascades students voted to use a portion of student fees to help fund the Student Success Center. Since then, students have raised over \$1 million. With the help of student fee dollars, OSU-Cascades will invest a total of \$5 million to the project. Not only does this show student's commitment to bettering the lives of current students, but future students as well. We support OSU Cascades' efforts to provide students the spaces and resources they need to thrive. It is time to invest in the expansion of student services now, so that we do not limit student access to necessary resources such as disability services, internship coordination, and academic and career advising.

With a population of 220,000 and a growing K-12 enrollment, access to a university education in Central Oregon has never been more critical. For rural, low-income, first-generation, and non-traditional students, the difference between attending college or not can come down to the location of a university within commuting distance. This is apparent when considering 60% of all OSU-Cascades students are from the Central Oregon region and 50% are Pell Grant eligible. Many of these students are place-bound and unable to attend other universities.

OSU-Cascades is home to 1,300 students and that number continues to grow each year. Currently, the campus has minimal space dedicated to helping students succeed--in the classroom or in the workforce. OSA advocates for the legislature to invest in students and in the resources and spaces they need to succeed. Research has proven student services increase graduation rates, reduces time to graduate, and connects students to future employment. The Central Oregon region has projected job growth at upwards of 15,000 jobs by 2027. Degrees earned at OSU Cascades will help ensure supply can meet demand.

OSA represents students who attend Oregon's public universities. Please make this critical investment during the 2020 legislative session, so that OSU-Cascades can continue to meet the needs of underserved students in an underserved region.

Sincerely,

Emily Wanous
Legislative Director
Oregon Student Association

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